

PROMOTING CHANGE IN 'TWO-TIERED' DEPARTMENTS

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Operational definition of 'two-tiered' governance system



- Faculty divided between those teaching (mostly) language and those teaching (mostly) literature;
- Unequal access to the tenure track depending on specialization;
- Unequal voting rights;
- Unequal chance of assuming leadership positions (e.g. DUS, DUG, section or department Head).

Conflictual organizations

- Systematically differentiated into subunits (especially if only two);
- Hierarchically divided by virtue of specialization into 'line' (core, have decision-making power, define the mission of the organization) and 'staff' (secondary, in support of 'line', have limited decision-making power, contribute only indirectly to the mission of the organization);
- Subunits work towards a common goal, but they are sequentially interdependent: one subunit's output is conceptualized as the other subunit's input;
- Dependence of scarce resources: subunits compete for resources and power, and one or more subunits become dominant.

(Rahim, 2011)

Findings supported by other research on ingroup/outgroup dynamics (e.g. Brewer, 1999).

The 'two-tiered' system

"This configuration defines both the curriculum and the governance structure of [departments], and creates a division between the language curriculum and the literature curriculum and between tenure-track literature professors and language instructors in non-tenure-track positions. At doctorate-granting institutions, cooperation or even exchange between the two groups is usually minimal or nonexistent. Foreign language instructors often work entirely outside departmental power structures and have little or no say in the educational mission of their department, even in areas where they have particular expertise" (MLA report, 2007, my emphasis)

- "The two-tiered configuration has outlived its usefulness and needs to evolve" (MLA report, 2007).
- "Noting that there are inequities in the academic system between tenure track and non-tenure track is more than obvious" (Bernhardt, 2010:1, my emphasis).

DISEMPOWERMENT

Evaluation questions

- ❑ How much conflict do faculty in FLL departments experience? (Variables: intrapersonal, intragroup, intergroup conflict);
- ❑ How empowered are the faculty who work in FLL departments? (Variables: perceived control, perceived competence, goal internalization);
- ❑ Which variables among the following may affect conflict and empowerment levels? (specialization, contractual position, types of courses taught, subjective perception of having job security).

Instruments, inclusion criteria, data collection

- Preliminary focus group with small group of LPDs;
- Earlier questionnaire pilot tested (n=34) on a convenience sample;
- Final version included four parts: Biographic and departmental information, ROCI-I (Rahim, 1983), Menon's Scale of Psychological Empowerment (Menon, 2001), exploratory section on ingroup/outgroup dynamics;
- Department sample was randomized from list of public and private research universities of the National Center for Education Statistics, US Department of Education: 100 departments were selected (50 public, 50 private). Maximum 15 faculty per department, tried to equally represent language and literature faculty if info available on website;
- List of faculty further randomized, and first 600 names were contacted.

Respondents' characteristics

Table 7-2 Respondents' Characteristics

Sex	Highest degree		Type of University		
Male	38.95% (<i>n</i> = 67)	Literary studies	52.91% (<i>n</i> = 91)	Private	61.05% (<i>n</i> = 105)
Female	61.05% (<i>n</i> = 105)	SLS	47.09% (<i>n</i> = 81)	Public	38.95% (<i>n</i> = 67)

Table 7-3 Breakdown of Two Disciplinary Groups by Contractual Position

Contractual position	Degree in SLS	Degree in literature
Tenured	15.12% (<i>n</i> = 26)	30.23% (<i>n</i> = 52)
Tenure track	10.47% (<i>n</i> = 18)	9.30% (<i>n</i> = 16)
Multiyear	13.37% (<i>n</i> = 23)	5.81% (<i>n</i> = 10)
One-year	8.14% (<i>n</i> = 14)	7.56% (<i>n</i> = 13)

1. 172 participants
2. Almost two-thirds claimed to be working in moderately to heavily 'two-tiered' depts. (at least two of the four conditions met)

Data analysis: Conflict

Comparison with national average (Rahim, 2004) for professionals working in the United States

	Interpersonal conflict	Intragroup conflict	Intergroup conflict
National <i>n</i> = 1188	M= 2.35 SD=.75	M=2.31 SD=.61	M = 2.21 SD =.68
This study <i>n</i> = 172	SLS M= 2.51 SD=.80 Lit M= 2.29 SD=.58	SLS M=2.54 SD=.80 Lit M=2.62 SD=.88	SLS M=2.81 SD=.89 Lit M=2.35 SD=.90

Table 7-7 Descriptive Statistics (Standard Deviation in Parentheses)

	Highest degree			Type of courses taught			Type of contract			Tenure-track status		Perceived job security	
	Lit. N = 91	SLS N = 81	Lang. N = 99	Lit. N = 49	Both N = 24	One- year N = 27	+Year N = 33	Tenure track N = 34	Tenured N = 78	No N = 60	Yes N = 112	No N = 41	Yes N = 131
Intrapersonal conflict	2.29 (0.58)	2.50 (0.80)	2.46 (0.78)	2.25 (0.58)	2.39 (0.52)	2.42 (0.62)	2.41 (0.82)	2.54 (0.78)	2.31 (0.62)	2.42 (0.73)	2.38 (0.68)	2.60 (0.71)	2.32 (0.68)
Intragroup conflict	2.62 (0.88)	2.54 (0.80)	2.45 (0.82)	2.74 (0.84)	2.76 (0.90)	2.61 (0.75)	2.43 (0.99)	2.54 (0.83)	2.65 (0.81)	2.51 (0.89)	2.61 (0.82)	2.59 (0.72)	2.57 (0.88)
Intergroup conflict	2.35 (0.90)	2.81 (0.89)	2.74 (0.91)	2.28 (0.83)	2.42 (0.98)	2.67 (0.73)	2.84 (1.06)	2.62 (0.99)	2.39 (0.85)	2.77 (0.93)	2.46 (0.90)	2.85 (0.93)	2.47 (0.90)
Goal internalization	2.03 (0.76)	2.19 (0.85)	2.15 (0.88)	2.07 (0.78)	2.01 (0.55)	2.17 (0.91)	2.22 (0.85)	2.12 (0.77)	2.02 (0.77)	2.20 (0.87)	2.06 (0.77)	2.30 (0.90)	2.06 (0.77)
Perceived control	2.07 (0.68)	2.39 (0.96)	2.33 (0.92)	2.07 (0.72)	2.08 (0.64)	2.67 (1.02)	2.40 (0.73)	2.28 (0.81)	1.97 (0.73)	2.53 (0.88)	2.06 (0.77)	2.60 (0.84)	2.10 (0.80)
Personal competence	1.60 (0.46)	1.54 (0.50)	1.50 (0.48)	1.66 (0.42)	1.71 (0.54)	1.45 (0.39)	1.43 (0.45)	1.52 (0.45)	1.69 (0.51)	1.44 (0.42)	1.64 (0.50)	1.51 (0.45)	1.59 (0.49)

Note: Data have been coded so that higher scores indicate a higher level of conflict and disempowerment on a scale from 1 to 5. For example, if subject A's score is 1 and subject B's score is 3, both on, for example, intergroup conflict and personal competence, subject B will display a higher level of conflict and a lower level of empowerment.

Discussion

- ▣ **At the national level**
- ▣ **At the department level**
- ▣ **At the individual level**

At the national level



- ❑ **The lack of a clear agenda is perhaps the most pressing problem.**
- ❑ **Identifying departments willing to undergo a structural change and documenting the steps through rigorous evaluation.**
- ❑ **Better representing 'second-tier' faculty in future committee work.**

At the department level



- ❑ **Change is likely to generate resistance. How to address it?**
- ❑ **Taking specific steps:**
 - Challenging departmental bylaws that create arbitrary faculty divisions, and working toward creating a sufficient level of *de facto* equality (e.g. giving all long-term faculty voting rights regardless of tenure status, on matters of common concern);
 - Encouraging, supporting, and rewarding voluntary research done by language faculty, even if they are on a teaching track;
 - Allowing qualified language faculty to teach graduate courses in their specialty in the graduate (literature) program;
 - Challenging terminological divisions between the ‘faculty’ (literature), and language teaching ‘staff, specialists, teachers, experts’ at all discourse levels (e.g., during departmental meetings, on the department’s website);
 - Reducing salary gaps.

At the individual level



“Empowerment is the process by which people, organizations, or groups who are [...] marginalized (1) become aware of power dynamics at work in their life context; (2) develop the skills and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives; (3) which they exercise, (4) without infringing on the rights of others, (5) which coincides with actively supporting the empowerment of others in the community”.

(McWhirter 194, p. 12)

The next step



December 2014/January 2015: research findings disseminated back to the sample, in order to:

- **Solicit feedback;**
- **Evaluate the possibility of creating a working group reflecting on how to address stakeholders' needs in two-tiered departments.**

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THANK YOU!

