The Difficulty with Diversity: White and Aboriginal Women Worker's Representations of Diversity Management in Forest Processing Mills

Suzanne Mills

Geography/Environmental Policy,
Sir Wilfred Grenfell College,
Memorial University of Newfoundland,
Canada.

THE DIFFICULTY WITH DIVERSITY: WHITE AND ABORIGINAL WOMEN WORKER'S REPRESENTATIONS OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IN FOREST PROCESSING MILLS.[1]

Suzanne Mills, Geography/Environmental Policy

Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Memorial University

1 University Drive Corner Brook, NL

A2H 6P9, Canada

Phone: (709) 637-6200 ext: 6574

E-mail: smills@swgc.mun.ca

Alternate e-mail: suzmills@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Diversity management, the promotion of diverse workforces as a way to increase firm competitiveness, has gained popularity as a human resource strategy in firms across the United States and Canada. This paper critically examines diversity management in a multinational forest company's operations in the northern prairies of Canada from the situated perspectives of white and Aboriginal women workers. Drawing on insights from theories of intersectionality, I highlight three ways that women's experiences can inform our understanding of corporate practices to include historically marginalized workers. First, differences among women's narratives about diversity management related to whether they were unionized and to whether they were white or Aboriginal highlight how local structures and constructions of difference and sameness ensure a non-uniform implementation of workplace practices among workers. Second, white women's representations of practices to include Aboriginal people used both concepts of sameness and difference to reproduce racist norms, underscoring the need to move beyond seeing white women working in forestry as only in oppressed subject positions. Last, women's representations suggest that by delineating difference as human capital attributes, diversity management compartmentalizes difference, not allowing for the ways that women's experiences of unequal power relations are structured by interlocking categories of difference, positions that may require collective rather than individualized redress.

KEYWORDS: WORK, LABOUR, ABORIGINAL, INDIGENOUS, GENDER, FORESTRY, MILL, CANADA, PRAIRIES, RACISM, RURAL, WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

Since their emergence in the late 1980s, distinct sets of practices and discourses that promote diversity have become key components of most western corporate cultures (defined as sets of discourses and practices palatable to employees and the public). Diversity management describes a set of discourses and practices aimed at promoting the valuation of differences among workers following an economic logic (D'Netto and Sohal, 1999). Typically, diversity management targets the better integration of groups formerly excluded from or marginalized within the workplace. Implementing diversity management, however, requires contending with the local meanings and norms in the workplace. This is particularly important in the case of diversity since what is understood as different hinges on people's beliefs of what is normal or the same (Scott, 1994). The meaning of difference can therefore only be deciphered in context. What this implies for corporations striving to homogenize corporate diversity culture is that interpretations, representations and reproductions of diversity discourse may have different meanings in different spaces. These meanings, in turn, help to construct the experiences of individuals from different identity groups based on how they mark ascribed attributes as different or the same. In a recent review, McDowell called for the need to better integrate studies of the construction and performance of identity/identities in the workplace with structural examinations of economic change (2008). This paper speaks to this call, drawing on the experiences of workers at intersections of multiple identity categories to analyse corporate approaches to the incorporation of diversity.

Larger forest processing mills in Canada have long been understood to be places where white male working class identities are solidified. These identities have at times been defined in opposition to non-Aboriginal women and Aboriginal people and these later groups have been

historically excluded from the better jobs in forestry (Brandth and Haugen, 2000; Dunk, 1994; Reed, 2003a, 2003b). Although these and other studies have examined gender relations in forest workplaces, to date there has been no examination of how gender intersects with other identity categories to shape perceptions and experiences of forestry work and of human resource practices. In this paper I examine how constructions of gender and Aboriginal identity, and the nature of employment contracts (individualized or collective), interact with the diversity management strategies of an American Multinational Forest Company, [MNFC], in the northern prairies. I look to workers who were targets of diversity management, white and Aboriginal women, to critically examine implemented diversity management practices. In the next section, I review critical scholarship in organizational literature on business discourses of diversity management and situate this in the context of the MNFC's operations in the northern prairies. This is followed by a critical examination of how corporate practices can be informed by intersectionality theory. I then present results from a critical discourse analysis of interviews with women working in subsidiaries of the MNFC to demonstrate how workplace policies of inclusion presented contradictions and limitations to inclusion for the women interviewed in three ways. First, they highlighted how women's experiences and representations of diversity management were structured by their locations in relation to multiple categories of difference including gender, their position within the company, and Aboriginality. Second, they highlighted how corporate strategies to include Aboriginal people contributed to discourses that re-inscribed racism towards Aboriginal people among white women workers. And, third, I review how these racialised and gendered representations highlighted specific ways liberal individualistic practices of inclusion were not able to address unequal power relations in the workplace since they delineated difference in a way that did not account for structural inequality.

DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IN THE NORTHERN PRAIRIES

In the mid 1990s the MNFC introduced diversity management strategies in the northern prairies which had the potential to challenge pre-existing inequalities in the distribution of employment opportunities. The American MNFC had gradually gained dominance over the forest sector in the province through the 1990s, largely through the acquisition of an oriented strand board mill, a plywood mill, and two sawmills, which supplemented its previously owned pulp and paper mill. This shift in ownership was accompanied by a shift in labour relations in the mills including increased rationalization, heightened job insecurity and the introduction of diversity management. The later was significant since employment in forestry in the province had historically not been equally available to women or to Aboriginal peoples who comprised over 30% of the population in the region in 2001 (Teskey and Smyth, 1975). Moreover the region's heavy dependence on forest employment and the high wages paid to workers at the mills relative to other work in the communities meant that unequal access to mill jobs had social and economic consequences.

Historically, Aboriginal men were under-represented in the larger forest processing mills in the region and were more likely to be employed in seasonal work tree planting, logging or forest fire fighting (Teskey and Smyth, 1975). The under representation of Aboriginal men in better paid resource work in the region is consistent with historical studies on Aboriginal participation in waged work that have demonstrated both the gradual dispossession of Aboriginal peoples from their traditional economies and increasing barriers to equal integration in resource sector employment through the early 20th century (High 1996; Tough, 1996). Racist constructions by employers and co-workers helped to limit employment opportunities; Hank

Pennier (2006) documented how he experienced discrimination as a Sto:lo logger from the 1930s-50s, and, more recently the detailed ethnographic work of Thomas Dunk, showed how a white male culture among pulp mill workers in northern Ontario was predicated on their distinction from Aboriginal people who were considered non-workers (Dunk 1994).

Unlike Aboriginal men, women are relatively recent entrants into most forms of forestry work. The fist women were hired at the mills in the northern prairies in the 1980s, however it was only in the 1990s that mills began to hire a significant number of women. By 2003, the MNFC's regional workforce was comprised of 15.9% women, and 12.3% of Aboriginal people. Women working within the company followed patterns of work allocation demonstrated elsewhere (Hayter, 2000; Hayter and Barnes, 1992); women were under-represented in management, labourer, and technical and trades occupations, and concentrated in clerical work (Table 1). This exclusion does not only result in economic vulnerability for women, Reed (2003b) has also emphasized that barriers to forest related to employment excludes women from access to the social status that accompanies these jobs and results in social exclusion in forest communities. The continued under representation of women and Aboriginal people from better paid employment in forest processing speaks to a need for structured approaches to their inclusion in these workplaces.

Critical scholars in organization studies have suggested that the past two decades have signaled a shift in the approach to workplace inclusion in Canada and the US from a regulatory approach focused on inequality to one of diversity management (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002; Humphries and Grice, 1995). Increasingly it is corporations, and not the government that is the initiator of workplace inclusion practices. D'Netto and Sohal, (1999) and Liff and Wajcman, (1996), have suggested that this has involved a discursive shift from the equal treatment of all

workers to the active promotion of difference among individual workers. Earlier efforts to address employment discrimination were predicated on legal requirements for equal treatment of people from identified marginalized groups (Agocs and Burr, 1996). Though in practice, this was often reduced to targeted hiring of individuals from designate groups, employment equity's "…fundamental purpose (was) as a remedy for systemic discrimination in the workplace"(Agocs, 2002; 257). As such, legislation acknowledged the need for solutions to questions of substantive equality by requiring employers to review and correct policies that systemically discriminated against designate groups (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002). This was based on broad understanding that in some instances equality can mean treating people the same (formal equality) and in others it can mean accommodating people's differences.

Alternatively, diversity management emerged from a liberal discourse, which enshrined the principle that managing workers' differences as individual identity attributes would respond to the on-going need for flexible workforce options by capital. Diversity is therefore posited as synergistic to firm competitiveness as labour markets become tighter and customer bases more diverse (Etlinger, 2001). Specifically, increases in firm productivity have been attributed to the improved performance of diverse management teams relative to homogeneous ones; to the elimination of labour market distortions resulting from discriminatory hiring; and to improved cultural knowledge of spatially (and culturally) diverse markets as firms become more international in scope (D'Netto and Sohal, 1999). Rather than seeking the inclusion of historically marginalized groups within a broad framework of substantive equality, diversity management seeks the inclusion of individuals with particular human capital variables that benefit the firm and that are denoted as different within a framework of corporate productivity. In valuing difference for its contribution to productivity rather than as a solution to inequality,

diversity management hinges on principles of meritocracy, individualism, productivity, and corporate ethics, ideas that form the cornerstones of newer models of HR management that focus on individualized rankings, rewards, and punishments.

Mirroring diversity management theory, the introduction of diversity management by the MNFC in the mid 1990s was accompanied by corporate slogans drawing on notions of efficiency, productivity and competitiveness. Diversity was listed as a top business priority and company-wide diversity practices included tying managers' bonuses to diversity targets, implementing diversity training programs for all management, and promoting 'clean' workplaces that were free from harassment. Moreover, the central diversity policy of the MNFC was not only about increasing the numbers of targeted minority groups, but also about changing the way the company operated to ensure that hiring practices and workplaces became amenable to diversity. As such, the company had adopted a broad definition of diversity that included not only legally protected recognized groups but also age, lifestyle and differences in experiences and ideas.   At the regional level, the MNFC aimed to have workforces that were representative of local demographics which in the northern prairies meant increasing the representation of Aboriginal men and women. Yet, despite targeted hiring of Aboriginal men and women, the language of local human resource managers followed the diversity management discourse, emphasizing a non-categorical understanding of diversity. One manager emphasized that people needed to be recognized and treated as individuals stating "I think you have to be careful… …you really need to talk about human beings rather than designated groups…". Likewise, the company's approach did not eliminate merit as a key factor in hiring and promotion; women and Aboriginal candidates were preferentially hired or promoted only if they were equally qualified to other candidates.   While the implementation of diversity management addressed an important

need in forestry workplaces, critical assessments have suggested that its underlying economic rational and its foundation in liberal individualist ideology simply helps to shift workplace relations from collective to individualized employment contracts, without necessarily helping marginalized groups (Cavanaugh, 1997; Humphries and Grice, 1995; 1997). These critiques notwithstanding, there is a paucity of empirical work examining the complex negotiation of how workers' social identities govern their experiences and representations of diversity management practices.

IDENTITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Human resource management strategies are implemented in order to transform pre-existing meanings and practices in workplaces. Meanings related to the construction of identity are important to how power operates in the workplace since "the construction of identity is a point of power, and, therefore difference."(Dei, 2005; 20). This is the case since power, understood as the ability to control access to resources that are valued, is both legitimized, and resisted with recourse to understandings of difference. Although individuals who are marked as different have unequal access to material resources, the legitimization of their classification as difference is discursive. Discursive power can be distinguished from other forms of power in that it operates in ways that are "…mostly cognitive, and enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to change the mind of others in one's own interest."(van Dijk, 1993; 254). Discursive power is embedded in understandings of sameness and difference, since these understandings help to reproduce, maintain and resist unequal material access to resources and power. I adopt a social constructionist perspective of identity, seeing individual and collective social identities as historically and socially constituted through a

negotiation between self-identification and projected identities originating from similarly identified individuals as well as 'outsiders'. From this perspective, although an individual has some power in determining identity, much of one's identity is not self constructed since visual markers such as skin colour and sex are used by non-group members to classify others (Dei, 2005). In the case of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, the individual identities of Aboriginal peoples are "…always being negotiated in relation to collective identity, and in the face of an external, colonizing society."(Lawrence 2003; 4). Identities are therefore historical and relational in that they develop meaning through interactions among individuals and groups over time.

Superimposing another layer of complexity, individuals' relationship to systems of power are based on their positions in relation to multiple categories of oppression. Individuals may therefore have multiple identities, of which some may take heightened importance over others at different times and in different spaces. Feminist theories of intersectionality arose to theorize this complexity. In opposition to earlier theories that either privileged one form of oppression over another or that examined oppression related to gender, race and class as separate systems, intersectionality proposed that gender, class and race needed to be understood as interlocking systems of social relations that structure individual and group experiences (Dei 2005; Hill Collins 2000). Consequently, understanding one category of oppression necessitates understanding how it intersects with other categories of oppression. Despite their limited use in human geography, an intersectional approach can provide insights to the way liberal workplace practices intersect with local constructions of identity (Valentine, 2007).

Theories of intersectionality call attention to the lived experiences of individuals who have been historically neglected from labour research. Early writings centered Black women's

lives to critique the essentialism implicit in white middle class feminism and in critical race

scholarship that professed to represent all women, or all African Americans, respectively (Hill

Collins, 2000; Zinn et al, 1986). Similarly geographers studying work emphasized the

particularities of experience and representation of groups located at intersections of multiple

dimensions of marginality (McDowell et al, 2007; Mullings, 2005; Wright, 1997). These studies

have highlight the specific how particular groups of women, such as migrant women from

particular countries, are constructed as suitable or unsuitable for specific types of work by

employers and co-workers.

Studies of identity and work can also be furthered through a more complex understanding

of the multiple roles that individuals can play in reproducing and resisting hierarchies (Valentine,

2007). By challenging the classification of individuals into categories of oppressor and

oppressed, intersectionality theorists have argued for a more nuanced understanding of

experience. Since individuals are differently located in terms of privilege and oppression relative

to different identity categories, some groups such as white women, may participate in

maintaining racist social structures despite their marginalization in another arena. In addition, to

the degree that women are able to choose which identity they present, they may articulate one

identity category over another at different times. This can help explain why women may present

contradictory perspectives, as they chose to either highlight or hide different aspects of identity.

This particularly important when trying to decipher the positions of women in forest

communities, whose experiences and portrayals are often contradictory (Reed 2003a)

And last, insights from the lives of women who are located at different junctures of

identity categories can provide insights into not only women's work lives, but also of how racial

and gender relations are implicated within larger political and economic systems. For example,

Hill Collins (2000) argues that the lived experiences of African American women provides insights that are important to understanding the political economy of the US as it is shaped by interlocking systems of race, class and gender. Hill Collins drew upon African American women's experiences to highlight the importance of the inter-generational transfers of wealth to the maintenance of privilege and poverty along racial divides. Her analysis demonstrated how a history of slavery followed by policies and laws governing the family worked in consort with labour market discrimination to impoverish African American families. This suggests that the perspectives and insights of white and Aboriginal and women workers may provide us with a insights into how the operation diversity management as an aspect of corporate culture may rely on pre-existing structures of class, gender and white/Aboriginal inequality to achieve worker exploitation and control.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

My approach to data collection and analysis was influenced by phenomenology and grounded theory and later by critical discourse analysis. The first data set included 40 interviews conducted with women working in forest processing mills in a province in the northern prairies during the summer of 2003. There was little initial theoretical development since the aims of the project were broad (to better understand women's work experiences in forestry). Interviews were semi-structured and asked a range of questions about women's work lives to develop a comprehensive picture of each woman's perspectives and experiences of work. Interviews with women workers were solicited through both union and company channels using a combination of letters distributed with the paycheques, postings on bulletin boards, e-mail and word of mouth.

Initial rounds of coding revealed that women who worked in subsidiaries of the MNFC recounted common discourses of diversity and restructuring that were not discussed by women working in other forest companies in the region. I therefore restricted my analysis of practices of inclusion to a subset of 29 of the 40 women interviewed who worked across subsidiaries of the MNFC. Interviews included 19 labourers, four clerical workers, one technical worker, four professional workers and one manager who worked across two forestlands operations units, two sawmills, one plywood mill, one oriented strand board mill and one pulp and paper mill. All positions except for management and professional workers and one clerical unit were unionized. Of the hourly workers, 10 self-identified as having Aboriginal ancestry and 14 self-identified as having European or Canadian ancestry. These interviews represented 10% of the total female workforce of the MNFC's provincial operations. Interviews with Aboriginal women workers represented 25% of the total female Aboriginal workforce in the MNFC's operations in the province.

The predominant racial divide in the northern prairies is between people of European descent and Aboriginal peoples. In the northern prairies, the dominance of third and fourth generation settlers of European ancestry and the high population of Aboriginal peoples relative to other populations of colour have resulted in the marking of Aboriginal peoples as the dominant "Other" (Schick and St. Denis, 2005) The term white was therefore used to collectively describe the non-Aboriginal women interviewed, none of whom were people of colour and all of whom self identified as being of Canadian or European ancestry. The term white emphasizes how whiteness superseded ethnic differences among the non-Aboriginal women. The category Aboriginal included any woman who identified herself as having Cree, Métis and/or Dené ancestry whether or not she was a 'Status Indian' as defined by Canada's

Indian Act. These differences were seldom recognized by white interviewees, who, in accordance with this strong racial division in the northern prairies, ascribed the label Aboriginal based on visible traits rather than ancestry.

Intersectional approaches to research require that researchers balance the degree to which they accept categories of difference to highlight inequality with the degree to which they deconstruct existing categories of difference for their essentialism (McCall, 2005). Despite the problems associated with drawing lines among groups, I used social categories that represented lived identities as they were accepted and negotiated by the participants to contextualize the talk and representations of women. After initial thematic coding, differences between women who were unionized and non-unionized and between white and Aboriginal women were found to be important factors structuring their representations of corporate practices. These categories were then used to contextualize how individual women's representations were shaped by their locations within sets of oppression and privilege.

Particular text segments within each of these groups were examined using critical discourse analysis (CDA). Using CDA allowed me to overcome a second caveat of adopting an intersectional approach: the difficulty of analyzing the experiences of women as oppressed and as potential oppressors using the same methods. CDA offers two advantages when compared to how other methods deal with complexity. First, in CDA, talk is understood to both reflect and construct social experience, so it can be used to highlight experiences of oppression and its construction (Fairclough, 2003). Second, CDA interprets text only within the context in which it is spoken, so the position of the speaker relative to structures of privilege and oppression is taken into consideration when deciphering the meaning (Rogers et al, 2005). This theoretical lens

allowed me to take a critical stance in relation to the assumptions of the speakers, and to simultaneously examine acts of oppression and experiences of marginalization.

I followed Fairclough's (1992), method of CDA by examining the structure of the text itself; how the text produces or reproduces different discourses; and how the text functions as a social practice within an ideological framework. Following Fairclough's (2003) typology of textual meaning, my analysis focused on meanings related to representations of identity and to ideological representations of diversity management. In relation to identity I examined how women represented themselves as well as others in text. Because of the length and detail inherent in this form of analysis, it was not possible to present the full range of interpretations found within each thematic group. Instead, portions of talk from some women were selected to provide some examples of how women's subject positions may influence their representations of company practices to include Aboriginal people or non-Aboriginal women and how these were related to the women's situated positions related to structures of dominance of gender, race and class.

Interviews with three Human Resource (HR) managers (out of a total of five); documents from the government, unions, company and media; and interviews with three national and sub-national level union officials and one provincial government industry representative, were used to contextualize women's experiences and representations. Interviews with HR managers were approximately two hours in length and asked questions about the company's approach to industry change, worker management and the inclusion of workers from the four designated groups in Canada's Employment Equity Act.

WORKPLACE PRACTICES AND DIFFERENCE

As described by Human Resource managers, regional enactment of diversity management included strategies to recruit and retain women and Aboriginal men. Practices included targeted hiring, altering the work experience requirements, moving the location of recruiting and applicant testing to reserves to encourage First Nation applicants, and ensuring representation from marginalized groups in summer student positions. Diversity practices also included promoting flexible work arrangements, holding diversity and Aboriginal awareness sessions, promoting a heightened awareness of discrimination and harassment and targeting women and Aboriginal men for promotion. While targeted hiring and heightened awareness of discrimination and harassment were uniformly applied across all of the mills, some strategies, such as diversity and Aboriginal awareness trainings were only available to salaried or clerical workers. Flexible work arrangements were provided to professional and managerial women allowing them to work from home, and to shift their work hours. Women in managerial and professional occupations were also encouraged to apply for promotions.

The interviewed women's portrayals of these practices reflected their different subject positions. Results advance three ways that understanding women as situated within multiple axes of oppression, can help us to better understand diversity management. Women's talk about diversity management was structured by whether they were Aboriginal (A) or white (W) and whether they were unionized workers (including labourers (ul) and clerical workers (uc)) or salaried workers (including managers (nm), professional workers (np) and one non-unionised clerical worker (nc)). Salaried women often drew on individualistic discourses; white women who were unionized often drew on union discourse of sameness; and unionized Aboriginal women often spoke in response to being seen as token employees by co-workers and

management. Practices of Aboriginal inclusion helped to re-inscribe racial hierarchy and the

particular ways that corporate practices delineating difference, were unable to promote a genuine

inclusion of the women interviewed.

The contradictions of flexibility: salaried worker's perspectives

As women, white non-unionized women were the subject of practices aimed at including

women. Yet, relative to unionized workers, women working as managers and professional

workers had greater individual authority in the workplace and labour market resulting from their

occupational positions, their higher educational attainment and their employment histories.

White non-unionized women were, by definition, in individualized employment contracts and

often played a role in implementing diversity practices. Salaried women were also white,

indicative of Aboriginal women's under-representation in these occupations. These aspects of

privilege, located the managerial and professional women in positions of power relative to other

women workers. Yet, although salaried women endorsed the company's approach to inclusion,

in many cases these statements were contradicted by the women's actual experiences of work. In

particular, several women had difficulty reconciling the long hours of work required for

promotion with family obligations.

Feminist scholars have critiqued liberal approaches to inclusion, such as diversity

management for their failure to challenge the white male liberal subject (Walby, 1990). From

this perspective the image of gender and racial neutrality or even of assistance for marginalized

groups often masks norms and regimes that rely on unequal gender and racial relations. In some

cases, however, it may be advantageous for certain groups of women to support liberal

approaches despite the ways in which they disadvantage women as a whole (Sa'ar, 2005). Thus,

women may obtain material benefit from showing that they support and believe in particular

state or corporate strategies. Middle class women may also benefit from approaches that are

disadvantageous to other women, if they offer returns for education and skills that they possess.

The representations of several salaried women fit this conceptualization, simultaneously

interweaving gendered obstacles to advancement with individualistic discourses legitimizing

corporate approaches to inclusion. Their descriptions of both the challenges they face and the

company's approach to inclusion however rely on discourses that include notions of meritocracy,

individual choice, productivity, and corporate ethics.

When discussing corporate approaches to better include women, some women drew on

personal narratives of their experiences to support company rhetoric. Two diversity practices in

particular served to highlight the contradictions within managerial women's talk: the option of

flexibility, in terms of location and hours of work, and the targeting of opportunities for

promotion to women and Aboriginal people. Talk concerned with the company's practice of

offering flexible work practices reflected the notion of individualism and corporate ethics within

the diversity discourse [W/nm-21, W/np-27, W/nm-32, W/nm-35][2].

I: …what do you like about your job?

W/np-27…I like the principles and the values of the company that I work for. I

always said to myself, if working for [this company]… …if it ever came to the point

where my values, [were compromised]… …I don't think I could do it just for the

money… …And there is a lot of flexibility in my job… … I have a young family,

---

[2] Numbers and letters in brackets represent specific interview transcripts.

there is more recognition given to the women and men in our corporation that have

young families and if someone is sick and they're staying at home because their wife

has to work… …they're still in contact… ….people have laptops, people can phone

in if they're missing a meeting…

This manager's remark about the flexible work practices of the company was bracketed by

the assertion that the company had positive values. The woman referenced her personal

values using a number of conditional clauses, 'if working for…,' 'if it ever came to the point

where…,' to add emphasis. This technique of moralization supported her authority to judge

those of the company. She then classified the practice of offering flexible hours as an

example of company 'values.' The woman conferred further authority on her claim by

highlighting her identity as a mother of a young family. The way she presented her ability

to work from home, however, to the effect that special accommodations would not be made

only for women but also for men in a similar situation, reflected the underlying tenet of

liberal equality; the special circumstances of each individual would be taken into account,

and not the blanket needs of a minority group. Moreover, her description of how flexibility

operated within the firm emphasized a continuation of work, 'the use of laptops and

phones,' in such a way as to not hamper firm productivity. Thus difference was not linked

to a reduction in productivity, consistent with dominant diversity discourse. Accordingly,

all six of the non-unionized women positioned themselves as high producers who were

dedicated to the company. After describing her very heavy workload and many hours of

overtime one woman stated W/np-19 "…you want to do your job well, and you don't want

to be viewed as if, as if you're not pulling your own weight". Likewise, another woman

described how she didn't question the need to work over time W/nm-32 "…the company says we're supposed to be here from 8 til' 4:30 but we know what needs to be done and what needs to happen during that week… … and we just do it".

This theme of labour productivity was present in women's discussions about the promotion of women within the organization, which revealed some of the contradictions in the discourse of diversity management. When asked about whether she was seeking an internal promotion, one interviewee remarked:

W/nm-21: Not in the near future and that's a personal decision because of where my kids are...

Later, when asked if she faced different challenges or opportunities from men in her job she stated:

W/nm-21 Yes I have, I do, but I think they are in a positive way… … they are looking strongly to have women and Aboriginals in top leadership roles, and they're encouraging that and that's what, that's where I find some pressure, that I'm a woman in a management role and… …they want to see me move on into bigger roles and I've got to challenge that back and say that's not what I want right now…

In the context of the interview, the woman's statement 'that's not what I want right now,' paraphrased her earlier statement 'Not in the near future… …because of where my kids are.' The last excerpt, then, was demonstrative of the contradictions underlying the discourse of diversity that professes to encourage the promotion of women. Not applying for promotion was

described as 'a personal decision,' and as an act of resistance against the company through the statement 'I've got to challenge that back.' These semantic devices framed the woman's not moving to higher roles in the organization as an *individual* choice, and not as a barrier facing women as a group. These meanings relied on the assumption that promotions entail longer hours of work not manageable while raising children. And, despite the speaker's emphasis on the individual level, her reference to children when answering a question about the differences facing women, suggested an assumed understanding that as a *woman* with young children, she would not find it manageable.

As shown in the above excerpts, the company's drive to increase the diversity of upper management by promoting women, and its drive to compel workers to work long hours were in conflict. This tension reflected the tenets of liberal individualism that underlie diversity management, that so long as conditions are fair (on a formal level), individuals are able to compete in the market and they will be rewarded accordingly (Humphries & Grice, 1995). Despite this tension, salaried women tended to present challenges they faced as a choice, and the company as pro-flexibility and women. This discourse of individual choice enabled some women to manage the dissonance between their investment in representing corporate practices that support women and maximize individual effort favorably and their lived experiences of work-family balance difficulties.

Negotiating equality: white unionized perspectives

In contrast to white salaried women who couched corporate practices of inclusion in a language of individualism, unionized women often used a vocabulary of worker equality. In the

reflections of several women, 'same treatment' was presented as the removal of unequal

discriminatory practices towards women [W/ul-13, W/ul-25, W/ul-29, W/ul-33, W/ul-34, W/ul-5, W/ul-7]. One woman stated: W/ul-25 "…as far as I'm concerned the company has been very

fair to us and they have hired a lot of women..." to describe the company's targeted hiring of

women. Another woman, used the terminology of fairness when describing the company's

strong stance on harassment relative to other mills stating W/uc-12: "As far as harassment…

…they are really trained to be fair, so it's good that way, I really believe that. Um it's not perfect

but so much better than in so many other places." This use of a vocabulary of sameness and

equality to describe corporate practices denotes slippage of union discourses into white women

workers' talk about the company. The circulation of union discourse of equality and sameness

among white unionized women is demonstrated by their use of words such as equal, fair, and

same, to describe the union; this occurred a total of 30 times throughout their interviews (Table

2).

Collective representation was significant to several white unionized women's portrayals

of diversity practices. Having little authority over other workers, white unionized women were

not involved in the implementation of diversity management initiatives and were less aware of

company initiatives than salaried women (Table 2). Moreover, collective agreements required

union consent for the implementation of corporate strategies targeting promotion or any form of

work flexibility. White unionized women experienced the company approach to the inclusion of

women predominantly through hiring practices, the enforcement of discrimination and

harassment policy by management, and the occasional participation in a diversity course (Table

2). Women's representations of these practices were on the whole favourable. However, in

scenarios when the initiatives for inclusion required a change in the collective agreement and

were in conflict with the union, white unionized women adopted more strategic perspectives.

These presentations exemplify the limitations of the individualized approach to inclusion [W/ul-

5, W/uc-12, W/ul-13, W/ul-22].

White union women felt that they were protected and represented by the union, as

evidenced by many women's narratives of the union providing them with protection from unfair

treatment by management and with equal opportunities for promotion [W/ul-5, W/uc-12, W/ul-

17, W/ul-13, W/ul-38, W/ul-22, W/ul-33]. One woman emphasized the union's protection

against discrimination against any worker, regardless of sex stating: W/ul-7"…So your

foreman… …don't happen to like you and if you didn't have a union, how long do you think you

would last? Whether it would be a girl or a guy." The notion that all workers are treated equally

is based as an underlying tenet of union culture that is based on the need for a collective stance

when facing the employer (Martin, 1995). The notion that workers have much greater power

when they stand together, has entrenched worker equality as a key aim of collective agreements,

and worker unity as a key discourse among unionists. This culture of collectivity has not only

been leveraged by white male forest workers to promote the empowerment of workers vis à vis

the employer, however. It has also used to separate white male workers from women and

Aboriginal people (Dunk, 1994).

Rather than resist this vocabulary however, white unionized women leveraged it in

defense of class interest, worker empowerment, and the inclusion of women. The later, was

demonstrated particularly well by some women's narratives of incidents where the union

opposed practices that would be beneficial for women. One woman described an attempt by the

company to introduce targeted apprenticeship positions to diversity groups, showing her

disappointment in the union:

W/ul-6: …the company had offered seven positions plus two if the two other ones came from the diverse group … …However it was voted down on the membership floor to have these extra two positions specifically because of seniority… …[it was] a very sad thing.

In response I asked her if this decision was because of objection to the possibility of apprenticeships going to people with less seniority. The interviewee agreed adding that:

…[the targeted positions], those would have been awarded on seniority of those identified groups but because those groups have been in the work place for so fewer years than the general white male population, they in total have less seniority… …it would have meant (pause) that was the bottom line to me was two more jobs…

In her description of the scenario, the women positioned herself in solidarity with the union throughout her talk, using the term 'us' to describe the union. She communicated disappointment not only for the outcome of the vote, but also for the reasoning behind the decision. Though the speaker described the union's 'no' vote as resulting from a refusal to allocate apprenticeships to workers of lower seniority, her position was that the union had not understood her line of reasoning: that the creation of two positions was an advance for workers in the context of a workforce that was being downsized. The firm had previously announced layoffs of 200 people. Her regret at the vote's outcome was thus not presented as a defeat for the rights of women and Aboriginal people, but rather as a defeat for workers. By stating 'the bottom line to me was two more jobs,' she emphasized the importance of the apprenticeships in

terms of job creation, rather than as something that would only target groups. This worker-based argument was presented when she approached the union, despite her own description of how women and Aboriginal workers were systematically disadvantaged from moving into apprenticeship positions in her interview. Although seniority guards against employer discrimination in promotion by ensuring same treatment of all workers, the same treatment of all workers in traditionally male white dominated workplaces may have unequal effects for women and minorities who are relatively recent entrants into workplaces. Systemic discrimination results when, regardless of intent, a policy or practice results in unequal representation of groups among jobs (Agocs, 2002). Women's collective lower than average seniority often results in a variety of forms of disadvantage, such as women's increased incidence of job loss in the face of downsizing (Fonow, 2003).

In another account, a woman described her conflicted position towards requests that women with small children had made to work part time. Although the firm was supportive of the requests, the union local stood firmly opposed.

W/ul-38: …I know of some girls, especially the ones coming back from mat [maternity] leaves, you know, they would love to work part time. Personally I tell them you know, this union has fought long and hard to have us all hired full time and that's not something that's not something they're going to like… …not for us few women. That's hard, it's for the benefit of the whole, for the majority but it does make it hard for the ones that are just having babies now.

This woman responded to a question about the firm by recounting barriers faced by the union. This reflected the degree to which the union mediated unionized women's experiences. The way that the women's positioned herself in her talk was inconsistent; shifting back and forth between locating herself with all workers 'to have us all hired full time' and with women workers 'not for us few women'. She defended the union stating that it was 'for the benefit of the whole.' While the woman was sympathetic to the issues of women with substantial family obligations, she spoke through an ideology that valued collectivity; that the interests of the individual should be forgone for those of the group.

These examples highlight the importance of understanding how employer practices to include marginalized workers relate to collective employment relationships. Having little labour market power to obtain higher wages owing to their lower education attainment than salaried women, white unionized women valued the collective power resulting from their solidarity with other workers. Though there were situations where union locals opposed changes that would benefit women workers, in many other scenarios, white women were able to obtain protection and benefits from union representation. White women's experiences were structured not only by gender relations, but also by their positions as workers and by their whiteness.

White women re-inscribing racism

Salaried and unionized white women were not only targets of diversity management. As part of the white majority within the workplace, their talk about corporate practices to include Aboriginal people helped to structure the experiences of Aboriginal workers. Though the MNFC's diversity strategy aimed to change the culture of the company to foster a climate

conducive to hiring and retention of Aboriginal peoples and women, in effect, it often helped to re-inscribe racism amongst workers. Education and training about Aboriginal peoples was unevenly applied across occupational categories and workplaces. Moreover, Aboriginal awareness training emphasized cultural difference and not white racism. Diversity training videos that were shown to some groups of workers were designed in the United States and hence addressed issues regarding the inclusion of African American and Hispanic workers and not Aboriginal workers. Corporate practices to include Aboriginal workers became an object that was used by some white women to re-inscribe racist conceptualizations.

Although the theoretical underpinnings of corporate diversity management are founded on the belief that cultural difference is equated with higher firm productivity, white women's representations of the inclusion of Aboriginal peoples reflected understandings that Aboriginal people were under-producers. Aboriginal people have historically faced discrimination and backlash in employment related to characterizations that they are deficient, that they are a problem to be fixed, and that they are outside of the working class (Dunk 1994; Guard, 2004; High, 1996). These discourses are particularly strong in the Prairie Provinces because of the relative absence of other visible minorities (Schick and St. Denis, 2005). While both unionized and salaried women drew on similar conceptualizations unionized women employed a vocabulary of inequality and preferential treatment while salaried women drew on constructions of the company as innocent and benevolent.

Although white unionized women used a vocabulary of similarity to promote the inclusion of women, this vocabulary was also used by some white unionized women to portray the inclusion of Aboriginal workers as unequal. The meaning of sameness and equality was therefore context specific and leveraged for particular purposes. Not all white unionized women

described the inclusion of Aboriginal people as unequal; some women described the targeted hiring of Aboriginal people as fair [W/ul-1, W/ul-5, W/ul-7, W/ul-33]. Since these representations resembled this group's descriptions of the inclusion of women I concentrate on the talk of white unionized women that used a vocabulary of equality to portray Aboriginal inclusion as unfair [W/uc-12, W/ul-25, W/ul-17, W/ul-22, W/uc-39]:

> W/ul-25: …as far as I know they supported the fact that (pause) in fact I think that they even went out of their way… … to put postings up on the reserve that there was a hiring going on so I thought that was quite fair because they didn't go into every other community to do that… …you know they definitely had their opportunity to put in for jobs.

> I: And was that successful do you think?

> W/ul-25: Well we have one person that I know of that is off the reserve that travels to the reserve, that's working…

A sense of trepidation to talk about Aboriginal inclusion was indicated in the text by the placement of the clause 'as far as I know,' and by the use of 'I *think* it was,' which lessened the speaker's commitment to her description. While the speaker used the word 'fair' to describe diversity practices, its meaning was contradicted by the phrases 'went out of their way,' and 'they didn't go to every other community to do that.' When taken as a whole, the text portrays Aboriginal people as the recipients of special treatment from the company. In combination with the tone of trepidation, this ambiguity might signal an attempt by the speaker to not appear racist

since, "…in any discourse about minorities, white speech participants are aware of the norms of nondiscrimination and conscious of the fact that they should present themselves as tolerant citizens"(van Dijk 1993; 145). The speaker may have used the word fair to moderate her thoughts that Aboriginal people were getting underserved preferential treatment. The statement that Aboriginal people had 'had their opportunity,' attributed blame for the low representation of Aboriginal people in the workplace to Aboriginal people and not the company. This sentiment was echoed by another woman who stated W/uc-12 "They're trying", in reference to the company's attempts to include Aboriginal people. Both text segments implied that the inclusion of Aboriginal people in the workplace is difficult and perhaps impossible.

A more direct use of the discourse of sameness was employed to oppose any diversity practice that was seen to treat Aboriginal people *differently* from other workers [W/ul-17, W/ul-22, W/uc-39]. This narrow use of the notion of sameness was presented in response to a question about whether Aboriginal people may face different challenges getting a job at the mill relative to white workers:

> W/ul-22: …Actually [Aboriginal people get] better [opportunities] because they want to hire minority groups because the pressure is on them to make sure that their work site has, and I know around when I got hired… …they hired lots and lots of women, and I think it actually affected their workplace, because there's women out there that cannot do the job to the same skill level that some of the men can do because some of it is physical and if you have a shift full of women, well who's going to do the grunt work?... ...and they've had special hiring just for Métis and Aboriginals, so.

While the question asked about Aboriginal people, the woman's response argued against the differential hiring of women, a position that she, as a woman, felt she could take without appearing sexist. The speaker, using gender as a surrogate for Aboriginal identity, argued that the company should not engage in preferential hiring for Aboriginal people. She argued that: 1. the company has hired a lot of women; 2. women have on average a lower physical skill level than men; and 3. that the workplace has suffered as a result. The connection between these propositions and the hiring of Aboriginal peoples was left unfinished that 'now there has been a special hiring for Métis and Aboriginals.' The implied completion of the argument relied once again on the circulation of discourses that Aboriginal people had inherent characteristics, like women, that would make them inferior workers. The discrepancy between white unionized women's talk about the company's efforts to include women and to include Aboriginal people highlights the political fluidity of the concepts of sameness and difference.

Racialized norms were also re-inscribed through the talk of salaried women. Salaried women identified with the corporation in their talk about the inclusion of Aboriginal workers. This presentation was accompanied by paternalist depictions of a company that is providing assistance to Aboriginal people. Responses were consistent with diversity discourse in that they used a language of including difference rather than of removing inequity, yet they were different in that Aboriginal cultural difference was represented as something to be accommodated and not as beneficial to firm productivity. This contrasts salaried women's characterizations of the inclusion of women in the workplace as compatible with firm productivity goals. Since the corporation was presented as racially neutral, any changes to policy or practice were understood as helping Aboriginal peoples.

Talk of practices pertaining to Aboriginal people often demonstrated a belief that the company's efforts to hire Aboriginal people were rooted in benevolence [W/np-27, W/nm-32, W/nc-23, W/np-19]. A white woman manager described her understanding of the relationship between the company and Aboriginal people as follows:

> W/nm-35…we work hard to try and incorporate Aboriginals into the workforce and give them opportunities and deal with their things that are of traditional value, like you know the berry picking, the gathering, the hunting and stuff…

The speaker positioned herself as a representative of the firm 'we', and in a position of power relative to 'Aboriginals.' The relationship between the company and Aboriginal people was presented as one where the company 'give[s] them opportunities,' insinuating that the relationship was unequal and not as mutually beneficial as suggested by diversity discourse. The presentation of traditional harvesting activities as 'things' that need to be 'dealt with,' had the connotation that Aboriginal culture was a barrier to the company's goals and that these needed to be overcome in order to have successful production. Aboriginal people were characterized as different because of their nature based activities (berry picking, hunting). The presentation of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal activities as associated with nature and not reconcilable with industrial production draws on discourses that position Aboriginal culture and industrial production as a contradiction. According to Peters (1996), white settler's early representations of authentic Aboriginal culture involved distancing Aboriginal culture from urban spaces using both space and time. Aboriginal people came to be considered 'in place' in natural spaces away

from industrial areas and 'out of place' in urban areas where Aboriginal difference was translated into racism.

Other women also emphasized the company's (and hence their own) benevolence towards Aboriginal people, using phrases such as W/nc-23 "we do like to give them the opportunity to come on board." When describing the allocation of logging and tree planting contracts one woman stated W/np-19 " …[company name] went [sic.] to some pretty lengthy extents to in order, like even to the extent of helping them set up their business, helping them manage finances …". By talking about the company's efforts as 'pretty lengthy extents,' and using the word 'even,' to induce the hearer to see the company's 'helping' set up a business and manage finances, as beyond the expectations of what the normal activities of a company are, the women represented the company's assistance of Aboriginal contractors as exceptional.

These portrayals, construct a frame of Aboriginal inferiority and dependence. Corporate practices of inclusion, then, became a tool employed by white salaried women, to provide testimony to the company's benevolence, and to their own positions as workers who, since they were acting on behalf of the company, were also innocent and benevolent. In the face of evidence that Aboriginal people were not being successfully incorporated into the workforce, women needed to construct alternate explanations that did not disrupt this portrayal of the company.

Perspectives of Aboriginal women

Understanding the oppression faced by Aboriginal women is not the case of understanding how patriarchy operates within Aboriginal communities but rather how the

oppression faced by Aboriginal women is the result of the intersection of colonialism and patriarchy (Monture-Angus, 1999; Peters, 1998). Consequently, Aboriginal women's experiences of labour markets and employment are structured by specific forms of negative stereotyping and structural racism, and by the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples from their territories. Aboriginal women's experiences and representations of company diversity practices highlighted how their experiences were shaped by backlash from white workers to the inclusion of Aboriginal workers, and by the company's tokenized approach to the inclusion of Aboriginal difference. Aboriginal women represented corporate practices of inclusion as superficial and not involving genuine changes to the company's power structure or philosophy. Aboriginal women were under-representation in all areas of the firm, and reported higher incidence of discrimination and harassment than white women. (Table 1; Table 2). Since the source of discrimination or harassment is often unclear, reporting included all discrimination and harassment regardless of whether the woman identified it as gender or racially based. This higher incidence of non-specified discrimination and harassment corresponds with studies on tokenism that have demonstrated that socially disadvantaged groups who form visibly identifiable minorities in the workplace often experience social isolation, increased stress, increased reporting of discrimination and harassment and a higher pressure to perform (Yoder and Berendsen, 2001).

Aboriginal women's talk about diversity practices in response to questions about the inclusion of women was markedly negligible. In contrast to her comments on the inclusion of Aboriginal workers, one woman's statement that A/ul-37 "…there is no favouritism there when it comes to man and woman hey?" suggested that she felt that Aboriginality was linked to inequality to a greater degree than gender. This absence of reading of situations through a

gender lens may indicate that Aboriginal women saw questions pertaining to the inclusion of women as synonymous with the essentialism of white feminism (Monture-Angus 1999). Yet, gender was not entirely absent from the talk of Aboriginal women. Rather the entirety of respondent's experiences as Aboriginal women workers were reflected in responses to questions about Aboriginal inclusion. For example, some Aboriginal women mentioned their gender as a feature that amplified their status as a token employee and that may have improved their chance of being hired [A/uc-8, A/ul-14, A/ul-23, A/ul-27, A/ul-35]. And, when describing a specific experience of discrimination, one woman stated A/ul-10 "But I still don't know to this day what that was all about. Whether it was because I was a woman, because I was Native, you know."

In response to questions about practices to include Aboriginal people, some Aboriginal women described experiences of dealing with co-worker backlash against diversity initiatives [A/ul-10, A/ul-40].

A/ul-10: Well when Aboriginal people come in there, the comment from… …the ones that flap their lips and its like, "oh they're only here because they're Indian, they're Aboriginal, they're not qualified." You know, you still have to prove yourself hey? But that takes a long times sometimes…

The woman contextualized backlash to the hiring of Aboriginal people by quoting the speech of a, presumably white, co-worker. Her portrayal of a common discourse, that Aboriginal workers were 'not qualified,' and were the recipients of unfair advantaged in company hiring, resembled the discourses about Aboriginal people communicated in interviews with white women. This excerpt was followed by sentences that aimed to communicate the impact that this type of discourse had on Aboriginal workers: who in order to compensate for the construction of

Aboriginal workers as "lazy" feel the need to work harder to be accepted by white workers. The first of these sentences was phrased as a question, using collective forms of the words 'you' and 'yourself,' to both engage and invite the white listener to empathize with the Aboriginal experience. Inclusionary practices and policies can have negative personal repercussions for individuals from target groups who become marked as different and as a result may be associated with perceived disadvantage and deficiency (Khayat, 1994). The sense of not being treated the same as other workers by their co-workers transpired to discussion of their unions. Aboriginal women did not as feel represented or protected by their unions as white women. In response to my question: "Does being unionized affect working conditions for you?" six women responded with paraphrases to the avail of A/ul-14 "…I don't think our union does much for us" [A/ul-4, A/ul-17, A/ul-36, A/ul-37, A/ul-40]. This sentiment was also reflected in the relative absence of the discourse of union equality and sameness in the interviews with Aboriginal women (Table 2). Although Aboriginal women's talk reflected a sense of collectivity with other Aboriginal workers, this did not extend to union feelings of solidarity.

When representing the firm's approach to Aboriginal inclusion, many Aboriginal women framed the inclusion of difference as desirable, but criticized the firm's approach to inclusion of difference as superficial. One woman complained that she felt that she was always used as a 'token' Aboriginal worker at career fairs [A/ul10], and four others stated that they felt that the company's pro-Aboriginal and family friendly policies had not materialized into tangible changes [A/ul-4, A/ul-26, A/ul-37]. In response to a more open ended question about how the firm might support cultural values in the workplace, the interviewee had the following to say:

A/ul-37: There were no culture values there. Nothing. Just the hiring the

Aboriginals just to make it look good

This woman's authoritative denial of the presence of Aboriginal culture in the workplace was

followed by a strong assertion that under the rhetoric of Aboriginal inclusion the company did

'just the hiring' for purposes that were unrelated to true values or ethics, 'to make it look good.'

The strong tone of her statements indicated that she had unmet expectations rooted in corporate

discourses related to Aboriginal inclusion.

This comment depicted the company's incorporation of Aboriginal people as routed in

public relations aims and not in a genuine desire to empower Aboriginal people through

promotion; through the incorporation of Aboriginal culture; or by giving Aboriginal people a

voice in shaping strategies designed for their inclusion [A/ul-4, A/ul-10, A/ul-14, A/ul-24,

A/ul-26, A/ul-37]. This feeling of Aboriginal people not having positions of power in the

company was communicated by one woman who reframed a question about how the

company might support Aboriginal cultural values in the workplace to structural concerns:

A/ul-24: …if they did have, like someone who was Aboriginal working in

management because I know of people that belong to some of the, like the First

Nations and that and who have applied out there but have never been accepted even

for a simple secretary job.

Although this woman was concerned about hiring and promotion, her primary concern was not

with her own rank within the company, but with the attainment of power by Aboriginal people as

a whole within the firm. She linked a desire to have greater Aboriginal representation at higher

levels in the company to increased hiring of Aboriginal workers. This positioned greater

Aboriginal voice in the workplace to the collective empowerment of Aboriginal people within

the mill. The content of the woman's talk, that First Nations people not being promoted or hired

at the mill, reflected a general sentiment that diversity management practices were more about

rhetoric than about material change that neither challenged the racial stereotypes of their co-

workers nor the material disempowerment of Aboriginal people.

CONCLUSION: REVISITING DIVERSITY

Responses demonstrate how spatially embedded gender, occupational and identities were

constituent of the implementation and legitimization/ delegitimization of diversity management.

Diversity management strategies were dependent on women's ascribed identities as white or

Aboriginal and unionized or non-unionized.   Practices to include and promote Aboriginal people

were leveraged by some white women to re-inscribe racialised hierarchy in the workplace. Since

diversity practices were often used to demonstrate the company's benevolence towards

Aboriginal people in cases where they were ineffective they supported discourses of Aboriginal

deficiency.   By re-positioning white women in forestry to the location of oppressor this research

challenges previous research on women in forestry that casts women as victims in the forestry

workplace (see for example: Brandth & Haugen 2000; Reed 2003b). Despite an air of social

progressiveness, the firm's diversity management practices had a limited ability to successfully

incorporate, retain and promote white and Aboriginal women in the firm. Approaches to

inclusion underwritten by productivity and implement through individualist human resource

management are not able to include of forms of difference that rely on collective rather than

individual remedies such as pan-Aboriginal nationhood, collective worker organization, or programs supporting social reproduction.

Women's representations demonstrated that worker control is necessary to address inequality based on gender and Aboriginality in addition to class. Contradictions in several white non-unionized women's representations of company practices demonstrated that targeted promotion and formal equality in the workplace were not sufficient for equal representation. The recruitment of workers who would make the company W/np-27 "the best forest company in the world" was based on whether workers would W/np-27 "take initiative, be ambitious, to do really good work." This ideal worker subject was based on a male norm in that did not account for time spent on social reproduction. The portrayals of Aboriginal women, who were doubly targeted by the firm's practices, reflected their experiences of heightened racism and their disappointment in the firm's efforts to empower Aboriginal workers. Aboriginal women's emphasis that Aboriginal people needed more control in the workplace alludes to Aboriginal people's rights to be full participation in forest employment stemming from their rights to resources. By extracting the question of difference from its foundation in broader patterns of oppression, diversity management overlooked the totality of women's different experiences necessary to promoting their true inclusion in the workplace.

LITERATURE CITED

Abu-Laban Y, Gabriel C, 2002 *Selling diversity: immigration, multiculturalism, employment*
        equity, and globalization. (Broadview Press, Peterborough)

Agocs C, 2002 "Canada's employment equity legislation and policy, 1987-2000: the gap between policy and practice. *International Journal of Manpower* **23**(3) 256 - 276

Agocs C, Burr C, 1996 "Employment equity, affirmative action and managing diversity: assessing the differences." *International Journal of Manpower* **17**(4/5) 30 - 45

Brandth B, Haugen M S, 2000 "From lumberjack to business manager: masculinity in the Norwegian forestry press." *Journal of Rural Studies* **16** 343 - 355

Cavanaugh M, 1997 "(In)corporating the other? Managing the politics of workplace difference", in *Managing the organizational melting pot: dilemmas of workplace diversity* P Prasad, A J Mills, A. Prasad (SAGE Publications Inc, Thousand Oaks) pp 31 - 53

Dei G S, 2005 "The intersections of race, class, and gender in the anti-racism discourse", in *Inequality in Canada: a reader in the intersections of gender, race, and class* V Zawilski, C Levine-Rasky (Oxford University Press, Don Mills) pp 17-35.

D'Netto B, Sohal A S, 1999 "Human resource practices and workforce diversity: an empirical assessment." *International Journal of Manpower* **20**(8) 530 - 547

Dunk T W, 1994 *It's a working man's town: male working-class culture*. (McGill-Queens University Press, Montreal & Kingston)

Ettlinger N, 2001 "A relational perspective in economic geography: connecting competitiveness with diversity and difference." *Anitpode* **33** 216-227.

Fairclough N, 1992 *Discourse and social change*. (Polity Press, Cambridge)

Fairclough N, 2003 *Analyzing discourse: textual analysis for social research* (Routledge, New York)

Fonow M M, 2003 *Union women: forging feminism in the United Steelworkers of America* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis)

Guard J, 2004 "Authenticity on the line: women workers, native "scabs," and the multi-ethnic politics of identity in a left-led strike in cold war Canada." *Journal of Women's History* **15**(4) 117 - 140

Hayter R, Barnes T, 1992 "Labour market segmentation, flexibility, and recession: a British Columbian case study." *Environment and Planning C: Goverment and Policy* **10**: 333 - 353

Hayter R, Barnes T. 1997 "The restructuring of British Columbia's coastal forest sector." *BC Studies* 113: 7-37.

Hayter R, 2000 *Flexible crossroads: the restructuring of British Columbia's forest economy* (UBC Press, Vancouver)

High S, 1996 "Native wage labour and independent production during the 'era of irrelevance.'" *Labour - Le Travail* **37** 243 - 264.

Hill Collins P., 2000. "Gender, Balck feminism and Black political economy." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* **568** 41 - 53

Humphries M, Grice, S. 1995 "Equal employment opportunity and the management of diversity", *Journal of Organizational Change Management* **8**(5) 17 - 32

Khayatt D, 1994 "The boundaries of identity at the intersection of race, class and gender." *Canadian Woman Studies* **14**(2) 6 - 12

Lawrence, B. 2003 "Gender, race, and the regulation of native identity in Canada and the United States: an overview" *Hypatia* **18**(2) 3 - 31

Liff S, Wajcman J, 1996 "'Sameness' and 'difference' revisited: which way forward for equal opportunity initiatives" *Journal of Management Studies* **33**(1) 79 - 94

Martin D, 1995 *Thinking union: activism and education in Canada's labour movement.* (Between the lines, Toronto)

McCall L, 2005 "The complexity of intersectinality" *Signs* **30**(3) 1771 – 1800

McDowell L, 2008 Thinking through work: complex inequalities, constructions of difference and trans-national migrants. *Progress in Human Geography* **32**(4) 491 - 507

McDowell L, Batnitzky A, Dyer S, 2007 "Division, segmentation, and interpellation: the embodied labors of migrant workers in a greater London hotel." *Economic Geography* **83**(1) 1 - 25

Monture-Angus P A, 1999 *Journeying forward: dreaming First Nations' independence* (Fernwood Publishing, Halifax)

Mullings B, 2005 "Women Rule? Globalization and the feminization of managerial and professional workspaces in the Caribbean." *Gender, Place & Culture* **12**(1) 1 - 27

Pennier H, 2006 *"Call Me Hank": A Stó:lõ Man's Reflection on Living, Logging, and Growing Old" Scholarly 2nd edition of Chiefly Indian: The Warm and Witty Story of a British Columbia Half Breed Logger*. (University of Toronto Press, Toronto)

Peters E, 1996 "'Urban' and 'Aboriginal': an impossible contradiction?'", in *City Lives & City Forms: Critical Research & Canadian Urbanism* Eds J Caulfield, L. Peak (University of Toronto Press, Toronto) pp 47 - 62

Peters E, 1998 "Subversive spaces: First Nations women and the city." *Environment and Planning D* **16** 665 - 685

Reed M, 2003a *Taking Stands: Gender and the Sustainability of Rural Communities* (UBC Press, Vancouver)

Reed M, 2003b "Marginality and gender at work in forestry communities of British Columbia, Canada" *Journal of Rural Studies* **19** 373 - 389

Rogers R, Malancharuvil-Berkes E, Mosley M, Hui D, O'Garro J G, 2005 "Critical discourse analysis in education: a review of the literature." *Review of Educational Research* **75**(3): 365 - 416

Sa'ar A, 2005. "Postcolonial feminism, the politics fo identification and the liberal bargain." *Gender and Society* **19**(5) 680 - 700

Schick C, St. Denis V, 2005 "Troubling national discourses in anti-racist curricular planning." *Canadian Journal of Education* **28**(3) 295 - 317

Scott J W, 1994 "Deconstructing equality-versus-difference: or, the uses of poststructuralist theory for feminism", in *The postmodern turn: new perspectives on social theory* Ed S Seidman. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge) pp 282 – 298)

Teskey A G, Smyth J H, 1975 *Saskatchewan's forest industry and its economic importance. Information Report NOR-X140.* (Northern Forest Research Centre, Canadian Forest Service and Environment Canada, Edmonton)

Tough F J 1996 *As their natural resources fail: native peoples and the economic history of northern Manitoba, 1870-1930.* Vancouver, UBC Press.

Valentine G, 2007 "Theorizing and researching intersectionality: a challenge for feminist geography", *The Professional Geographer* **59**(1) 10 - 21

van Dijk T A, 1993 *Elite discourse and racism.* (Sage Publications Inc., Newbury Park)

Walby S, 1990 *Theorizing patriarchy* (Blackwell, Boston)

Wright M W, 1997 "Crossing the Factory Frontier: Gender, Place and Power in the Mexican Maquiladora". *Antipode* **29**(3) 278 - 302

Yoder J D, Berendsen, L L, 2001 ""Outsider within" the firehouse: African American and white women firefighters." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* **25**: 27 - 36

Zinn, M B, Weber Cannon L, Higginbotham E, Thornton Dill B, 1986 "The costs of exclusionary practices in women's studies." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* **11**(2) 290 - 303

Table 1: Occupational distribution of female and Aboriginal employees in MNFC regional subsidiaries, 2003.

Occupational groups	Total Employees			Aboriginal Employees			
	Total	Female		Total Aboriginal		Female	
	No	No	%[1]	No	%	No	%
Hourly Operations	968	160	16.5%	158	16.3%	31	3.2%
Hourly Trades	351	1	0.3%	23	6.6%	0	0.0%
Sales/Service	18	6	33.3%	2	11.1%	0	0.0%
Admin/Clerical	68	64	94.1%	7	10.3%	7	10.3%
Supervisor	100	5	5.0%	8	8.0%	1	1.0%
Semi Professional	24	5	20.8%	1	4.2%	0	0.0%
Professional	78	19	24.4%	4	5.1%	1	1.3%
Managers	51	4	7.8%	1	2.0%	1	2.0%
Total	1658	264	15.9%	204	12.3%	41	2.5%
Management employees							
Senior Managers	5	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Middle Managers	46	4	8.7%	1	2.2%	1	2.2%

[1] Percent of total workforce in a given occupational group.

.

Table 2. Women's reference to particular diversity practices, discourse of union sameness and experiences of discrimination or harassment.

	Total Non-union		White Union		Aboriginal Union		All women	
	no = 6		no = 13		No = 10		no = 29	
	I[1]	%[2]	I	%	I	%	I	%
I. Knowledge of particular practices pertaining to diversity								
1. Hiring quotas and targets	20	(100)	24	(85)	12	(70)	55	(79)
2. Hiring process changes	2	(33)	4	(31)	3	(30)	8	(28)
3. Diversity training	3	(50)	5	(23)	2	(20)	10	(28)
4. Aboriginal awareness training	7	(83)	1	(8)	3	(20)	11	(28)
5. Promotion for women and Aboriginal workers.	5	(50)	3	(23)	2	(20)	10	(28)
6. Union women course	1	(17)	8	(46)	2	(20)	10	(28)
II. Reference to discourse of union sameness[3]	3	(33)	30	(92)	5	(30)	37	(55)
III. Experiences of Discrimination or harassment*								
None	11	(50)	15	(85)	7	(30)	32	(45)
Yes, from management	2	(33)	1	(8)	3	(30)	5	(17)
Yes, from co-workers	1	(17)	6	(38)	6	(60)	13	(41)

*Categories are not exclusive since some women experienced discrimination or harassment from both management and co-workers.

[1] I= the total no. of discrete incidences of talk, (word, phrase or sentence)

[2] the percent of women with 1 who had one or more incidents of talk throughout their interview that paraphrased text segments in I, II, or III.

[3] Incidents where women paraphrased 'the union treats everyone the same."