

**Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement:
How organizations are embedding equitable stakeholder engagement in their project
management processes**

By

Samad Aidane

Canterbury Christ Church University

Thesis Submitted

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May, 2021

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Acknowledgements

It is with profound appreciation that I acknowledge all those individuals who supported me throughout my journey. I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my lead supervisor, Dr. Ian Daniell, for his encouragement and guidance and for always challenging me to be mindful of the “big picture” at every stage of my research. I would like to also thank Dr. Sunny Stout-Rostron for the invaluable advice, continuous support, and patience throughout my PhD journey. I am deeply grateful to Dr. David Lane, my Chair of Studies, who believed in me and made it possible to pursue this PhD degree. I would also like to thank Kris Henker and the entire Professional Development Foundation team who tirelessly supported me throughout my journey. I also appreciate all the support I received from colleague and friend Stacy Harmon. She provided me with valuable feedback on the various drafts and challenged me to assert my voice. My sincere gratitude to Dr. David Reedy for his time, effort, and diligence in proofreading of this dissertation. I would also like to thank my doctoral program cohorts, Iftikhar Nadeem and Ingra Du-Buisson who helped me along my journey with support and encouragement. A special thank you to Debra Oliver for educating me about racial equity and who continues to inspire me to strive to advance equity in Project Management. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the project managers who volunteered for the study and generously shared their lived experiences. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my wife, Errin, and my son, Roan. Without their tremendous love, understanding, and encouragement in the past few years, it would be impossible for me to complete my study.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Thesis Summary

This thesis provides a portfolio of research that focuses on stakeholder management practices for engaging ethnically- and culturally-diverse local (ECDL) communities in project decisions. The aim of this thesis is to explore how local government project managers make sense of the experience of engaging ECDL communities. Additionally, the thesis explores how local government project managers apply a social equity lens to stakeholder engagement planning to ensure that historically underrepresented and marginalized stakeholder groups are included in project decision making processes.

The current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is lifting the veil on the deep-seated social inequities that ethnically- and culturally-diverse communities, and historically underrepresented and marginalized groups have always known to affect their health and safety. Public sector infrastructure and construction (PIC) projects are accepted as an important strategy for economic and social development. However, this development often comes with negative economic, social, and environmental impacts on local communities and disproportionately affect ECDL communities.

As communities in the United States grow more culturally diverse, the one size-fits-all approach to project stakeholder engagement is no longer sufficient to confront these inequities and address the unique needs of ECDL communities and historically underrepresented and marginalized stakeholder groups. In the context of PIC projects, inclusive and equitable community engagement is an important component of public engagement which enables citizens to participate in project decisions. While there is a growing interest in local community as an important project stakeholder, there is currently limited understanding, agreement, and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

research on how organizations operationalize inclusive and equitable stakeholder engagement within the context of project stakeholder management.

This thesis extends previous research on inclusive stakeholder management and local community as a project stakeholder by first examining the factors that influence how project managers engage ECDL communities. This was accomplished by conducting a literature review that reveals the contentious relationship between project organizations and local community and the importance of adapting project management practices to the local and cultural context of the project. Secondly, an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study, using semi-structured interviews with 13 project managers from one local government agency, examines the barriers and facilitators for engaging ECDL communities in projects. The study suggests the need for organizations to establish clearly defined policies and procedures to guide how Project Managers approach community engagement when ECDL communities are a project stakeholder group. Thirdly, a case study of a second local government agency examines how an organization applies a social equity lens to the project planning processes to ensure participation of historically underrepresented and marginalized stakeholder groups in project decision making process. Using thematic analysis of interviews and documents, the case study shows how the organization defines and integrates equitable stakeholder engagement into its policies, strategic plans, and project delivery processes.

The research is relevant to project management offices (PMO) in any organization that serve, directly affect, or support the interest of ECDL communities, and who are in the process of planning to start integrating inclusive and equitable stakeholder engagement in their project delivery processes. The findings from this research support readiness for change and adoption

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

of social equity in projects and programs by informing (a) how project managers can enhance their capacity to effectively engage ethno-cultural minority communities, (b) the development of future training interventions, and (c) how organizations can advance social equity in PIC projects by embedding inclusive and equitable stakeholder engagement in their project delivery processes.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	14
Research Question	17
Methodology Overview	17
The Structure of the Thesis Portfolio	18
References	22
CHAPTER 2-LITERATURE REVIEW	24
Introduction	24
Literature Review Methodology	26
Definitions.....	31
Key Findings	33
Project Management in Cross-cultural Context	33
Project Stakeholder Management.....	39
Local Community as a Project Stakeholder	43
Cultural Competence	47
Discussion and Conclusion	56
Research Gap	56
Implications for Research and Practice	58
Conclusion.....	59
References	62
Appendix 1- Summary table of Project Management reviewed articles (N=42)	74
Appendix 2- Summary table of Cultural Neuroscience reviewed articles (N=10)	86
CHAPTER 3: SMALL SCALE PROJECT REPORT	89
Introduction	89

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Terms of Reference/Objectives and Literature Review	91
Rational for the Preliminary Study	94
Methodology	96
Project Activity	97
Study Participants	97
Data Collection.....	99
Data Analysis.....	99
Findings	104
Data collection and analysis.....	104
Recruitment protocols	123
Interview Schedule	123
Conclusions and Recommendations	124
References	125
Appendices:	131
Appendix 1-Interview Schedule	131
Appendix 2-Informed Consent Form	135
Appendix 3-Research Study Fact Sheet	137
Appendix 4-Initial Themes	139
CHAPTER 4: APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT	140
Introduction	140
Terms of Reference/Objectives and Literature Review	141
Method	152
Project Activity	155
Researcher as Insider	155
Project Site	155

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Participants	156
Data Collection.....	158
Data Analysis.....	158
Findings and Discussion	161
Theme 1: A Voice for the Vulnerable and Marginalized (Community Factors).....	162
Theme 2: Bridging the Intention–Implementation Gap (Organizational factors)	166
Theme 3: The Engagement Experience (The Engagement Process)	172
Theme 4: Negotiating Roles and Relationships	177
Theme 5: Building Capacity for Inclusion (Best Practices and Training):	183
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	186
Recommendations	190
Limitations.....	194
Conclusion.....	194
References	196
Appendices	204
Appendix 1-Interview Schedule	204
Appendix 2-Informed Consent Form	208
Appendix 3-Research Study Fact Sheet	210
CHAPTER 5: REPORT OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	212
Introduction	212
Background	212
Research Question	215
Method	215
Research Site.....	215
Study Participants	218

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Data Collection.....	218
Data Analysis.....	221
Ethical Issues.....	222
Results	223
Introduction	223
Theme 1: Equity lens on policies and strategic planning.....	225
Theme 2: Equity lens on hiring and capacity building	229
Theme 3: Equity lens on Project Planning	231
Theme 4: Alignment, Empowerment, and Support.....	240
Discussion	245
Introduction	245
Awareness, Literacy, and Understanding	247
Organizational Alignment through Policies	248
Workforce Diversity and Capacity Building	248
Equity Lens on Project Management Practices	250
Support and Empowerment	252
Limitations, Implications, and Conclusions.....	253
Limitations.....	253
Implications for Practice	254
Recommendations for Future Research.....	256
Conclusions	257
References	258
Appendices	260
Appendix 1– Interview Schedule	260
Appendix 2 - Training Program for Project and Program Managers	261

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 3– Informed Consent Form.....	262
Appendix 4 – Overview of Project Management Process	265
Appendix 5 – Overview of PMToolkit tools and templates	266
Appendix 6 – Racial Equity in key PM Toolkit templates.....	268
Appendix 7 - Project Management Tools and Templates	270
Appendix 8 - Equity Lens on Planning Process	271
Appendix 9 - Racial Equity Glossary of Terms.....	272
CHAPTER 6: REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT	274
Introduction	274
Background	275
Contribution to Knowledge and Scholarship	277
A synthesis summary of the main findings.....	277
Towards a framework for racially equitable project stakeholder engagement.....	282
Summary of original contribution to knowledge and scholarship	289
Contribution to Practice	290
Implications for Policy.....	290
Implications for organizations	291
Implications for Project Management professional associations	293
Contribution to the development of professional practice.....	293
Methodological Issues and Future Research Direction	294
The Evolution of the Research Question	294
Reflection on Research Method	295
Limitations.....	297
Reflection on Future Research Direction.....	297
Impact on Researcher	299

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Thesis Conclusion	301
References	304

List of Figures

Figure 1. <i>Racial Equity Considerations in the Project Initiation Checklist</i>	234
Figure 2. <i>Racial Equity Considerations in the Project Charter Template</i>	234
Figure 3. <i>Racial Equity Considerations in the Project Management Plan</i>	235
Figure 4. <i>Racial Equity Considerations in the Work Breakdown Structure Template</i>	235
Figure 5. <i>Equity Considerations in the Risk Management Plan</i>	236
Figure 6. <i>Racial Equity Considerations in the Project Closure Template</i>	237
Figure 1. <i>Equitable project stakeholder engagement framework</i>	282
Figure 2. <i>Levels of Recommendations</i>	291

List of Tables

Table 1: <i>Example keywords to search for relevant Project Management papers</i>	28
Table 2: <i>Results of the selection process for Project Management papers</i>	29
Table 3: <i>Results of the selection process for Cultural Neuroscience papers</i>	30
Table 1: <i>Study Participants</i>	98
Table 2: <i>Table illustrating superordinate theme, subthemes, codes, and quotes</i>	100
Table 3: <i>Example Analytical Memos</i>	103
Table 4: <i>Superordinate Themes and Subthemes</i>	105
Table 1: <i>Study Participants</i>	157

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Table 2: <i>Table illustrating superordinate theme, subthemes, codes, and quotes</i>	160
Table 3: <i>Superordinate Themes and Subthemes</i>	161
Table 1. <i>Documents included in the analysis</i>	220
Table 2. <i>Themes and Subthemes Identified through Data Analysis.</i>	224

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Chapter 1: Introduction

The current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is lifting the veil on the deep-seated social inequities that ethnically- and culturally-diverse local (ECDL) communities and historically underrepresented and marginalized groups have always known to affect their health and safety. Despite the progress that has been made to eliminate discrimination, racial inequities continue to be a persistent reality of social and economic life across the United States (Selmi, 2016). Over the next decades, local and regional governments will continue to face the challenge of addressing these disparities, as the number of minority Americans is projected to increase to approximately 57% of U.S. population by 2060 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Local and regional governments are crucial in addressing disparities being the closest to the effected population, and where community members feel they can voice their concerns and redress their grievances (Ball, 2016).

Many ECDL communities face the impacts because of legacy government racially-biased policies. Such policies have resulted in the marginalization and lack the economic resources these communities need to advocate for themselves. For example, in the 1930s, the U.S. Government's Federal Housing Administration (FHA) created maps that labeled communities of color as "hazardous". This practice of "redlining" discouraged banks from lending mortgages in those areas, resulting in the deprivation of these communities from much needed investment (Percy, 2020). Although redlining practices became illegal in the mid-1970s and much progress in the desegregation of communities has been made over the years, the devastating economic, racial segregation, and disadvantaged impact of historical redlining on local communities of color persists today (Foster, Cannon, & Bloche, 2020). As an example of this impact, a recent

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

study found that in 94% of the 108 cities examined, formerly redlined communities today are, on average, five degrees, and in some instances as high as 12 degrees, hotter in summer than non-redlined communities once favored for housing mortgages (Hoffman, Shandas, & Pendleton, 2020). Past racial zoning, redlining, and housing discrimination practices led to these communities consistently having significantly fewer number of trees and parks needed to help cool the air, and having more paved surfaces, building exteriors, and nearby highways that absorb and radiate heat. This is but one example of how local government policies facilitate inequities.

Public sector infrastructure and construction (PIC) projects are accepted as an important strategy for economic and social development. However, this development often comes with negative economic, social, and environmental impacts on local communities (Cuganesan & Floris, 2020) and disproportionately affect ECDL communities. For example, the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 disproportionately displaced thriving Black, Latinx, Native American, and Asian communities that were deliberately targeted by federal and state officials to make way for massive highway projects (Archer, 2020). Similar government practices, unfortunately, continue today. The recent push by the Trump Administration to rush the completion of the Keystone XL Pipeline project, despite the environmental threats to clean drinking water sources on which communities of the Standing Rock Sioux Native American tribe of North Dakota depend (Outka & Warner, 2019), is yet another recent example of how government funded or backed infrastructure projects can negatively harm ECDL communities.

There is a growing movement among local government leaders, to assess their decisions and policies and how they impact their communities, through the lens of racial equity (Nelson,

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Spokane, Ross, & Deng, 2015). According to the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), more than 30 state and 150 city governments are working to implement racial equity tools to guide policy, program, and budget decisions (Nelson et al., 2015). A racial equity tool is a set of questions to guide local government agencies in assessing how their decisions, including policies, practices, and budgets benefit and/or burden communities, specifically ECDL communities. To advance equity and opportunities for all constituencies, a key objective of equity tools is to increase public participation in government decisions. In the context of PIC projects, inclusive and equitable community engagement is an important component of public engagement to enable citizens to participate in project decisions. The government of the city of Durham, NC, a GARE member, has adopted the following definition for equitable community engagement:

Community engagement alone is not enough. It needs to be equitable. For engagement to be equitable, it must aim for participation from a group representative of a community's geography, race/ethnicity, age, gender, and other demographic characteristics. It must place specific emphasis on those who will be most adversely impacted by the project and those who are most often marginalized in these conversations. Equitable community engagement starts by recognizing the reality that systemic barriers cause certain populations to have less access to city processes. To overcome those barriers, the City must invest engagement resources towards the people who are often underrepresented in participation. (City of Durham, 2019).

Despite efforts to engage ECDL communities in infrastructure planning decisions, progress has been limited (Sylvan, 2020). Currently, there is limited understanding, agreement, and research on the factors concerning the influence engagement of ECDL communities, living within a dominant culture, in project decisions. There is also a lack of research on how organizations operationalize inclusive and equitable stakeholder engagement within the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

context of project stakeholder management, to increase participation of historically underrepresented and marginalized stakeholder groups, such as ECDL communities.

Research Question

This thesis extends previous research on inclusive stakeholder management and local community as a project stakeholder. The aim is to provide an understanding of the factors that influence engagement of ECDL communities in project decisions and how local government agencies operationalized equitable project stakeholder engagement in their project delivery processes, to increase participation of ECDL communities in project decisions.

Therefore, the main research questions addressed by this series of studies are:

1. What are the factors that influence engagement of ECDL communities in project decisions?
2. What strategies do local government agencies utilize to operationalize equitable stakeholder engagement to increase participation of historically marginalized groups in project decisions?

Methodology Overview

This thesis first examines how cultural differences influence collaboration between projects and ECDL communities. This was addressed by a literature review of research at the intersection of project management in cross-cultural contexts, stakeholder management, and local community as a project stakeholder group. Secondly, an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study, using semi-structured interviews with 13 project managers from a local government agency, examined the barriers and facilitators for engaging ECDL communities in projects. This study was preceded by a smaller one to assess the feasibility, appropriateness, and potential effectiveness of the recruitment protocol, interview schedule, preliminary data collection, and the preliminary data analysis approach used in the larger study. Thirdly, using

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

thematic analysis of interviews and documents, a case study of a second local government agency examined how an organization applies a social equity lens to its project planning processes to ensure participation of historically underrepresented and marginalized stakeholder groups in project decision making processes.

The Structure of the Thesis Portfolio

This thesis is a portfolio of research studies and a reflective account. The portfolio is comprised of the following 5 components:

Chapter 2-A Critical Review of Literature: The objective of this literature review is to provide a critical overview of what is currently known in existing research on project stakeholder management and engagement of culturally diverse local (ECDL) communities in project management research.

Chapter 3-A Small Scale Research Project: The objective of this preliminary study is to determine the feasibility of a larger study (outlined in Chapter 4) at a local government agency organization and identify any barriers.

Chapter 4-An Applied Research Project: This research study takes place at the same organization as the preliminary study. The objective of this study is to examine the barriers and facilitators for engaging culturally diverse communities in projects. It is an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study, using semi-structured interviews with 13 project managers from a local government agency.

Chapter 5-A Report of Professional Practice: This research study takes place at a second local government agency. The objective is to examine the lessons learned from an organization

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

that has undergone organizational change to overcome institutional barriers to equitable stakeholder engagement of ECDL communities.

Chapter 6-A Reflective Account: An overarching synthesis and commentary on the portfolio elements and its implementation for scholarship and practice.

Table1 illustrates the link between the five components of this thesis portfolio:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Table 1.

An overview of the thesis portfolio

	Critical Review of Literature	Small Scale Research Project	Applied Research Project	Report of Professional Practice	Reflective Account
Objective	The objective of this literature review is to provide a critical overview of what is currently known in existing research on project stakeholder management and engagement of culturally diverse local communities	The objective of this preliminary study is to determine the feasibility of a larger study (the Applied Research Project) at a local government agency and identify any barriers.	The objective of this study is to examine the barriers and facilitators for engaging culturally diverse communities in projects	The objective of this study is to examine the lessons learned from an organization that has undergone organizational change to overcome institutional barriers to equitable stakeholder engagement of ECDL communities.	Overarching Synthesis and Commentary
Research Question	What is currently known and not known in existing research on project stakeholder management and engagement of culturally diverse local communities	How feasible is a larger research study in a local government agency, given the sensitive nature of the relationship that a local government agency has with local communities.	How do project managers make sense of the barriers and facilitators to engage culturally diverse communities in projects?	How do leaders at local government agencies institutionalize equitable project stakeholder engagement to increase participation of ECDL communities in project decisions?	N/A
Unit of Analysis	N/A	Project Manager	Project Manager	Organization	N/A
# of Participants	N/A	3	14	2	N/A
Location	N/A	Organization A	Organization A	Organization B	N/A
Method and Analysis	Thematic Analysis	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	Case Study + Thematic Analysis	N/A

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

	Critical Review of Literature	Small Scale Research Project	Applied Research Project	Report of Professional Practice	Reflective Account
Data Collection	Research articles, books, and other published texts	Semi-structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews and organizational Documents	N/A

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

References

- Archer, D. N. (2020). "White men's roads through black men's homes": Advancing racial equity through highway reconstruction. *Vanderbilt Law Review*, Forthcoming.
- Ball, C. L. (2016). *Intercultural dialogue for civic engagement: Perspectives from the multicultural community* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text Database database. (10105384)
- City of Durham. (2019). *Equitable community engagement blueprint*. Retrieved from City of Durham website: https://www.durhamcommunityengagement.org/equitable_engagement
- Cuganesan, S., & Floris, M. (2020). Investigating perspective taking when infrastructure megaproject teams engage local communities: Navigating tensions and balancing perspectives. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(3), 153-164.
- Foster, S., Cannon, Y., & Bloche, M. G. (2020). Health justice is racial justice: A legal action agenda for health disparities. *Health Affairs Blog*.
- Hoffman, J. S., Shandas, V., & Pendleton, N. (2020). The effects of historical housing policies on resident exposure to intra-urban heat: A study of 108 U.S urban areas. *Climate*, 8(1), 12.
- Nelson, J., Spokane, L., Ross, L., & Deng, N. (2015). *Advancing racial equity and transforming government: A resource guide to put ideas into action*. Retrieved from Government Alliance on Race and Equity website: <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/advancing-racial-equity-and-transforming-government-a-resource-guide-to-put-ideas-into-action/>
- Outka, U., & Warner, E. K. (2019). Reversing course on environmental justice under the trump administration. *Wake Forest Law Review*, 54, 393.
- Pearcy, M. (2020). "The most insidious legacy"—teaching about redlining and the impact of racial residential segregation. *The Geography Teacher*, 17(2), 44-55.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Selmi, M. (2016). Statistical inequality and intentional (not implicit) discrimination. *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 79, 199.

Sylvan, D. (2020). Barriers to infrastructure development and federal policy solutions. Retrieved from Institute for Policy Integrity at NYU School of Law website:

https://policyintegrity.org/files/publications/Building_a_Foundation_for_Sustainable_Infrastructure.pdf

U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). Percent distribution of the projected population by selected age groups and sex for the United States: 2015 to 2060 (np2012-t3). US Census Bureau, Population Division Washington, DC.

Chapter 2-Literature Review

Introduction

Racial and ethnic disparities in accessing public services such as education, healthcare, and housing in the United States, have been extensively documented. For example, between 2003 and 2006, the combined direct and indirect cost of health disparities in the United States was estimated to be \$1.24 trillion (Betancourt, Corbett, & Bondaryk, 2014). Local and regional governments are crucial in addressing disparities because they are the closest to the effected population and the place where communities feel they can voice their concerns and redress their grievances (Ball, 2016). As demographics shift, civic engagement has emerged as a key priority for local and regional governments to address the needs of ECDL communities and reduce disparities (Ball, 2016). Community engagement is a means to incorporate citizens and civil society into local government decisions.

Experts recommend increasing the engagement of ECDL communities as a strategy to develop culturally responsive public services and address differences in quality of service that are based on the race, ethnicity, or culture of the service consumer (Jones & Wells, 2007). In the context of Project Management, meaningful engagement of all stakeholders is core to the success of every project (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b). While engagement should continue as an ongoing process, it is most crucial during the early program phases of service design and planning where key decisions that impact racial and ethnic minorities are made.

A key challenge facing local government agencies is how to overcome barriers to collaboration so they can effectively engage the communities that are most impacted by their public service program and projects. While socioeconomic and class related disparities such as

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

lack of transportation, time, or child care can prevent communities from engagement (de Lancer Julnes & Johnson, 2011; King, Feltey, & Susel, 1998), research has identified barriers to multicultural stakeholder engagement at multiple levels, including how leadership interacts with the workforce, how service programs are conceived and implemented, and how providers interact with consumers.

As communities grow more culturally diverse, the one size-fits-all approach to stakeholder engagement is no longer sufficient to address the unique needs of ECDL communities. Intercultural competence has been identified as an important contributor to multicultural stakeholder engagement, based on the premise that culturally responsive service provider communication improves relations with stakeholders and builds mutual understanding, respect, and collaboration toward shared goals (Brach & Fraserirector, 2000). For example, during hurricane Katrina, many African Americans did not evacuate before the storm made landfall primarily because of communication barriers (Andrulis, Siddiqui, & Gantner, 2007) related to cultural factors (Singleton & Krause, 2009). Evacuation orders, if given at all, were confusing and inconsistent (Andrulis et al., 2007).

Reducing bias, through acquiring cultural understanding, is a necessary step to effectively engaging ECDL communities. Researchers have called for investigation of cognitive biases and how they influence the PM's approach to managing projects (Jain, Poston, & Simon, 2011). There is also a need to move beyond just the visible and concrete manifestation of culture by examining the cultural factors that impact project management. Neuroscience research on how culture shapes cognition is also providing evidence on how group characteristics influence a person's perception and interpersonal processes, resulting in a large

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

body of evidence on implicit bias with significant implications for understanding how culture, race, and ethnicity influences provider decisions and behavior. Researchers have called for examining how insights from neuroscience, specifically in Cultural Neuroscience, can inform how to improve intercultural understanding and cultural competence (Chang, 2017; Doole, Chan, & Huang, 2015; Glazer, Blok, Mrazek, & Mathis, 2015). This research agenda promises to make important contributions to our understanding of cultural differences and how to overcome barriers to communication and collaboration.

The purpose of this narrative literature review is to examine project management research that has addressed how cultural differences influence collaboration between project managers and ECDL communities as project stakeholders. As this review will show, there is a research gap in the project management literature. While there is a recognition of the importance of cultural understanding to effective stakeholder engagement, there is no clear understanding of the factors that promote or inhibit engagement of culturally diverse stakeholders. Therefore, the aim of this narrative literature review is to explore how cultural differences influence collaboration between project managers and ECDL communities in the context of local government PIC projects and programs.

Literature Review Methodology

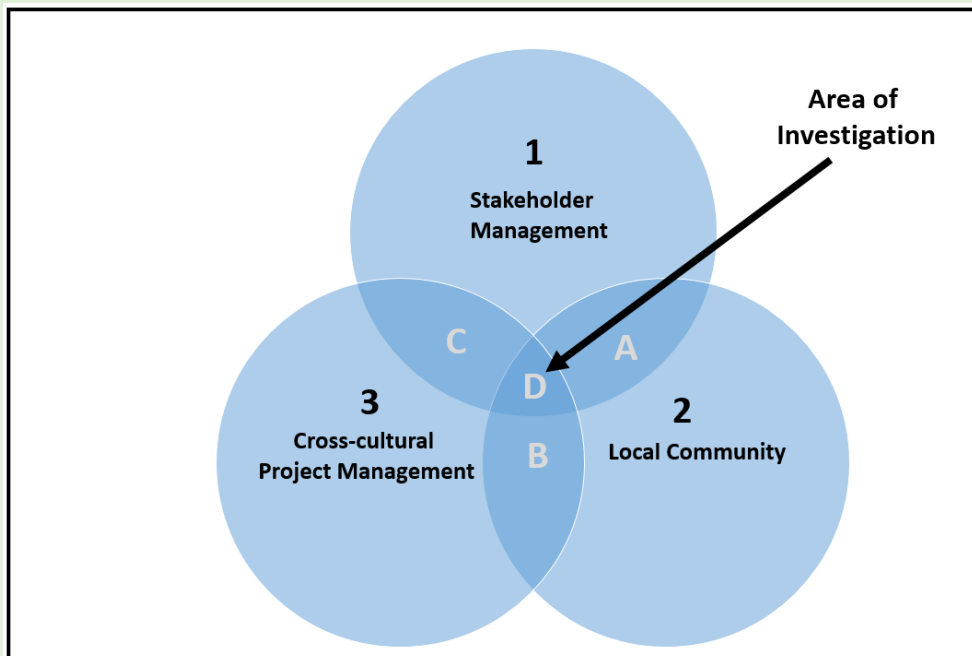
This review design is a narrative literature review using a systematic search. It is important to note that, although this review employs a systematic search, it is not a systematic review. Project management research was explored, especially at the intersection of project management in cross-cultural contexts, stakeholder management, and local community as a project stakeholder group. Studies relate to the three broad research areas marked as 1, 2, and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

3 in Figure 1. This narrative literature review was limited to the “intersection” of these three research topics, as marked below with A, B, C, and D.

Figure 1.

The Focus of Investigation



I searched journals indexed databases such as MEDLINE, Google Scholar, PsycInfo, and PubMed for relevant papers to Project Stakeholder Management and Cultural Neuroscience published before November 1, 2017. Additionally, I used snowballing to search in the references of the included studies to identify any additional source that may have been missed in the database search.

All project stakeholder management papers included in the review meet the following inclusion criteria:

- peer-reviewed journals

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- published before November 1, 2017
- English language
- studies that addressed cultural aspects of project management with implications for project stakeholder management
- studies that addressed stakeholder engagement of local community as a distinct class of project stakeholders
- studies that addressed cultural aspects of stakeholder engagement of external stakeholders

Additionally, relevant literature reviews and theoretical papers that are not empirical studies were also included in this review to provide additional background information. Table 1 shows keywords used to search for relevant papers. Boolean operators “AND” and “OR” were used to search for different permutations of the keywords. Table 2 shows the number of records examined in the search process. Also, Appendix 1 provides a summary table of the Project Management reviewed articles.

Table 1:

Example keywords to search for relevant Project Management papers

Stakeholder Management	Intercultural Project Management	PM/Manager
stakeholder management	intercultural training	project manager
stakeholder engagement	intercultural Intervention	program manager
stakeholder involvement	multicultural training	team manager
stakeholder participation	multicultural Intervention	project leader
community management	cultural training	program leader
community engagement	cultural Intervention	team leader
community involvement	diversity training	project management
community participation	diversity Intervention	program management
local community	cultural intelligence training	team management

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

cultural intelligence Intervention

Table 2:

Results of the selection process for Project Management papers

Description	Number of Records
Records identified through database search	4018
Records after removing duplicated	323
Records rejected as not sufficiently relevant after full-text review	270
Empirical papers included in the review	42

To provide a neuroscience perspective on the cultural dimension of stakeholder management, relevant studies from the emerging field of cultural neuroscience were also explored in this review. Because cultural neuroscience is a new field, the literature review was not confined to a specific time period. The studies included in the current literature review are from peer-reviewed journals, English language, and published before November 1, 2017.

The search used two types of keywords:

- For fMRI: Search words used to select fMRI studies: fMRI, functional MRI, magnetic resonance imaging, BOLD, brain imaging, neuroimaging.
- For culture: ethnicity, demographic group, independence/interdependence, Eastern/Western, individualism/collectivism, black/white, race

Studies included are those that measured blood oxygenation level-dependent (BOLD) effects and are original functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) studies with a focus on psychological processes (for example, empathy, theory of mind, emotion recognition). All Cultural Neuroscience papers included in the review meet the following inclusion criteria:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- peer-reviewed journals
- published before November 1, 2017
- English language
- study focused on psychological processes such as empathy, theory of mind, emotion recognition
- addressed psychological processes with cultural content
- original functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) studies
- measurement of blood oxygenation level-dependent (BOLD) effects using fMRI technology

Only landmark representative studies of cultural neuroscience research relevant to the cultural dimension of stakeholder engagement, such as those that focus on the major themes of self-concept, in-group/out-group, emotion recognition, and holistic/analytical thinking styles, were included in the review. Additionally, relevant literature reviews and theoretical papers were also included in this review to provide additional background information. Table 3 shows the number of records examined in the search process. Also, Appendix 2 is a summary table of the Cultural Neuroscience articles reviewed.

Table 3:

Results of the selection process for Cultural Neuroscience papers

Description	Number of Records
Records identified through search	6082
Duplicates removed	2214
Records screened	3742
Full-text article assessed for eligibility	126
Empirical papers included in the review	10

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Definitions

Project Management

The Project Management Institute defined the project as “A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result” (Project Management Institute, 2017, p. 13). Andersen (2010) offered an organizational perspective on the project by further defining it as a temporary organization established by the base organization “giving it an assignment to perform work on its behalf” (p. 370).

Culture in Project Management Research

Based on the existing research from international projects, differences in cultural values are the most difficult to resolve because they require a change in subconscious beliefs that are not easy to articulate (Mahalingam & Levitt, 2007). Hofstede (1994) defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (p. 1). According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2011), “the essence of culture is not what is visible on the surface. It is the shared ways groups of people understand and interpret the world” (p. 3).

Stakeholder Management in Project Management

Most research studies on project stakeholder management use stakeholder theory as a conceptual model to examine the relationship between the project organization and the project stakeholders (Eslerod & Huemann, 2013). Freeman (1984) defined stakeholders as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

objectives” (p. 46). Stakeholder theory asserts that the main purpose of an organization is to create value that satisfies the needs of its stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholder theory further emphasized that the role of managers is “managing for stakeholders”, which requires managers to consider stakeholders as “bound together by the jointness of their interests” (Freeman, 2010) (p. 7). Cleland (1986) is accredited with being one of the early researchers to highlight stakeholder management as an important component of project management (Eskerod, Huemann, & Savage, 2015). Despite the importance of stakeholder management to project success, it was only in 2013 that the Project Management Institute (PMI), which is the largest professional association for project management professionals, added a chapter on stakeholder management to its Project Management Book of Knowledge (PMBOK). The PMBOK is a widely accepted standard in project management with five million copies in circulation. Since then, numerous researchers have examined different aspects of stakeholder management and its link to project management.

ECDL Communities as a Project Stakeholder

Dunham, Freeman, and Liedtka (2006) classified “community” into four distinct categories: “community of place”, “community of interest”, “virtual advocacy groups”, and “community of practice”. The present series of studies focus on community of place, defined as a group of people who share physical (geographic) proximity (Dunham et al., 2006) and common characteristics such as race, income, and lived experience. Specifically, the studies will focus primarily on ECDL communities, sometimes referred in the U.S. as “communities of color” or BIPOC (Black, indigenous, and other persons of color) communities.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

As a project stakeholder group, ECDL communities are those that live in proximity of or are impacted by PIC projects. Some of these communities have been identified by the United States federal government as “environmental justice” communities, defined as communities with a high concentration of racial, ethnic, and low-income vulnerable populations and a number of proximate pollution facilities (Hynes & Lopez, 2007).

Key Findings

The next section will outline the key themes that emerged from the review of the literature. The review is organized in four sections. Section one covers project management in cross-cultural contexts. Section two covers project stakeholder management in the context of multicultural projects. Section three is on the local community as a project stakeholder. Section four is on cultural competence in the context of project management.

Project Management in Cross-cultural Context

There is an ongoing debate about whether project management practices are universal or whether they need to be adapted to the cultural context (Anantatmula & Thomas, 2010; Ika, 2012). While some researchers argue that management processes are universal, others argued for the benefits of adapting to the cultural context of the project. For example, PMI’s PMBOK makes the fundamental assumption that project management practices are universal without recognizing culture as a factor in the implementation of the processes it outlines. Project management theory, with its origin in scientific management, has drawn criticism for being built on reductionism (Eskerod & Larsen, 2018) and for being based primarily on western cultural beliefs and human behavior that can be incompatible with other cultures (Muriithi & Crawford, 2003; Pant, Allinson, & Hayes, 1996).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Research in the field of cross-cultural management has a significant influence on how culture is conceptualized in project management research. Cross-cultural management examines how culture influences management and leadership and skills needed for effective collaboration across cultures. The most prominent studies in this line of research are Hofstede's five cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2011), Trompenaars's five elements of culture (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2011), and Hall's high and low context cultures (Hall, 1989). However, it is Hofstede (2011) and his seminal work on "cultural dimensions" that emerged as the leading figure in this line of research. Hofstede (2011) proposed five core cultural dimensions that differentiate cultures: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and collectivism, long-term and short-term orientation, and masculinity and femininity. Power distance refers to the extent to which individuals in a culture accept and expect a difference in power among individuals based on the assumption that power is distributed unequally. Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which individuals in a culture are comfortable with uncertainty and risk. Individualism and collectivism refer to the degree that individuals in a culture see themselves as independent or interdependent in their social context. Long-term and short-term orientation are about the degree to which individuals in a culture tend to emphasize long-term vs. short-term thinking. Masculinity and femininity orientation refer to the extent to which individuals in a culture value assertiveness, achievement, and wealth vs. human relationships and quality of life.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2011) also contributed to this line of research by identifying five dimensions: universalism and particularism, individualism, and communitarianism, neutral and emotional, achievement and ascription, and specific and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

diffuse. Universalism vs. particularism is the extent to which individuals in a culture believe that relationships between individuals are governed by rules and regulations. Individualism and Communitarianism are similar to Hofstede's (2011) Individualism and collectivism. Neutral and emotional are the way individuals in a culture express their emotions. Achievement and ascription are the degree to which individuals believe that status is given rather than earned. Specific and diffuse are the degree to which individuals in a culture keep their private and public life separate.

Hall (1989) contributed to this line of research with the time theory and context theory. According to the time theory, cultures are divided into two categories: Sequential and Synchronic. Sequential cultures tend to perceive time as linear where tasks or activities are carried out sequentially. On the other hand, synchronic cultures perceive time as fluid - where many tasks and activities can take place simultaneously. According to context theory, communication tends to be indirect in high context cultures. Individuals assume that much is known about the context of a conversation or situation and, therefore, much of the meaning is implied. Silence and nonverbal communication are important to decode the meaning of a communication. In low context cultures, communication tends to be direct, while little is assumed to be known. Therefore, importance is given to verbal communication. Silence and nonverbal communication are not important to decode the meaning of a communication.

In Project Management research, culture has been found to impact several processes. The seminal work of Hofstede (1983) had a major influence on the research that examined the link between culture and project management over the last 30 years. Shore and Cross (2005) identified five core cultural dimensions that influence behavior and decision-making in project

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

management: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, humane treatment, and future orientation. Amster and Böhm (2016) combined existing research on cultural values and beliefs with their own research on cultural differences in behavior and identified five behavioral categories that influence managing multicultural collaboration. According to their research, culture influences how project team members communicate, form relationships, make decisions, planned and scheduled, and how rigorously they follow defined processes. Zhang, Marquis, Filippov, Haasnoot, and Van der Steen (2015) found cultural differences in how project management processes are interpreted and that this can influence stakeholders' perception of project performance and their satisfaction. Rees-Caldwell and Pinnington (2013) found that national culture affects the way project managers understand the planning phase of the project. They suggest that project managers may have different project management cognitive schemas or scripts concerning planning phases and practices. Risk management is another process that seems to be affected by culture.

Researchers have also found cultural differences in how uncertainty and risk perception are experienced in projects. Loosemore and Musmani (1999) found that different cultures approach uncertainty differently while Ullah Khan (2014) confirmed that project managers who showed cultural understanding were able to reduce uncertainty inherent in the early stages of the projects. de Camprieu, Desbiens, and Feixue (2007) found cultural differences in risk perception and evaluation. Liu, Meng, and Fellows (2015) reported that culture influences how risk management is practiced in projects. Therefore, culture can have a significant influence on how ECDL communities deal with the project manager during the early phases of the project, when uncertainty and risk aversion about key decisions are high.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Another strand of research focused on examining the cultural factors that create barriers to effective collaboration. Žegarac and Spencer-Oatey (2013) investigated the challenges in cross-cultural projects during the early phases of the project. They suggested that affective factors, such as face concerns, play a major role in cross-cultural communication on projects. The study suggests that this concern for the self can become a barrier to negotiating common understanding within projects. Chen and Partington (2004) identified cultural differences in how project managers perceive relationships. Pheng and Leong (2000) also found that such differences in communication, approach to conflict, and negotiation, can be a significant barrier to collaboration among culturally diverse project stakeholders.

The impact of culture on collaboration has also been studied in the context of team diversity. Ochieng and Price (2010) found that communication, collectivism, empathy, and trust are key factors that influence multicultural teams. Watson, Kumar, and Michaelsen (1993) conducted one of the early longitudinal studies comparing performance of homogenous groups to diverse groups. They concluded that process effectiveness and performance of culturally diverse teams started out less than homogenous groups but improved over time. More importantly, while overall performance remained the same for the two groups, the culturally diverse group scored higher on two tasks: identifying problem perspectives and generating solution alternatives. However, harnessing the innovation and creativity of culturally diverse teams requires effective management of cultural differences.

It is vital for project stakeholders to share information early in the planning phase, when stakeholder requirements, priorities, and concerns are gathered to inform how the project is to be organized and implemented. Project managers need to recognize that culture influences

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

how individuals share information and that creation and sharing of knowledge occurs in its social and cultural context (Weir & Hutchings, 2005). Mahalingam and Levitt (2007) found that in the planning phase of the project, cultural differences in information gathering and what information is expected or is available, can impact the project. Kohlbacher and Krähe (2007) reported similar findings and further identified cultural differences in the preferred methods of knowledge transfer by different stakeholders involved in the project. They also concluded that the magnitude of the knowledge transfer required at the beginning of collaboration can be underestimated, when the motivation of transfer knowledge can be lacking, and can take time to develop. Additionally, Mahalingam and Levitt (2007) highlighted that in some situations, cultures may have rules on what information is made public outside of the group or community. For example, the role that hierarchy plays in a culture may also play a role in who is responsible for providing information and to whom.

Working effectively with stakeholders from different cultures requires an understanding of their cultural backgrounds and the implication this has on their motivation to share knowledge. Damian and Zowghi (2003) contributed to research on the cultural dimension of knowledge creation and sharing by investigating the challenges that projects face when dealing with conflicting requirements from multiple stakeholders with different cultural beliefs and values. This dynamic, they found, leads to conflict in ranking, prioritizing, and negotiating of requirements. Damian and Zowghi (2003) called for awareness of cultural differences in approach to conflict during requirements management. Swierczek (1994) found cultural differences in how conflict is perceived and approached, which leads to different perspectives and approaches to solving problems and can result in barriers to communication. For example,

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Jain, Simon, and Poston (2011) demonstrated how culture influences the way silence is used and how it manifests itself in a project. They reported that silence can take various forms, such as to minimize impact, delay disclosure or fail to disclose, and lack of contribution to improving processes. As this example shows, without understanding the cultural meaning of silence, the project manager may misunderstand the needs and interests of culturally diverse stakeholders. Therefore, to mitigate these types of cultural differences, it is important for project managers to take the time to understand the cultural practices of stakeholders to reduce misunderstanding (Jain, Simon, et al., 2011).

Project Stakeholder Management

Engagement of stakeholders so that their interests and concerns are understood is a critical success factor of stakeholder management. Yang, Shen, Ho, Drew, and Xue (2011) identified and ranked 15 critical success factors for stakeholder management, and four of the top five factors required meaningful participation of the stakeholders in the project. These factors are: (a) properly identifying stakeholders, (b) exploring their needs, (c) communicating with them, and (d) understanding stakeholder interest areas. A lack of stakeholder involvement can result in a confrontational relationship that can lead to the perception that the project is a failure, even if it met all its time, cost, and scope objectives (Olander, 2007). Therefore, meaningful engagement of culturally diverse stakeholders enables the project organization to perform a comprehensive needs assessment and analysis of risks that may impact these stakeholders. This then allows the formulation of plans to both meet needs and mitigate risks.

The early phases of the project are the most critical for stakeholder involvement. Critical decisions are made early regarding the direction of the project and how the rest of the project

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

is formulated. Aapaoja, Haapasalo, and Söderström (2013) emphasized the value of engaging stakeholders early, enabling an open exchange of ideas and facilitating the emergence of creative solutions during the critical planning phases of the project.

A central and recurring theme in the project management literature is the problematic nature of engaging with external stakeholders whose needs conflict with those of the project. How project stakeholders are engaged depends on their perceived influence on the project. Aapaoja et al. (2013) argued that a key factor in determining how to respond to stakeholders is their “salience” to the project. Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997) developed the prevailing stakeholder salience model used in PM research and practice. Stakeholder salience is “the degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims” (p. 854). According to (Mitchell et al., 1997), stakeholders can be identified by their power to influence, the legitimacy of their relationship to the project, and the urgency of their claim or issue (Mitchell et al., 1997). An important objective of stakeholder “salience analysis” is to assess which group is a threat to the project (Aaltonen, Jaakko, & Tuomas, 2008). Research by Aaltonen et al. (2008) suggested that stakeholders tend to use different strategies to increase their salience and the legitimacy of their claims, so project managers are warned that these strategies may represent potential risk leading to cost and time overruns.

Existing stakeholder models, including the salience model, have drawn criticism for treatment of stakeholders as a homogenous group. Di Maddaloni and Davis (2017a) specifically criticized the salience model for being generic and reflecting “either/or” thinking. Aaltonen, Kujala, Lehtonen, and Ruuska (2010) found that current stakeholder management models do not reflect the increasingly diverse nature of project environments. The salience model does

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

not recognize culture as a dimension of stakeholder diversity. Therefore, community stakeholders are bundled into a singular homogenous group, ignoring the complex and multidimensional nature of these stakeholders (Teo & Loosemore, 2017). Additionally, the salience model makes the assumptions that all stakeholders can equally exert their influence, legitimacy, and urgency of their claims, regardless of socioeconomic status. Because of the imbalance in power relationship between the organization and its stakeholders, the salience model was criticized for being especially problematic for marginalized groups, such as ECDL communities (Aaltonen, 2011; Banerjee, 2008).

Researchers have called for approaches to engage stakeholders that recognize their diversity (McVea & Freeman, 2005). Understanding the full diversity of stakeholders is key to understanding their interests and building relationships in order to leverage their local knowledge in making decisions and mitigating risks associated with unexpected events (Aaltonen et al., 2010). Eskerod and Larsen (2018) argued that project managers should look at projects as embedded in the context of stakeholder perceptions of experience while Crane and Ruebottom (2011) called for the use of social identity to consistently and meaningfully relate to stakeholders.

Understanding the diversity of the stakeholders impacted by the project is a vital step in effective stakeholder engagement. Recognizing cultural differences in the initial phases of the project is particularly important (DeLone, Espinosa, Lee, & Carmel, 2005) and is key to the success of the entire project (Ullah Khan, 2014). However, it is also important for project managers to continue to monitor the progress of cultural responsiveness to stakeholders during all stages of the project, especially the execution phase (Ullah Khan, 2014).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Researchers have provided evidence for the benefits of adapting project management practices (PMP) to the cultural context of the project. McVea and Freeman (2005) advocated for adapting stakeholder engagement practices to recognize the diversity of the project stakeholders. De Bony (2010) pointed out the need to adapt PMPs in order to mitigate the impact of cultural differences on collaboration, coordination, and decision making. DeLone et al. (2005) found that recognizing cultural differences during the initial phases of the project is particularly important. Haried and Ramamurthy (2009) found that adapting sends signals that parties are committed and care about the relationship, since they were willing to make sacrifices to support it. However, adapting PMPs to the cultural context required a deep understanding of existing cultural norms and routines (De Bony, 2010). Ullah Khan (2014) recognized cultural competence is important to deliver successful projects across cultures. Ochieng and Price (2010) found project managers in particular, must be culturally competent.

The lack of understanding of cultural differences and the failure to utilize cultural knowledge can lead to time delays and cost overruns in projects (Mahalingam & Levitt, 2007). This deficiency results in poor quality (DeLone et al., 2005) and missed opportunities to leverage the innovation and creativity offered by cultural diversity (Daim et al., 2012), which can impact the overall performance of the project. This deficiency can also result in a negative impact on ECDL communities, which in turn impacts sustainability. ECDL communities have historically lacked power, legitimacy, and a sense of urgency paid to their concerns, while then bearing the adverse consequences of project. Furthermore, their influence weakens over the course of the project as it moves from planning to execution phases. Stakeholders may not hear of a project until it is too late to influence it. Stakeholder management approaches that do not

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

take into account the full diversity of stakeholder subgroups can have the effect of perpetuating injustice and inequality.

Local Community as a Project Stakeholder

A clear conceptualization of local community as a stakeholder is currently lacking in the project stakeholder management field (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b). PM research has neglected distinguishing community as a legitimate and a different type of stakeholder (Teo & Loosemore, 2017). Although there is a recognition of the importance of local community as a stakeholder (Aaltonen, 2011; Teo & Loosemore, 2017) and their support for the projects (Teo & Loosemore, 2014), a clear understanding of stakeholder engagement of local communities, and in turn ECDL communities, is currently lacking in the project management literature (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b; Teo & Loosemore, 2017). A lack of understanding of stakeholder engagement of local communities and a lack of consideration of the diversity of communities and their needs, and especially the needs of ECDL communities, may perpetuate marginalization of these historically disadvantaged communities (Yang, 2014).

Existing approaches to stakeholder management tend to prioritize stakeholders that have a financial interest in the project (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010; Eskerod, Huemann, & Ringhofer, 2015; Eskerod, Huemann, & Savage, 2015; Hart & Sharma, 2004). Stakeholders such as sponsors, clients, and vendors are considered primary, whereas a local community is considered a secondary stakeholder group. The focus on primary stakeholders leads to the potential exclusion of minority, disadvantaged, and disempowered groups such as ECDL communities (Banerjee, 2008).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Local community tends to bear the risk of projects (Olander, 2007). Researchers have called for more inclusive approaches to stakeholder engagement of local community that takes into account stakeholders who could be harmed by the project (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017a). The pursuit of this balancing act reflects the tension between ‘management *of* stakeholders’ and ‘management *for* stakeholders’ debated in current project management research (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b). The “management *of* stakeholder” approach tends to be motivated by a need of PMs to control stakeholders and make them comply with the needs of the project (Eskerod & Huemann, 2013). The top-down approach to stakeholder management assumes that providing the right information to the stakeholders will mitigate risks and conflicts (Wester-Herber, 2004). Information flow in this type of approach tends to be one-way from the project to the stakeholders. The belief is that the project can shape the community’s perception of the project. Research shows that such old methods to stakeholder engagement are no longer effective (Wester-Herber, 2004). Top-down and control approach do not work because communities form their own perception of the projects (Close & Loosemore, 2014). Even the use of the term “management”, in the context of project relationship with community, is considered as indicating a desire for control, which is inconsistent with current trends in community engagement (Bryson, Quick, Slotterback, & Crosby, 2013) that emphasizes relational approaches.

On the other hand, there is a growing interest in a relational approach to “management *for* stakeholders” (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017a; Eskerod & Huemann, 2013; Eskerod, Huemann, & Ringhofer, 2015; Eskerod, Huemann, & Savage, 2015). There is a shift away from top-down control methods to a more relational approach that focus on “community

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

engagement” rather than “community management” (Boutilier & Zdziarski, 2017; Teo & Loosemore, 2017). Such approaches welcome and encourage community concerns rather than suppressing or marginalizing them (Teo & Loosemore, 2017) and leads PMs to anticipate and mitigate risks to the project (Boutilier & Zdziarski, 2017).

It can be challenging to manage the inherent conflicts between the objectives of the project organization and the interests of its stakeholders. Aaltonen and Sivonen (2009) found that stakeholder characteristics and type of claim, can influence a project manager’s response strategy. They identified five strategies: adaptation, compromising, avoidance, dismissal, and influence. Other researchers have criticized this approach and called for a less manipulative and more relational approach to stakeholder management. Teo and Loosemore (2017) advocated that project managers tap into the social capital of the community to resolve concerns, which requires a deep understanding and respect for the local culture and history. A relational approach that is based on mutual trust and mutual benefits can lay the foundation for inclusion of culturally diverse stakeholders. Indeed, Teo and Loosemore (2017) warned that a lack of genuine trust can lead the stakeholders to exclude the project manager from communication.

There are many benefits to building a good relationship with the local community primarily because they possess knowledge that can be leveraged to improve decisions and mitigate uncertainty and risks (Aaltonen et al., 2010). Additionally, it was found that inclusive approaches to stakeholder engagement leads to better project decisions (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017a; Eskerod, Huemann, & Ringhofer, 2015; Eskerod, Huemann, & Savage, 2015; Olander, 2007). On the other hand, a lack of engagement of community in planning and decision making can result in decisions being opposed by community (Sun, Yung, Chan, & Zhu, 2016). Poor

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

stakeholder engagement can lead to a loss of reputation and future opportunities (Graetz & Franks, 2016). Therefore, Kinawy and El-Diraby (2010) highlighted the need for two-way communication between the PM and the community.

When communities are not engaged, they tend to try to exert influence on the project (Klandermans & Van Stekelenburg, 2013) through collective action such as protesting. Teo and Loosemore (2017) examined the dynamics of protesting and other collective actions when the local community is not engaged in the project. They found that even when projects involve community, they do so inconsistently, with engagement in early phases of planning and lack of engagement during subsequent phases, resulting in concerns being left unaddressed. What is ironic is that community engagement can actually be an effective strategy to mitigate impact of protesting and collective action (Teo & Loosemore, 2017).

When the local community opposes a project, the general perception tends to be that the response is the so-called NIMBY (not in my back yard) attitude typical of irrational and selfish stakeholder groups (Burningham, Barnett, & Thrush, 2006; Petrova, 2016). In the absence of an understanding of the complexity of the socio-cultural dynamics of community engagement, NIMBY is a typical “blanket” explanation to stakeholders’ opposition to the project (Dear, 1992; Petrova, 2016). Local community is then perceived as a threat to the project (Olander, 2007) making it, therefore, a risk that PMs need to manage. However, project managers are not equipped to address the socio-political risks associated with local community opposition to the project (Close & Loosemore, 2014). Additionally, they perceive the efforts needed to engage local community as a burden and the relationship as fraught with conflict and risk (Boutilier & Zdziarski, 2017; Close & Loosemore, 2014). However, because of the lack of

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

research on ECDL communities, it is not clear how collective action, as a response to lack of engagement, applies to ECDL communities who are historically marginalized.

Taken together, the above findings have significant implications for ECDL communities. First, local communities are generally treated as a homogenous stakeholder group, ignoring the diversity of the communities and the disparities between communities. Second, local communities are generally treated as a secondary and external stakeholder group, which tends to have less power, when compared to primary and internal stakeholders. They also tend to have claims that are assumed to lack legitimacy and urgency. Third, the relationship between projects and local communities is generally contemptuous, due to opposition of local communities to projects. This perception results in stakeholder management practices that treat local communities as risks to the project, which may lead to stakeholder engagement approaches that further contribute to these communities' marginalization and disenfranchisement. Finally, because most of the research on local community has been done in the context of understanding collective action in opposition to project, there is a built-in bias that causes any examination of local communities to be painted as negative and only addressed from a defensive stand.

Cultural Competence

Cultural differences add new responsibilities to the project manager role. Research by Jain, Poston, et al. (2011) highlighted the importance of developing social bonds with culturally diverse stakeholders. The main insight from their study is that relying solely on the project management processes is not sufficient to create an environment for culturally diverse stakeholders to be safe in communicating difficult issues, negative feedback, and bad news.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

There are additional responsibilities and practices needed to effectively engage culturally diverse stakeholders and that these require the project manager to develop new skills.

Ullah Khan (2014) argued that cultural competence is important to deliver successful projects across cultures. The project manager, in particular, must be culturally competent (Ochieng & Price, 2010). In a case study that compared two projects from the same company, Ullah Khan (2014) found that the difference between a project that succeeded and one that failed was the degree of cultural understanding experienced in the project. For example, project managers who showed cultural understanding were able to reduce the inherent uncertainty of the early stages of projects (Ullah Khan, 2014).

Earley and Ang (2003) provided a definition of intelligence that includes culture. Their cultural intelligence (CQ) framework is based on four components that are essential for effective communication and collaboration in cross-cultural contexts. The CQ elements are motivation, cognition, meta-cognition, and behavior.

Motivation is an individual's drive to develop cultural intelligence to be effective in culturally diverse situations. Cognition is an individual's knowledge about what is universal and what is specific about a particular culture. Metacognition is thinking about how one experiences culturally diverse situations or environments. In other words, it is thinking about thinking. Behavior is a person's flexibility (verbal and non-verbal) to adapt to various culturally diverse situations. In the context of project management, Gregory, Prifling, and Beck (2009) investigated cultural intelligence components among project managers and concluded that trust-based interpersonal relationships and understanding expectations are pre-requisites for

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

motivational CQ. They also reported that communication, conflict resolution, and trust-building are important skills for behavioral CQ.

Thomas et al. (2008) found that, of the four CQ components, metacognition is the most important component because it integrated all the other components and specifically modulates cognition and behavior. A high level of cultural metacognition has also been found to be associated with high levels of metacognitive abilities (Ang et al., 2007), emotional closeness in intercultural interactions (Chua, Morris, & Mor, 2012), and team creativity (Crotty & Brett, 2012). Metacognition also involves adjusting one's thoughts and strategies as one learns new skills (Flavell, 1979). Van Dyne et al. (2012) further defined cultural metacognition as the ability to be aware of the cultural knowledge and assumptions of the self and those of others. They also defined it as the capacity to continuously assess and update cultural knowledge and assumptions based on new information gained from experience.

A limitation of the existing research on culture, in the context of project stakeholder management, is its reliance on cultural dimensions informed solely by studies based on surveys of participants' self-reported cultural values and beliefs. These paradigms assume that individuals are conscious of how culture influences their behavior. This information in turn affects their interpretation of cultural differences. Recent cultural neuroscience studies have provided evidence of limitations of self-reporting as the only method for investigating cultural phenomena (Chang, 2017). Cultural variations are associated with neural activation patterns beyond our conscious awareness and control (Chang, 2017).

Cultural neuroscience has emerged as a promising paradigm that offers a new lens through which to understand cultural differences. Cultural neuroscience investigates how

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

cultural beliefs and values influence psychological and neurobiological processes that are the basis for behavior (Chiao, 2009), which is relevant to stakeholder engagement. The field emerged as an interdisciplinary research domain using methods of cognitive neuroscience, cultural psychology and neurogenetics to investigate the bidirectional relationship between culture and the brain (Chiao, 2009). This research is providing evidence that questions about culture are also questions about biology and the brain (Sasaki & Kim, 2017). The rapid growth of the neuroscience research is attributed to the recent scientific and technological advances, particularly functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI, and other technologies that allow researchers to examine the functioning of the brain as it engages in different cognitive tasks. This neurobiological perspective has the potential of augmenting existing cultural frameworks and paradigms and can improve our understanding of how culture shapes collaboration between the project organization and its culturally diverse stakeholders.

The following section will provide an overview of the core concepts from cultural neuroscience relevant to project stakeholder management.

Culture and Neuroplasticity

A core concept in research on cultural differences in neural structure and function is the brain's plasticity (Kitayama, 2013). Sustained experience changes the structure and functioning of the brain. One of the early evidences of this was reported by Maguire et al. (2000) who studied the brain of taxi drivers who undergo training to obtain a license to operate in London. The volume of the hippocampus, a brain region responsible for memory, increased as a result of the training. Additionally, the more years of experience the taxi driver gained, the more volume the hippocampus increased. Similar findings were reported in other experiments, as

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

well. Those who learned to juggle experienced an increase in the volume of areas linked to processing visual motion Draganski et al. (2004). For those who learn a second language, the left inferior parietal cortex is larger compared to monolingual brains (Mechelli et al., 2004). Since there is clear evidence that exposure to sustained experience affects the neural structure of the brain, it is logical to conclude that sustained exposure to a set of cultural experiences will shape the neural structure and function of the brain.

The following section will review a few landmark studies and highlight the relevance of key findings to the investigation of cultural factors that influence collaboration between project managers and their culturally diverse stakeholders.

Self-concept

One of the most influential frameworks applied in the field of cultural neuroscience is the work of Markus and Kitayama (1991) on self-concept. They brought together two fields of research that had not previously been related: research on cultural differences and research in social cognition within social psychology (Rule, 2014). According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), the interdependent self is interconnected with its social context. The independent self is autonomous and separate from others, and driven by internal motives, desires, and traits. The interdependent self is driven by external factors such as obligations, roles, and expectations of others.

Zhu, Zhang, Fan, and Han (2007) conducted one of the first studies to investigate the neural basis of independent and interdependent self-concept. While in an fMRI scanner, they asked western and Chinese participants, whether an adjective describes themselves or their mother. Both groups showed similar brain activation, when thinking about themselves, in the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

ventral medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) and anterior cingulate cortex (ACC). The mPFC and ACC have been shown to be activated when people reflect about themselves (self-referential processing and self-reflection) (Wuyun et al., 2014). However, only the Chinese participants showed activation in ventral mPFC, when thinking about their mothers. These results support the independent interdependent hypotheses that easterners perceive the self as interconnected with others, while westerners perceive the self as autonomous and separate regardless of the strength of the relationships (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Another study by (Chiao et al., 2009) asked participants to judge whether a sentence described them in general (general self-task) or if it described them in the context of a relationship with others (contextual self-task). Both participants showed greater prefrontal cortex (MPFC), a region associated with self-knowledge. However, while this activation was experienced by participants who identified with independent values during the general self-task, participants who identified with interdependent values experienced it in the contextual self-task. These findings provide strong evidence that cultural values such as independence and interdependence are associated with neural activation pattern underlying how we represent the self.

Kobayashi, Glover, and Temple (2006) asked Japanese and American participants to think about others' beliefs. While participants from both groups showed similar activation in the same brain regions, the Japanese in particular showed greater activation of the orbitofrontal cortex. This brain region has been associated with specific social cognitive tasks such as thinking about the feelings of others (Ames & Fiske, 2010). This may suggest the interdependent cultural orientation of Japan emphasizes greater sensitivity and attention to

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

the feelings of others in order to determine their own mental and emotional states. This may also be related to the differences between interdependent and independent cultures in emotional expression and display rules. Self-expression and emotional display are encouraged to a greater extent in independent cultures, so there may be a reduced need to be attuned to the feelings of others as they are expected to be expressed in the self. Individuals from an interdependent culture, such as in Japan, may deploy additional neurological resources to infer the emotional and mental states of others.

In-group/Outgroup

People generally tend to have a positive perception of their in-group and the negative perception of outgroups and this bias may be associated with the neural mechanisms underlying decision making and social cognition (Chang, 2017). Adams et al. (2010) showed Japanese and American participants images of only individual eyes and asked them to identify the emotional state of the person in the image. Consistently, the results showed that participants were more accurate in identifying the emotions expressed in people from their own culture. What was more interesting was that the superior temporal sulcus, a brain region typically recruited when making social judgments, showed significantly more activation when participants saw images of people of their own culture. Similar results were found in a different study by Chiao et al. (2008), who measured brain activation on participants from different cultures while they viewed images of fearful and non-fearful faces. Participants showed greater empathy and were able to more accurately identify the emotional state of the person in the image when the person belongs to their own cultural group. Again, from a brain activation perspective, participants showed greater amygdala activation, a region of the brain important

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

for processing emotional information, in response to fear expressed in images of members of their own culture. These results suggest that the accuracy of understanding the emotional states of others diminishes upon engaging peoples from cultures different from ours. This has a direct application to the interaction between project managers and their culturally diverse stakeholders, especially when the project manager does not share the same cultural background as the stakeholder.

Emotion Expression

Cheon et al. (2011) examined the connection between the cultural values of social hierarchy and empathy. They asked Caucasian American and Korean participants to view images depicting people in painful situations. Korean culture endorses social hierarchy, and the Koreans showed greater activation in the left temporoparietal junction (L-TPJ), a region associated with theory of mind, when viewing pain images depicting people from their own culture. Theory of mind, also commonly referred to as mentalizing, mind reading, or mental state reasoning (Adams et al., 2010) is the ability to predict behaviors of others by inferring their intentions (Na & Chan, 2015). Similar activation was not observed with Caucasian American participants, who come from a culture that endorses egalitarianism. According to Chiao, Cheon, Pornpattanakul, Mrazek, and Blizinsky (2013), cultures that endorse social hierarchy may have strong rules for emotional display and therefore may discourage expressing emotions that may undermine social harmony. The researchers hypothesized that, in these cultures, it may be necessary to include theory of mind to understand one's obligations to others. Conversely, cultures that endorse egalitarianism encourage self-expression and therefore reliance on theory of mind to determine the emotional state of others may not be necessary.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Cheon's study (2011) provided evidence that cultural difference in values is associated with differences in how we experience and express emotions, such as in empathy, and that these cultural differences are in turn associated with different neural activation patterns. These findings can inform our understanding of how people from different cultures relate to others who are of a different status in a hierarchy and how this may influence their behavior, especially in dealing with conflict, delivering bad news, and giving negative feedback. Silence and saying "yes" in some cultures, is a very powerful communication tool for handling difficult conversations and defusing conflict. A project manager without cultural knowledge may mistake silence for agreement, leading to unmet expectations and conflict later.

Holistic and Analytic Cognition

Hedden, Ketay, Aron, Markus, and Gabrieli (2008) asked participants of East Asian and European descent to compare one box and line combination to a previously shown combination. In one condition, they were asked to judge whether the two combinations matched in the proportional size of the line and the box. In the second condition they were asked to judge whether the combination matched regardless of the size of the box. In other words, in the first condition, participants needed to incorporate contextual information while, in the second condition, they had to ignore it. The results showed that when East Asians were asked to ignore contextual information, they showed greater activation in the frontal parietal region, a region associated with attentional control. The same activation was experienced by westerners when they were asked to incorporate the contextual information. These results suggest that extra attention and effort are required when people are expected to engage in a cognitive style that is incongruent with their cultural orientation. Conversely, it takes less

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

attention and effort when we are engaged in mental processing that is congruent with our cultural cognitive style. This is relevant to understanding the challenges of engaging stakeholders who do not share the same cultural background, as this requires exerting mental effort and conscious awareness, when our brain prefers to engage in thinking styles congruent with our cultural orientation (Hedden et al., 2008).

These studies and others provide ample evidence to support the need for augmenting the existing cultural paradigms with findings from cultural neuroscience to improve our understanding of the factors that promote or hinder collaboration between project managers and their multicultural stakeholders. For example, the existing stakeholder management models that focus primarily on the needs and interests of the project organization may exacerbate and legitimize the unconscious in-group/out-group bias that affects intergroup relations. Such bias can undermine trust and prevents social bond and ultimately creates adversarial relationships between the project organization and the stakeholder community. Cultural difference in self-concept, emotion display and recognition, and cognitive styles, if combined with lack of cultural knowledge and absence of relationships, make the challenges of collaboration inherent in any relationship even more harmful to the project and to the community.

Discussion and Conclusion

Research Gap

The increase in cultural diversity in project environments requires a greater cultural understanding to make collaboration with culturally diverse stakeholders successful. The goal of effective stakeholder management activities is to maximize understanding of the needs and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

concerns of stakeholders to address them and improve collaboration in decision making and problem solving. Without cultural understanding, cultural differences, as shown in this review, can undermine trust and relationships when engaging culturally diverse stakeholders. The more the project organization and the stakeholders can understand each other, the more productive the collaboration will be.

The cultural dimension of stakeholder management has been studied, within project management research, primarily in the context of cross-national projects. The focus of most of these studies is on the cultural factors that influence collaboration between multinational organizations and in cross-border partnerships and collaboration. For example, most of these projects tend to be case studies of a client from one culture and a vendor from another culture. Given the lack of research specifically on ECDL communities as project stakeholder, we don't know yet if the conceptualization of the effect of cultural difference on stakeholder management in cross-national projects applies to culturally diverse stakeholders living within a dominant culture. For example, while we know from cross-national research that cultural differences impact knowledge creation and sharing in the context of cross-national projects, we don't know the implications for projects with culturally diverse stakeholders, such as ECDL communities, who are living within a dominant culture.

Furthermore, much of the existing research is based on studies from the private sector. The focus of such research is primarily on focal organization and its needs and interest and the factors that influence the stakeholders to comply with the organization's strategies and objectives. When these projects are not studied in the context of global multinational, stakeholders are treated as a homogenous population, with only their salience to the project

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

(power, legitimacy, urgency) as a variation. Projects in the public sector are focused on different types of objectives from those of the private sector. While the private sector focuses on maximizing shareholder equity, public sector is concerned with maximizing social equity and access to opportunities to all. Given the lack of research on ECDL communities as a project stakeholder in the context of public sector projects, we don't know how applicable the current conceptualization of stakeholder management is to engaging ECDL communities in projects, given their lived experience with marginalization and discrimination.

Implications for Research and Practice

Implications for Research

This narrative literature review contributes to previous research on project stakeholder management by examining the influence of cultural differences on the engagement of ECDL communities in local government PIC projects. While there is a growing recognition of the need to understand stakeholder engagement of the local community, there is very limited empirical research that focuses explicitly on the local community as a stakeholder (Aaltonen, 2011; Teo & Loosemore, 2017). Di Maddaloni and Davis (2017b) observed that the social impact of PIC projects on local community and interactions between PIC projects and local community, including marginalized stakeholder groups, have not been fully examined. They called for research on these topics and on how practitioners within PIC projects perceive local community stakeholders and how stakeholder practices are applied at the local community level.

The lack of empirical research that specifically examines the dynamics of multicultural stakeholder engagement in the context of ECDL communities, living within a dominant culture, has a number of implications. Information on how project managers approach engaging ECDL

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

communities, living in a dominant culture, is currently lacking. The research reviewed in the previous sections suggests that effective multicultural stakeholder management requires the project manager to assume new responsibilities and practices. For example, to enable meaningful participation, building capacity within a community may be necessary to give its members equitable representation within the project. Additionally, project managers may need to develop new skills to become culturally responsive to their multicultural stakeholders. Developing culturally responsive and inclusive practices and skills may require a significant change and extensions to the function of the project manager and to existing project management approaches that support cultural diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

Implications for Practice

There is a practical problem in that local communities are not generally engaged during local government projects like public infrastructure projects, especially during the early planning and decision-making phases. This is when local communities can make the most difference in mitigating the social and environmental impact of projects on their communities. The voices of ECDL communities tend to be even less represented in those critical early phases of these projects. Therefore, these communities suffer the most from health, education, and environment disparities in general, but especially those created by local government projects and programs.

Conclusion

This narrative literature review extends previous research on inclusive stakeholder management and local community as a project stakeholder. Over the last decade, there has been a call for a focus on a more equitable, inclusive, and socially responsible management-for-

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

stakeholders (Eskerod & Huemann, 2013; Eskerod, Huemann, & Ringhofer, 2015; Eskerod, Huemann, & Savage, 2015). This review highlights the need for additional research on project stakeholder engagement of ECDL communities to advance the normative formulation of stakeholder theory, which emphasizes the moral rights of all stakeholders and the fair distribution of benefits and harms arising from the organization's activities (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Additional research is needed to further expand this normative perspective by empirically examining inclusive project stakeholder management practices aimed specifically at ensuring the engagement of ECDL communities in PIC projects.

As this literature review showed, there is a research gap in that, while there is a recognition of the importance of cultural understanding to inclusive stakeholder engagement, there is no clear understanding of the factors that promote or inhibit engagement of ECDL communities in the context of local government PIC projects and programs. As a result, there is no clear understanding of how local government agencies operationalize inclusive and equitable project stakeholder engagement in their project delivery processes to increase participation of ECDL communities in project decisions.

Therefore, the research question that emerged from this literature review was:

- What are the factors that influence stakeholder engagement of ECDL communities in project decisions?

Chapter 3 and 4 will present two research studies (a preliminary and a main study) that examined this research question.

As Chapter 5 will show, a second research question emerged from the data analysis conducted to answer the above research question. The insights gained from exploring project

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

managers' understanding and experience of the challenges, barriers, and critical success factors for engaging ECDL communities left an open question. It would be of interest to organizations that are committed to advancing equity in their project management practices to understand how other local government agencies actually operationalize inclusive project stakeholder management aimed specifically at ensuring the participation of ECDL communities in projects. Therefore, Chapter 5 will present a case study that examined the following research question:

- What strategies do local government agencies utilize to operationalize inclusive stakeholder engagement to increase the participation of historically marginalized groups in project decisions?

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

References

- Aaltonen, K. (2011). Project stakeholder analysis as an environmental interpretation process. *International Journal of Project Management*, 29(2), 165-183.
- Aaltonen, K., & Sivonen, R. (2009). Response strategies to stakeholder pressures in global projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 27(2), 131-141.
- Aaltonen, K., & Kujala, J. (2010). A project lifecycle perspective on stakeholder influence strategies in global projects. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 26(4), 381-397.
- Aaltonen, K., Jaakko, K., & Tuomas, O. (2008). Stakeholder salience in global projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 26(5), 509-516.
- Aaltonen, K., Kujala, J., Lehtonen, P., & Ruuska, I. (2010). A stakeholder network perspective on unexpected events and their management in international projects. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 3(4), 564-588.
- Aapaoja, A., Haapasalo, H., & Söderström, P. (2013). Early stakeholder involvement in the project definition phase: Case renovation. *ISRN Industrial Engineering*, 2013.
- Adams, R. B., Jr., Rule, N. O., Franklin, R. G., Jr., Wang, E., Stevenson, M. T., Yoshikawa, S., . . . Ambady, N. (2010). Cross-cultural reading the mind in the eyes: An fMRI investigation. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 22(1), 97-108. doi:10.1162/jocn.2009.21187
- Ames, D. L., & Fiske, S. T. (2010). Cultural neuroscience. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 13(2), 72-82.
- Amster, R., & Böhm, C. (2016). Improving intercultural competency in global IT projects through recognition of culture-based behaviors. *IJISPM-International Journal of Information Systems and Project Management*, 4(2), 5-20.
- Anantatmula, V., & Thomas, M. (2010). Managing global projects: A structured approach for better performance. *Project Management Journal*, 41(2), 60-72.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Andersen, E. S. (2010). The x model—a tool for describing and assessing individual projects. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*.
- Andrulis, D. P., Siddiqui, N. J., & Gantner, J. L. (2007). Preparing racially and ethnically diverse communities for public health emergencies. *Health Affairs*, 26(5), 1269-1279.
- Ang, S., Van Dyne, L., Koh, C., Ng, K. Y., Templer, K. J., Tay, C., & Chandrasekar, N. A. (2007). Cultural intelligence: Its measurement and effects on cultural judgment and decision making, cultural adaptation and task performance. *Management and Organization Review*, 3(3), 335-371.
- Ball, C. L. (2016). *Intercultural dialogue for civic engagement: Perspectives from the multicultural community* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text Database database. (10105384)
- Banerjee, S. B. (2008). Corporate social responsibility: The good, the bad and the ugly. *Critical Sociology*, 34(1), 51-79.
- Betancourt, J. R., Corbett, J., & Bondaryk, M. R. (2014). Addressing disparities and achieving equity: Cultural competence, ethics, and health-care transformation. *Chest Journal*, 145(1), 143-148.
- Boutilier, R. G., & Zdziarski, M. (2017). Managing stakeholder networks for a social license to build. *Construction Management and Economics*, 35(8-9), 498-513.
- Brach, C., & Fraserirector, I. (2000). Can cultural competency reduce racial and ethnic health disparities? A review and conceptual model. *Medical Care Research and Review*, 57(1_suppl), 181-217.
- Bryson, J. M., Quick, K. S., Slotterback, C. S., & Crosby, B. C. (2013). Designing public participation processes. *Public Administration Review*, 73(1), 23-34.
- Burningham, K., Barnett, J., & Thrush, D. (2006). The limitations of the nimby concept for understanding public engagement with renewable energy technologies: A literature. Accessed February, 27.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Chang, W.-W. (2017). Approaches for developing intercultural competence: An extended learning model with implications from cultural neuroscience. *Human Resource Development Review, 16*(2), 158-175.
- Chen, P., & Partington, D. (2004). An interpretive comparison of Chinese and western conceptions of relationships in construction project management work. *International Journal of Project Management, 22*(5), 397-406.
- Cheon, B. K., Im, D. M., Harada, T., Kim, J. S., Mathur, V. A., Scimeca, J. M., . . . Chiao, J. Y. (2011). Cultural influences on neural basis of intergroup empathy. *Neuroimage, 57*(2), 642-650.
doi:10.1016/j.neuroimage.2011.04.031
- Chiao, J. Y. (2009). Cultural neuroscience: A once and future discipline. *Prog Brain Res, 178*, 287-304.
- Chiao, J. Y., Cheon, B. K., Pornpattanangkul, N., Mrazek, A. J., & Blizinsky, K. D. (2013). Cultural neuroscience: Progress and promise. *Psychological Inquiry, 24*(1), 1-19.
doi:10.1080/1047840X.2013.752715
- Chiao, J. Y., Iidaka, T., Gordon, H. L., Nogawa, J., Bar, M., Aminoff, E., . . . Ambady, N. (2008). Cultural specificity in amygdala response to fear faces. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience, 20*(12), 2167-2174. doi:10.1162/jocn.2008.20151
- Chiao, J. Y., Harada, T., Komeda, H., Li, Z., Mano, Y., Saito, D., . . . Iidaka, T. (2009). Neural basis of individualistic and collectivistic views of self. *Human Brain Mapping, 30*(9), 2813-2820.
doi:10.1002/hbm.20707
- Chua, R. Y., Morris, M. W., & Mor, S. (2012). Collaborating across cultures: Cultural metacognition and affect-based trust in creative collaboration. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 118*(2), 116-131.
- Cleland, D. I. (1986). Project stakeholder management. *Project Management Handbook, 17*, 36-44.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Close, R., & Loosemore, M. (2014). Breaking down the site hoardings: Attitudes and approaches to community consultation during construction. *Construction Management and Economics*, 32(7-8), 816-828.
- Crane, A., & Ruebottom, T. (2011). Stakeholder theory and social identity: Rethinking stakeholder identification. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 102(1), 77-87.
- Crotty, S. K., & Brett, J. M. (2012). Fusing creativity: Cultural metacognition and teamwork in multicultural teams. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research*, 5(2), 210-234.
- Daim, T. U., Ha, A., Reutiman, S., Hughes, B., Pathak, U., Bynum, W., & Bhatla, A. (2012). Exploring the communication breakdown in global virtual teams. *International Journal of Project Management*, 30(2), 199-212.
- Damian, D. E., & Zowghi, D. (2003). *An insight into the interplay between culture, conflict and distance in globally distributed requirements negotiations*. Paper presented at the System Sciences, 2003. Proceedings of the 36th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences.
- De Bony, J. (2010). Project management and national culture: A Dutch–French case study. *International Journal of Project Management*, 28(2), 173-182.
- de Camprieu, R., Desbiens, J., & Feixue, Y. (2007). ‘Cultural’ differences in project risk perception: An empirical comparison of china and canada. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25(7), 683-693.
- de Lancer Julnes, P., & Johnson, D. (2011). Strengthening efforts to engage the Hispanic community in citizen-driven governance: An assessment of efforts in utah. *Public Administration Review*, 71(2), 221-231.
- Dear, M. (1992). Understanding and overcoming the nimby syndrome. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 58(3), 288-300.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- DeLone, W., Espinosa, J. A., Lee, G., & Carmel, E. (2005). *Bridging global boundaries for IS project success*. Paper presented at the System Sciences, 2005. HICSS'05. Proceedings of the 38th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences.
- Di Maddaloni, F., & Davis, K. (2017a). Project manager's perception of the local communities' stakeholder in megaprojects. An empirical investigation in the UK. *International Journal of Project Management*.
- Di Maddaloni, F., & Davis, K. (2017b). The influence of local community stakeholders in megaprojects: Rethinking their inclusiveness to improve project performance. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(8), 1537-1556.
- Donaldson, T., & Preston, L. E. (1995). The stakeholder theory of the corporation: Concepts, evidence, and implications. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(1), 65-91.
- Doole, R., Chan, M. Y., & Huang, C.-M. (2015). Intercultural relations and the perceptual brain: A cognitive neuroscience perspective. In *Neuroscience in intercultural contexts* (pp. 203-214): Springer.
- Draganski, B., Gaser, C., Busch, V., Schuierer, G., Bogdahn, U., & May, A. (2004). Neuroplasticity: Changes in grey matter induced by training. *Nature*, 427(6972), 311.
- Dunham, L., Freeman, R. E., & Liedtka, J. (2006). Enhancing stakeholder practice: A particularized exploration of community. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 16(1), 23-42.
- Earley, P. C., & Ang, S. (2003). *Cultural intelligence: Individual interactions across cultures*. Stanford University Press.
- Eskerod, P., & Larsen, T. (2018). Advancing project stakeholder analysis by the concept 'shadows of the context'. *International Journal of Project Management*, 36(1), 161-169.
- Eskerod, P., & Huemann, M. (2013). Sustainable development and project stakeholder management: What standards say. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 6(1), 36-50.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Eskerod, P., Huemann, M., & Savage, G. (2015). Project stakeholder management—past and present.

Project Management Journal, 46(6), 6-14.

Eskerod, P., Huemann, M., & Ringhofer, C. (2015). Stakeholder inclusiveness: Enriching project

management with general stakeholder theory. *Project Management Journal*, 46(6), 42-53.

Flavell, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive—developmental

inquiry. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 906.

Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Cambridge University Press.

Freeman, R. E. (2010). Managing for stakeholders: Trade-offs or value creation. *Journal of Business*

Ethics, 96(1), 7-9.

Glazer, S., Blok, S., Mrazek, A. J., & Mathis, A. M. (2015). Implications of behavioral and neuroscience

research for cross-cultural training. In *Neuroscience in intercultural contexts* (pp. 171-202):

Springer.

Graetz, G., & Franks, D. M. (2016). Conceptualising social risk and business risk associated with private

sector development projects. *Journal of Risk Research*, 19(5), 581-601.

Gregory, R., Prifling, M., & Beck, R. (2009). The role of cultural intelligence for the emergence of

negotiated culture in it offshore outsourcing projects. *Information Technology & People*.

Hall, E. T. (1989). *Beyond culture*. Anchor.

Haried, P., & Ramamurthy, K. (2009). Evaluating the success in international sourcing of information

technology projects: The need for a relational client-vendor approach. *Project Management*

Journal, 40(3), 56-71.

Hart, S. L., & Sharma, S. (2004). Engaging fringe stakeholders for competitive imagination. *Academy of*

Management Perspectives, 18(1), 7-18.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Hedden, T., Ketay, S., Aron, A., Markus, H. R., & Gabrieli, J. D. (2008). Cultural influences on neural substrates of attentional control. *Psychological Science, 19*(1), 12-17. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02038.x
- Hofstede, G. (1994). The business of international business is culture. *International Business Review, 3*(1), 1-14.
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The hofstede model in context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, 2*(1), 2307-0919.1014.
- Hofstede, G. (1983). Cultural dimensions for project management. *International Journal of Project Management, 1*(1), 41-48.
- Hynes, H., & Lopez, R. (2007). Cumulative risk and a call for action in environmental justice communities. *Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice, 1*(2), 3.
- Ika, L. A. (2012). Project management for development in Africa: Why projects are failing and what can be done about it. *Project Management Journal, 43*(4), 27-41.
- Jain, R. P., Poston, R. S., & Simon, J. C. (2011). An empirical investigation of client managers' responsibilities in managing offshore outsourcing of software-testing projects. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management, 58*(4), 743-757.
- Jain, R. P., Simon, J. C., & Poston, R. S. (2011). Mitigating vendor silence in offshore outsourcing: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Management Information Systems, 27*(4), 261-298.
- Jones, L., & Wells, K. (2007). Strategies for academic and clinician engagement in community-participatory partnered research. *Jama, 297*(4), 407-410.
- Kinawy, S., & El-Diraby, T. E. (2010). *E-society: A community engagement framework for construction projects*. Paper presented at the Construction Research Congress 2010: Innovation for Reshaping Construction Practice.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- King, C. S., Feltey, K. M., & Susel, B. O. N. (1998). The question of participation: Toward authentic public participation in public administration. *Public Administration Review*, 317-326.
- Kitayama, S. (2013). Mapping mindsets. *APS Observer*, 26(10).
- Klandermans, B., & Van Stekelenburg, J. (2013). Social movements and the dynamics of collective action. *In The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology (2nd ed.)*.
doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199760107.013.0024
- Kobayashi, C., Glover, G. H., & Temple, E. (2006). Cultural and linguistic influence on neural bases of 'theory of mind': An fMRI study with Japanese bilinguals. *Brain Lang*, 98(2), 210-220.
doi:10.1016/j.bandl.2006.04.013
- Kohlbacher, F., & Krähe, M. O. (2007). Knowledge creation and transfer in a cross-cultural context— empirical evidence from Tyco flow control. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 14(3), 169-181.
- Liu, J., Meng, F., & Fellows, R. (2015). An exploratory study of understanding project risk management from the perspective of national culture. *International Journal of Project Management*, 33(3), 564-575.
- Loosemore, M., & Muslmani, H. A. (1999). Construction project management in the Persian Gulf: Inter-cultural communication. *International Journal of Project Management*, 17(2), 95-100.
- Maguire, E. A., Gadian, D. G., Johnsrude, I. S., Good, C. D., Ashburner, J., Frackowiak, R. S., & Frith, C. D. (2000). Navigation-related structural change in the hippocampi of taxi drivers. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 97(8), 4398-4403.
- Mahalingam, A., & Levitt, R. E. (2007). Institutional theory as a framework for analyzing conflicts on global projects. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 133(7), 517-528.
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98(2), 224.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- McVea, J. F., & Freeman, R. E. (2005). A names-and-faces approach to stakeholder management: How focusing on stakeholders as individuals can bring ethics and entrepreneurial strategy together. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 14(1), 57-69.
- Mechelli, A., Crinion, J. T., Noppeney, U., O'doherty, J., Ashburner, J., Frackowiak, R. S., & Price, C. J. (2004). Neurolinguistics: Structural plasticity in the bilingual brain. *Nature*, 431(7010), 757.
- Mitchell, R. K., Agle, B. R., & Wood, D. J. (1997). Toward a theory of stakeholder identification and salience: Defining the principle of who and what really counts. *Academy of Management Review*, 22(4), 853-886.
- Muriithi, N., & Crawford, L. (2003). Approaches to project management in Africa: Implications for international development projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 21(5), 309-319.
- Na, J., & Chan, M. Y. (2015). Culture, cognition, and intercultural relations. In *Neuroscience in intercultural contexts* (pp. 49-71): Springer.
- Ochieng, E. G., & Price, A. (2010). Managing cross-cultural communication in multicultural construction project teams: The case of Kenya and UK. *International Journal of Project Management*, 28(5), 449-460.
- Olander, S. (2007). Stakeholder impact analysis in construction project management. *Construction Management and Economics*, 25(3), 277-287.
- Pant, D. P., Allinson, C. W., & Hayes, J. (1996). Transferring the western model of project organisation to a bureaucratic culture: The case of Nepal. *International Journal of Project Management*, 14(1), 53-57.
- Petrova, M. A. (2016). From NIMBY to acceptance: Toward a novel framework—VESPA—for organizing and interpreting community concerns. *Renewable Energy*, 86, 1280-1294.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Pheng, L. S., & Leong, C. H. (2000). Cross-cultural project management for international construction in China. *International Journal of Project Management*, 18(5), 307-316.
- Project Management Institute. (2017). A guide to the project management body of knowledge (6th ed.). *Project Management Institute, Inc*, 2-111.
- Rees-Caldwell, K., & Pinnington, A. H. (2013). National culture differences in project management: Comparing British and Arab project managers' perceptions of different planning areas. *International Journal of Project Management*, 31(2), 212-227.
- Rule, N. O. (2014). Cultural neuroscience: A historical introduction and overview. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 9(2). doi:10.9707/2307-0919.1128
- Sasaki, J. Y., & Kim, H. S. (2017). Nature, nurture, and their interplay: A review of cultural neuroscience. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 48(1), 4-22. doi:10.1177/0022022116680481
- Shore, B., & Cross, B. J. (2005). Exploring the role of national culture in the management of large-scale international science projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 23(1), 55-64.
- Singleton, K., & Krause, E. (2009). Understanding cultural and linguistic barriers to health literacy. *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 14(3), 4.
- Sun, L., Yung, E. H., Chan, E. H., & Zhu, D. (2016). Issues of nimby conflict management from the perspective of stakeholders: A case study in Shanghai. *Habitat International*, 53, 133-141.
- Swierczek, F. W. (1994). Culture and conflict in joint ventures in asia. *International Journal of Project Management*, 12(1), 39-47.
- Teo, M., & Loosemore, M. (2014). The role of core protest group members in sustaining protest against controversial construction and engineering projects. *Habitat International*, 44, 41-49.
- Teo, M., & Loosemore, M. (2017). Understanding community protest from a project management perspective: A relationship-based approach. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(8), 1444-1458.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Thomas, D. C., Elron, E., Stahl, G., Ekelund, B. Z., Ravlin, E. C., Cerdin, J.-L., . . . Aycan, Z. (2008). Cultural intelligence: Domain and assessment. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 8(2), 123-143.
- Trompenaars, F., & Hampden-Turner, C. (2011). *Riding the waves of culture: Understanding diversity in global business*: Nicholas Brealey International.
- Ullah Khan, A. (2014). Effects of cultural assimilation on the performance of a construction project—evidence from uae. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 21(3), 430-449.
- Van Dyne, L., Ang, S., Ng, K. Y., Rockstuhl, T., Tan, M. L., & Koh, C. (2012). Sub-dimensions of the four factor model of cultural intelligence: Expanding the conceptualization and measurement of cultural intelligence. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 6(4), 295-313.
- Watson, W. E., Kumar, K., & Michaelsen, L. K. (1993). Cultural diversity's impact on interaction process and performance: Comparing homogeneous and diverse task groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(3), 590-602.
- Weir, D., & Hutchings, K. (2005). Cultural embeddedness and contextual constraints: Knowledge sharing in chinese and arab cultures. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 12(2), 89-98.
- Wester-Herber, M. (2004). Underlying concerns in land-use conflicts—the role of place-identity in risk perception. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 7(2), 109-116.
- Wuyun, G., Shu, M., Cao, Z., Huang, W., Zou, X., Li, S., . . . Wu, Y. (2014). Neural representations of the self and the mother for Chinese individuals. *PLoS One*, 9(3), e91556.
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0091556
- Yang, J., Shen, G. Q., Ho, M., Drew, D. S., & Xue, X. (2011). Stakeholder management in construction: An empirical study to address research gaps in previous studies. *International Journal of Project Management*, 29(7), 900-910.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Yang, R. J. (2014). An investigation of stakeholder analysis in urban development projects: Empirical or rationalistic perspectives. *International Journal of Project Management*, 32(5), 838-849.
- Žegarac, V., & Spencer-Oatey, H. (2013). Achieving mutual understanding in intercultural project partnerships: Cooperation, self-orientation, and fragility. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 10(3), 433-458.
- Zhang, Y., Marquis, C., Filippov, S., Haasnoot, H.-J., & Van der Steen, M. (2015). *The challenges and enhancing opportunities of global project management: Evidence from chinese and dutch cross-cultural project management*. Harvard Business School Working Paper, No. 15-063.
- Zhu, Y., Zhang, L., Fan, J., & Han, S. (2007). Neural basis of cultural influence on self-representation. *Neuroimage*, 34(3), 1310-1316. doi:10.1016/j.neuroimage.2006.08.047

Appendix 1- Summary table of Project Management reviewed articles (N=42)

Author/Year	Publication Type	Design/ Methodology	Sample Size	Sampling	Country	Key Findings
(Aaltonen, 2011)	Journal	Qualitative design Multiple cases Interviews	22	Unspecified	China and unspecified countries from Eastern Europe	<p>This paper focused on stakeholder analysis as a strategy for how project managers interpret the project environment in order to reduce uncertainty and manage risk. The following are relevant findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects are embedded in their social context. • There is a link between the project manager's cultural competence and their ability to effectively assess project risks. • Stakeholder analysis is highly dependent on the fairness of the project manager. • The project manager plays a central role in stakeholder engagement and in achieving equity goals. • There are variations in how project managers respond to local communities.
(Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010)	Journal	Qualitative Single case Documents Analysis	N/A	N/A	Finland and Uruguay	<p>This paper focused on project stakeholder management approaches to handling stakeholders' influence on project decisions throughout the project lifecycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper identified a paradox where the early phase of a project is the period when stakeholders can have the most influence, yet they are often not engaged at this crucial period in the project lifecycle. • The nature of projects, being unique and with inflexible decision-making processes, influences how external stakeholders are perceived and, in turn, how stakeholders oppose projects. • Because external stakeholders can influence projects, project management should do an in-depth analysis of the diversity of stakeholder needs and demands. • Understanding the attributes, concerns, and behavior of external stakeholders helps management better engage them. • Western companies focus on speed and efficiency at the expense of addressing secondary stakeholders' concerns.
(Close & Loosemore, 2014)	Journal	Mixed method quantitative and qualitative Survey and semi-structured Interviews	151 Surveys 10 interviews	Random	UK, Australia, and New Zealand	<p>This paper investigated the attitudes and approaches towards community consultation during construction projects. It found that in construction projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project teams tended to perceive that community engagement was only needed in the planning phase. Community engagement, therefore, was perceived as the responsibility of planners. • Project teams tended to lack skills in community engagement and did not perceive training on community engagement as beneficial. • Once the construction phase started, there was very little openness to community consultation, and community engagement tended to be more reactive than proactive. • Community consultation was more of a token obligation than an opportunity to build partnerships with the community. • Project management perceived that the risks of community engagement outweighed the benefits.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Author/Year	Publication Type	Design/ Methodology	Sample Size	Sampling	Country	Key Findings
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project management perceived managing community engagement during construction to be a burden, costly, and time-consuming.
(Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017a)	Journal	Qualitative design: Semi-structured Interviews	19	Purposive	UK	<p>This paper focused on how project managers perceive local communities and how their engagement could improve the performance of the projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In project decisions, stakeholder management tends to not include local communities that could be harmed by the organization's strategy. Project managers lack an established method or conceptual map for identifying, categorizing, and assessing local community stakeholders, which is necessary for including them in the decision-making process of projects. The paper identified the need for broader inclusiveness of local communities as stakeholders and argued that the inclusion of stakeholders is essential to enhancing the benefits of projects.
(Eslerod, Huemann, & Ringhofer, 2015)	Journal	Qualitative design: Single case Semi-structured Interviews, focus group, document analysis	16	Purposive	Denmark	<p>This study focused on the challenges of inclusive stakeholder engagement that require the engagement of a broad range of stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This study highlighted the dilemma that while projects strive for inclusive stakeholder engagement by engaging a broad range of stakeholders, they run the risk of losing focus and neglecting or alienating the important stakeholders that the project depends on for resources. A high degree of stakeholder engagement may lead the stakeholders to develop escalating expectations that, if not met, may result in stakeholder disappointment.
(Liu et al., 2015)	Journal	Qualitative design: Single case Semi-structured Interviews and document analysis	25	Purposive	China, Poland, and Singapore	<p>This study examined how culture influences risk management in cross-cultural international projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture influences risk management: project risks are perceived and managed differently in different national cultures. The number of risks and the difficulty of addressing them are greater when project stakeholders do not share a similar cultural background.
(Olander, 2007)	Journal	Qualitative design: Semi-structured Interviews and document analysis	unknown	Purposive	Sweden	<p>This paper focused on the negative impact of a lack of stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder analysis is investigated as a strategy for assessing the needs and expectations of stakeholders in relation to the objectives of the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lack of stakeholder involvement can result in a confrontational relationship with stakeholders and can lead to the project being perceived as unsuccessful even if it met all of its time, cost, and scope objectives. Instead of proactively considering stakeholder concerns, especially during the early stages of a project when they can be proactively addressed, project managers are forced to react to them once the public opposes the project. This reactive approach to stakeholder engagement undermines relationships with the stakeholders. <p>Critical Review/Limitations:</p>

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Author/Year	Publication Type	Design/ Methodology	Sample Size	Sampling	Country	Key Findings
						It is not clear from the methodology section of this paper how many participants were interviewed for this study. Therefore, the findings should be considered with caution.
(Petrova, 2016)	Journal	Quantitative design Survey	1051	Random	US	<p>This paper examined the factors that lead communities to support or oppose projects and the common perception that local community opposition is attributed to NIMBYism (Not-In-My-Back-Yard).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NIMBY label is used as a blanket label to explain all opposition as selfishly motivated. This view fails to take into account the complexity of the social and political dynamics of stakeholder engagement. • Project management needs to move to a more sophisticated understanding of the human dynamics of a project. • A better understanding of the perceptions, preferences, and motives of those who support or oppose projects can be achieved by categorizing their concerns and identifying which ones create more discontent than others.
(Sun et al., 2016)	Journal	Qualitative design: Single case Semi-structured Interviews	15	snowball sampling	China	<p>This case study examined how project management approached public opposition to projects that they attributed to NIMBY (Not-In-My-Back-Yard) attitudes and motivation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of stakeholder engagement is one of the leading causes of NIMBY conflicts. • Stakeholder engagement and understanding and addressing the needs and interests of the most affected stakeholders is an effective strategy in mitigating NIMBY conflicts.
(Teo & Loosemore, 2014)	Journal	Qualitative design: Single case Semi-structured Interviews	24	Snowball sampling	Australia	<p>This study investigated the role of community group members in driving community-based protests against construction and engineering projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A key finding of this study is that the lack of formal structure within the core groups that drive community-based protests is the most important factor in sustaining community opposition to a project over time. • Mismanaging stakeholder engagement of the core group leads it to go underground, which can strengthen its ability to build a coalition against the project and rapidly spread negative perceptions of the project. • The more the project is perceived as a threat, the more cohesive the group will become, perpetuating and sustaining community actions against the project. <p>Critical Review/Limitations: One of the strengths of this study is that the researchers established a good relationship with the local community by participating in their protest against a controversial project. This participation helped the researchers gain the trust of the community, which enabled the researchers to gain access to valuable insights that is only possible by developing an insider status.</p>

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Author/Year	Publication Type	Design/ Methodology	Sample Size	Sampling	Country	Key Findings
(Teo & Loosemore, 2017)	Journal	Qualitative design: Ethnographic Semi-structured Interviews	24	Purposive	Australia	<p>This study examined one community's opposition to a highly controversial construction project to provide an understanding of the complex and dynamic challenge that community-based protests pose to project stakeholder management. The study found it is important that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMs tap into the social capital of the community, • PMs develop an intimate knowledge of community needs and concerns, • PMs build trust with the community through genuine engagement early and throughout the project lifecycle, and • PMs ensure that concerns identified in the early stages of the project continue to be considered throughout the project lifecycles until fully addressed.
(Yang, 2014)	Journal	Qualitative design: Single case Semi-structured Interviews and documents	unknown	Purposive	unknown	<p>This study examined the process of stakeholder analysis and the methods used to identify stakeholders and prioritize their interests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the study, two methods were proposed for identifying stakeholders: empirical and rationalistic perspectives. The empirical perspective posits that analysis of a small core group of stakeholders, rather than all stakeholders, is a more efficient approach to stakeholder analysis. On the other hand, in the rationalistic perspective, the analysis of all the stakeholders, not just a core stakeholder group, is considered the more robust approach. • No one method is perfect. Stakeholders can be identified using a combination of both methods, which is recommended, as combining both perspectives and comparing the analysis from both approaches can help project managers develop a more robust stakeholder analysis. <p>Critical Review/Limitations: It is not clear from the methodology section of this paper how many participants were interviewed for this study. Therefore, the findings should be considered with caution.</p>
(Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009)	Journal	Qualitative design: Multiple case Semi-structured Interviews and analysis of documents	23	Purposive	Finland	<p>This paper examined the different types of response strategies that project managers use to address stakeholder opposition to projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the center of most stakeholder conflicts is a disagreement between the objectives of organization and the interests of its stakeholders. • It identified five response strategies: adaptation strategy, compromising strategy, avoidance strategy, dismissal strategy, and influence strategy. • The characteristics of the stakeholders and types of claims influence PM response strategy.
(Aaltonen et al., 2008)	Journal	Qualitative design: Single case Analysis of public documents	N/A	Purposive	Finland and Uruguay	<p>This paper examined the different strategies project stakeholders use to increase their influence on project decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It identified strategies that stakeholders use to increase their salience and the legitimacy of their claims.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Author/Year	Publication Type	Design/ Methodology	Sample Size	Sampling	Country	Key Findings
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project managers must be aware of stakeholder influence strategies as they represent potential risks that lead to cost and time overruns. Stakeholder analysis enables project managers to understand which stakeholder groups are willing and able to threaten the project. This paper is an example of how research on external stakeholders is primarily focused on understanding the stakeholder from the perspective that they are a threat to the project, and the motivation of the research is to help PMs understand how to mitigate this threat. <p>Critical Review/Limitations: One of the weaknesses of this paper is the fact that, for a study that seeks to identify the different strategies project stakeholders use to increase their salience, it only relied on information published in two main Finnish financial periodicals. The perspective of the project team or the local community was not considered. Given that the project was based in Uruguay, it would have been interesting to understand the perspective of the impacted local communities in Uruguay. Additionally, interviews with the project team and/or the local community would have made this study more robust. Therefore, the findings should be considered with caution.</p>
(Aaltonen et al., 2010)	Journal	Qualitative design: Multiple case Semi-structured Interviews and analysis of documents	26	Purposive	Finland, China, and an unspecified former Soviet Union country	<p>This paper examined how project managers approach risks resulting from “unexpected events” and how the approaches they use impact relationships with stakeholders in the context of international projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current stakeholder management models do not reflect the increasingly diverse nature of project environments. The lack of relationships with local stakeholders can lead to unexpected events and creates uncertainty. Project management needs to understand the diversity of stakeholders in order to understand their interests and build relationships. Projects need to leverage local stakeholders’ knowledge in decision making to mitigate risks associated with unexpected events.
(Aapaoja et al., 2013)	Journal	Qualitative design: Single case Semi-structured Interviews	8	snowball sampling	Finland	<p>This paper examined the process and nature of early engagement of stakeholders in the definition phases of projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging stakeholders early in a project lifecycle enables open exchange of ideas and leads to the emergence of creative solutions. It is important to understand the diversity of stakeholders and use this information to adapt stakeholder engagement approaches based on stakeholders’ roles, needs, and salience in relation to the project.
(Amster & Böhm, 2016)	Journal	Qualitative Design Interviews	40	Purposive	India and other unspecified countries	<p>This paper examined how cultural differences impacted projects, and it identified several behaviors that significantly affected project success and cross-cultural collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher combined existing research on cultural values and beliefs with their research that identified five major culture-based

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Author/Year	Publication Type	Design/ Methodology	Sample Size	Sampling	Country	Key Findings
						<p>categories of behaviors that influence managing multicultural collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how project team members communicate, - how project team members form relationships, - how decisions are made for the project, - how projects are planned and scheduled, and - how rigorously defined processes are followed.
(Anantamula & Thomas, 2010)		Mixed method design Survey data Data analysis using Interpretive structural modeling	76	Unspecified	Unspecified	<p>This paper examined the factors that enhance and inhibit the performance of global projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It highlighted the importance of recognizing similarities and differences in culture and values. • Project managers need to adapt their leadership strategies and project management practices to the cultural context of the project stakeholders. • It emphasized the importance of providing training on cultural values to the entire project team.
(Chen & Partington, 2004)	Journal	Qualitative Design Phenomenography Semi-structured Interviews	20	Theoretical sampling	China and U.K	<p>This paper examined cultural differences in how project managers conceive their work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It found cultural differences in how project managers perceive relationships in projects. Project Managers from China, unlike their counterparts from the U.K, were found to place importance on relationships rather than contractual agreements. Although project managers from the U.K also valued relationships, the study found differences in how the different cultures define good relationships.
(Daim et al., 2012)	Journal	Mixed method Interviews Survey	10	Purposive	U.S and other unspecified countries	<p>This paper examined the types of factors that contribute to communication breakdowns in global projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-cultural differences were found to impact communication in cross-functional collaboration. • When cultural differences are not managed, projects are unable to leverage the benefits and advantages of diverse teams.
(Damian & Zowghi, 2003)	Conference Proceeding	Qualitative Design Case Study Interviews Grounded theory	Unspecified	Purposive	U.S and Australia	<p>This paper examined the relationship between culture and conflict as they affect requirement-analysis processes in globally distributed projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It highlighted the challenges that PMs face when dealing with conflicting requirements from multiple stakeholders with different cultural beliefs and values. • Differences in cultural values can have an impact on ranking, prioritizing, and negotiating requirements. • It draws attention to the impact of cultural differences in approach to conflict during requirements management. • It emphasized the importance of investing in training PMs on cultural differences to improve their conflict management skills. This can help PMs in resolving conflicts that emerge during the requirements-analysis phase of a project. <p>Critical Review/Limitations:</p>

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Author/Year	Publication Type	Design/ Methodology	Sample Size	Sampling	Country	Key Findings
						It is not clear from the methodology section of this paper how many participants were interviewed for this study. Therefore, the findings should be considered with caution.
(De Bony, 2010)	Journal	Qualitative Design Case study Interviews and Document analysis	16	Purposive	Netherland and France	<p>This study examined the success factors for culturally appropriate and effective project customer engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM practices need to adapt to cultural context. • Cultural differences influence collaboration, coordination, and decision making. • It argued for the need to tailor practices to the context of the project. • Tailoring practices to the context of the project required a deep understanding of existing norms and routines.
(de Camprieu et al., 2007)	Journal	Quantitative Design Questionnaire	138	Purposive	China and Canada	<p>This paper examined how project managers from different cultural backgrounds differ in the way they assess risks on a large project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It found cultural differences in how project managers perceive, assess, and manage risk. • Ignoring cultural differences limits the ability of project teams to mitigate the impact and leverage the benefits and advantages of diversity. <p>Critical Review/Limitations: The aim of this paper was to investigate how project managers from different cultures differ in how they assess the risk of a large project. However, all participants were students in a university master's degree programs. It is not clear how many of the students had actual professional experience managing projects, let alone large projects. Therefore, caution regarding generalization from the findings of this study should be noted.</p>
(DeLone et al., 2005)	Conference Proceedings	Qualitative Design Semi-structured interview	9	Purposive	India, Ireland, South Africa, and U.S	<p>This study examined the factors that lead to the success and failure of global projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It found that cultural differences had a negative effect on project performance as it caused time and cost overruns and low quality. • Cultural differences particularly impact the initial phases of a project. Differences in communication, shared belief, and trust hindered project success. • While communication was found to be high on the list of factors that impact the success of a project, two of the nine factors related to the shared understanding of project goals and strategies, as well as trust, were found to be key to success in intercultural contexts.
(Gregory et al., 2009)	Journal	Qualitative Design Case study Semi-structured interview	31	Theoretical sampling	Germany and India	<p>This study examined how project team members deal with cultural differences and how cultural intelligence helps project managers develop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This study draws attention to the importance of cultural intelligence in developing a “negotiated” culture, which is defined as trust-based interpersonal relationships, shared understanding, and the effective resolution of conflicts.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Author/Year	Publication Type	Design/ Methodology	Sample Size	Sampling	Country	Key Findings
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both cognitive and motivational components of the cultural intelligence model of cultural intelligence are antecedents of behavioral cultural intelligence. Developing cultural intelligence should take the same priority as the development of technical and functional skills.
(Haried & Ramamurthy, 2009)	Journal	Qualitative Design Case study Semi-structured interview	56	Purposive	U.S and India	<p>This study examined how different stakeholders evaluate the success of projects differently in the context of vendor-client relationship and how relationship-related factors play a key role in achieving project success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting practices to the cultural context of a project is a key to the success of the relationship with stakeholders. Adapting project management practices to the cultural context of the project sends a signal to stakeholders that the project team is committed to and cares about the relationship with stakeholders since the project team is willing to make sacrifices to support the relationship.
(Jain, Poston, et al., 2011)	Journal	Qualitative Design Case study Semi-structured interview	15	theoretical sampling	U.S and India	<p>This study examined the type of project management activities that need to be adapted in order to effectively manage globally distributed projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project management practices need to be enhanced when dealing with culturally diverse stakeholders. In other words, what are the additional capacities/skills that are needed for the PM to effectively engage culturally diverse stakeholders? This study highlighted the importance of developing social bonds to create an environment where it is safe to communicate about difficult issues, negative feedback, and bad news. The main insight from this study is the importance of building relationships with culturally diverse stakeholders (in this case, the partnership between stakeholders on a project). Relying primarily on project management processes is not sufficient. It is important to build close relationships that foster trust. This study also highlights the additional responsibilities that multicultural stakeholder management requires or entails.
(Jain, Simon, et al., 2011)	Journal	Qualitative Design Case study Semi-structured interview	15	Purposive	U.S and India	<p>This study focused on the importance of cultural adaptation in mitigating risks associated with the tendency of some stakeholders to remain silent about project-related issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silence can take different forms: minimizing impact, delay in disclosure, failure to disclose, and the lack of contributions to improve processes. In order to mitigate these issues, it is important to understand the social mechanisms that would best reduce cultural misalignment on projects.
(Kohlbacher & Krähe, 2007)	Journal	Qualitative Design Case study Semi-structured interview Document analysis	100+	Purposive	U.S, Japan, and unspecified European countries	<p>This study examined how cultural differences and cross-cultural contexts influence knowledge creation, transfer, and management in global projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural differences influence the creation and transfer of knowledge, and the magnitude of the knowledge transfer required at the beginning of collaboration can be underestimated.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Author/Year	Publication Type	Design/ Methodology	Sample Size	Sampling	Country	Key Findings
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation to transfer knowledge can be lacking at the start of a partnership and can take time to develop. • There can be cultural differences in the preferred methodology of knowledge transfer by the parties involved in the project. • Setting goals and targets without considering the cultural differences in the preferred ways to achieve them can result in time and cost overruns.
(Loosemore & Muslmani, 1999)	Journal	Quantitative Design Survey	59	Random	U.K and Iran	<p>This study examined the communication challenges that emerge on international projects due to cultural differences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural differences in approach to uncertainty and conceptualization of time can lead to misunderstanding and conflict. • The study draws attention to the importance of cultural training as an effective strategy to mitigate the effect of cultural differences on projects.
(Mahalingam & Levitt, 2007)	Journal	Qualitative Design Case study Unstructured interview	20	Theoretical sampling	U.S, France, Germany	<p>This study examined how institutional theory can help practitioners understand and mitigate the cross-national issues they encounter on international projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This case study on the planning phase of a project found that cultural differences in information gathering and what information is expected or available can impact the project. • The study also found that rules vary, in different cultures, on what information is made public.
(Ochieng & Price, 2010)	Journal	Qualitative Design Semi-structured interview	20	Purposive	Kenya and U.K	<p>This study focused on the cultural factors that influence communication in multicultural project environments and how effective communication can mitigate the issues that emerge in such projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication, collectivism, empathy, and trust are key factors that influence multicultural teams. • Effective communication is key to managing conflict that emerges in multicultural project teams due to differences in expectations, misconceptions, and misgivings. • The culture of the PM plays a major role in how the project team perceived cross-cultural communication in the project. • It was found to be important that the PM be culturally competent. <p>Critical Review/Limitations: Regarding the finding that the culture of the PM played a major role in how the project team perceived cross-cultural communication, this is a finding that was not clarified in the paper. Therefore, caution should be exercised concerning this finding.</p>
(Pant et al., 1996)	Journal	Quantitative Design Survey	293	Purposive	Nepal, U.S, and U.K	<p>This study examined how project management practices from western countries are applied in culturally different project contexts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This study highlighted the challenges of transferring project management models developed in economically advanced countries to less developed countries.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Author/Year	Publication Type	Design/ Methodology	Sample Size	Sampling	Country	Key Findings
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preferences for hierarchical relationships and conformity to regulations, in some cultures, may be incompatible with project management models developed in cultures that have a low preference for conformity, power, and rule orientation.
(Pheng & Leong, 2000)	Journal	Qualitative Design Case study	Unspecified	Purposive	China and U.S	<p>This paper examined the impact of cultural differences on collaboration and the effect of cross-cultural management on project outcomes in the context of construction project management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were differences in the perception of relationships, communication, dispute resolution, and negotiation. Project managers working in cross-cultural contexts need to understand the prevailing cultural differences and take steps to mitigate their impact on projects. <p>Critical Review/Limitations: It is not clear from the methodology section of this paper how many participants were interviewed for this study. Therefore, the findings should be considered with caution.</p>
(Rees-Caldwell & Pinnington, 2013)	Journal	Quantitative Design Survey	200	Random	U.K and United Arab Emirates	<p>This study focused on the influence of national culture on the planning processes of project management in the context of international projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A key finding from this study was that national culture has an effect on the way project managers understand the planning phase of the project. The study suggested that project managers may have different PM cognitive schemas or scripts concerning planning phases and practices. Cultural differences in how PMs understand planning processes had an impact on working relationships, communication, and collaboration in projects.
(Shore & Cross, 2005)	Journal	Qualitative Design Semi-structured interview	Unspecified	Purposive	U.K, U.S, Belgium, and France	<p>This study examined the influence of national culture on the project management processes in the context of large-scale projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A key finding from this study is that cultural dimensions influence management behavior and decision making. The specific cultural dimensions that are linked to project management are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, humane treatment, and future orientation. <p>Critical Review/Limitations: It is not clear from the methodology section of this paper how many participants were interviewed for this study. Therefore, the findings should be considered with caution.</p>
(Swierczek, 1994)	Journal	Qualitative Design Case Study Questionnaire	250	Purposive	Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and France.	<p>This study examined how cultural differences create conflict in international projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall theme from this study is the central role that cultural differences play in relationships and partnerships.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Author/Year	Publication Type	Design/ Methodology	Sample Size	Sampling	Country	Key Findings
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural differences in how conflict is perceived and approached lead to different perspectives and approaches to solving problems. These differences can result in barriers to communication that undermine the benefits and advantages of cultural diversity in partnerships.
(Ullah Khan, 2014)	Journal	Qualitative Design Ethnography and analysis of project records Grounded theory	Unspecified	Purposive	China and United Arab Emirates	<p>This study examined the effect of national culture on the performance of construction projects and the cultural factors that lead to their success or failure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The case study showed two projects from the same company. One succeeded, and one failed. The difference was the degree of “cultural assimilation.” The study identified several cultural factors that impacted the projects. There were cultural differences in handling uncertainty, and project managers who showed cultural understanding were able to reduce the uncertainty that is typically inherent in the early stages of projects. Cultural understanding at the start of the project (project initiation and planning) is key to success. It identified the importance of continuing to monitor the progress of cultural responsiveness during the execution phase of the project. The paper argued that cultural competence is important to delivering successful projects across cultures. <p>Critical Review/Limitations: It is not clear from the methodology section of this paper how many participants were interviewed for this study. Therefore, the findings should be considered with caution.</p>
(Watson et al., 1993)	Journal	Quantitative Design Survey	173	Purposive	U.S and unspecified countries in Asia, Latin America, Africa, or the Middle East.	<p>This longitudinal study compared the performance of a homogenous group and a diverse group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance of the culturally diverse team started out poorer than the homogenous group but improved over time. While overall performance remained the same for the two cultural groups, the performance of the diverse group improved after week 9, and it scored higher on two tasks: identifying problem perspectives and generating solution alternatives.
(Yang et al., 2011)	Journal	Qualitative Design Interviews questionnaire survey Case study	6	Purposive	China and Australia	<p>This study examined the stakeholder management process in the context of construction projects and provided an understanding of how the social network analysis technique can be applied to stakeholder analysis. It identified and ranked 15 critical success factors for stakeholder management. The top factors were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> managing stakeholders with social responsibilities (economic, legal, environmental, and ethical), exploring what stakeholders need from the project, communicating with and engaging stakeholders, understanding stakeholder interests, and properly identifying stakeholders.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Author/Year	Publication Type	Design/ Methodology	Sample Size	Sampling	Country	Key Findings
(Žegarac & Spencer-Oatey, 2013)	Journal	Qualitative Design Analysis of meeting documents	8	Purposive	U.K, China	<p>This study investigated cross-cultural challenges during the early stages of projects by analyzing the interaction at a meeting between Chinese and British stakeholders at the start of a project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The paper suggests that concern for self-image (face concerns) plays a major role in cross-cultural communication in projects. The study suggests that this concern for the self can become a barrier to negotiating common understanding. <p>Critical Review/Limitations: The authors of this study acknowledged that recognize that we cannot generalize from analysis of a single meeting, but it does highlight a key barrier to communication in cross-cultural projects.</p>
(Zhang et al., 2015)	Journal	Qualitative Design Case study Interviews	5	Purposive	China and the Netherlands	<p>This study examined the role national and organizational culture play in the day-to-day activities of multinational project teams, specifically focusing on differences between Chinese and Dutch project managers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This study found different processes are interpreted differently depending on culture, which leads to differences in performance and satisfaction. <p>Critical Review/Limitations This study used participants who were already adapted to cross-cultural work and, therefore, may have developed some skills in cross-cultural collaboration. The researchers did not address how this type of experience may have influenced the findings.</p>

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 2- Summary table of Cultural Neuroscience reviewed articles (N=10)

Author/Year	Participants and Sample Characteristics	Procedure	Summary of Relevant Findings
(Adams et al., 2010)	<p>-28 participants from Japan and U.S</p> <p>-14 white American participants (9 women)</p> <p>-14 native Japanese participants (9 women)</p> <p>-Between the ages of 18 and 27 years.</p>	<p>In-group/Outgroup</p> <p>During scanning, participants viewed 72 photographs depicting 36 white American and 36 Asian eye stimuli, once with corresponding mental state labels and once with gender labels, for a total of 144 stimulus presentations.</p> <p>Participants viewed images that only showed an individual's eyes and were asked to identify the emotional state of the individual in the image.</p>	<p>Consistently, the results showed that participants were more accurate in identifying the emotions expressed in people from their own culture. What was more interesting was that the superior temporal sulcus, a brain region typically recruited when making social judgments, showed significantly more activation when participants saw images of people of their own culture.</p>
(Cheon et al., 2011)	<p>-27 Participants from Korea and U.S</p> <p>-13 Native Koreans living in South Korea (5 women)</p> <p>-14 Caucasian-Americans living in the United States (7 women)</p>	<p>Emotion Expression</p> <p>The study examined the connection between the cultural values of social hierarchy and empathy.</p> <p>Stimuli consisted of images of scenes depicting either Korean or Caucasian-Americans in an emotionally painful or neutral situation.</p> <p>During scanning, Caucasian American and Korean participants viewed images depicting people in painful situations.</p>	<p>Koreans showed greater activation in the left temporoparietal junction (L-TPJ), a region associated with theory of mind, when viewing pain images depicting people from their own culture. Similar activation was not observed with Caucasian American participants, who come from a culture that endorses egalitarianism.</p> <p>The researchers hypothesized that, in certain cultures, it might be necessary to include theory of mind to understand one's obligations to others. Conversely, cultures that endorse egalitarianism encourage self-expression, and therefore, reliance on theory of mind to determine the emotional state of others may not be necessary.</p>
(Chiao et al., 2008)	<p>-20 participants from Japan and U.S</p> <p>-10 native Japanese living in Japan (5 men, 5 women)</p> <p>-10 Caucasians living in the United States (5 men, 5 women)</p> <p>-Between the ages of 18 and 25 years</p>	<p>Emotion Expression</p> <p>Stimuli consisted of 80 pictures of faces, each with either a fearful, a neutral, a happy, or an angry expression taken from Japanese and Caucasian posers.</p> <p>During scanning, participants viewed images of fearful and non-fearful faces.</p>	<p>Participants showed greater empathy and were able to more accurately identify the emotional state of the person in the image when the person belonged to their own cultural group. These results suggest that the accuracy of understanding the emotional states of others diminishes upon engaging peoples from cultures different from ours.</p> <p>This has a direct application to the interaction between project managers and their culturally diverse stakeholders, especially when the project manager does not share the same cultural background as the stakeholder.</p>
(Chiao et al., 2009)	<p>-24 participants from Japan and U.S</p> <p>-12 native Japanese young adults (7 males, 5 women) living Japan</p> <p>-12 Caucasian-American young adults (7 males, 5 women) living in U.S</p>	<p>Self-concept</p> <p>During scanning, participants were asked to judge whether a sentence described them in general (general self-task) or if it described them in the context of a relationship with others (contextual self-task).</p>	<p>Participants from both groups showed greater activation in the prefrontal cortex (MPFC), a region associated with self-knowledge. However, while this activation was experienced by participants who identified with independent values during the general self-task, participants who identified with interdependent values experienced it in the contextual self-task.</p>

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

			These findings suggest that cultural values such as independence and interdependence are associated with a neural activation pattern underlying how we represent the self.
(Hedden et al., 2008)	<p>-20 participants from East Asia and U.S</p> <p>-Age between 18–26</p> <p>-11 women, 9 male</p> <p>-10 East Asians recently in the U.S</p> <p>-10 Americans of Western European ancestry</p>	<p>Holistic and Analytic Cognition</p> <p>During scanning, participants of East Asian and European descent were asked to compare one box and line combination to a previously shown combination. In one condition, they were asked to judge whether the two combinations matched in the proportional size of the line and the box. In the second condition, they were asked to judge whether the combination matched regardless of the size of the box. In the first condition, participants needed to incorporate contextual information, while in the second condition, they had to ignore it.</p>	When East Asians were asked to ignore contextual information, they showed greater activation in the frontal parietal region, a region associated with attentional control. The same activation was experienced by westerners when they were asked to incorporate the contextual information. These results suggest that extra attention and effort are required when people are expected to engage in a cognitive style that is incongruent with their cultural orientation. Conversely, it takes less attention and effort when we are engaged in mental processing that is congruent with our cultural cognitive style. This is relevant to understanding the challenges of engaging stakeholders who do not share the same cultural background, as this requires exerting mental effort and conscious awareness when our brain prefers to engage in thinking styles congruent with our cultural orientation (Hedden et al., 2008).
(Kobayashi et al., 2006)	<p>-32 participants from Japan and U.S</p> <p>-16 Japanese-English bilinguals (8 males and 8 women)</p> <p>-16 American English-speaking monolinguals (8 males and 8 women)</p> <p>-Mean age of 28.42</p>	<p>Self-concept</p> <p>Participants completed three conditions: an experimental theory of mind, a non-theory of mind control condition, and a baseline condition.</p> <p>During scanning, Japanese and American participants were asked to think about others' beliefs.</p>	While participants from both groups showed similar activation in the same brain regions, the Japanese, in particular, showed greater activation of the orbitofrontal cortex. This brain region has been associated with specific social cognitive tasks such as thinking about the feelings of others (Ames & Fiske, 2010). This may suggest the interdependent cultural orientation of Japan emphasizes greater sensitivity and attention to the feelings of others in order to determine their mental and emotional states.
(Maguire et al., 2000)	<p>-16 male licensed London taxi drivers</p> <p>-Age between 32–62 years</p>	<p>Culture and Neuroplasticity</p> <p>Researchers tested how exposure to sustained experience affects the neural structure of the brain</p> <p>Structural Magnetic resonance imaging of the brain of taxi drivers, who undergo training to obtain a license to operate in London, were analyzed and compared with those of control subjects who did not drive taxis.</p>	The volume of the hippocampus, a brain region responsible for memory, was significantly larger for taxi drivers relative to those of control subjects. The volume correlated with the amount of time spent as a taxi driver.
(Draganski et al., 2004)	<p>-24 participants (21 female, 3 male)</p>	<p>Culture and Neuroplasticity</p> <p>Tested how learning to juggle affects the neural structure of the brain.</p> <p>Participants were divided into two groups, designated as jugglers and non-jugglers. Both groups were inexperienced in juggling at the time of their first brain scan. A second brain</p>	Those who learned to juggle experienced an increase in the volume of areas linked to processing visual motion.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

		scan measured performance three months later after Juggler group learned a classic three-ball cascade juggling routine.	
(Mechelli et al., 2004)	<p>-83 Participants</p> <p>-25 monolinguals with little or no exposure to a second language</p> <p>-25 early bilinguals, who had learned a second European language before the age of 5 years and who had practiced it regularly since</p> <p>-33 late bilinguals, who had learned a second European language between the ages of 10 and 15 years and practiced it regularly for at least 5 years.</p>	<p>Culture and Neuroplasticity</p> <p>Tested how learning a second language affects the neural structure of the brain.</p>	<p>For those who learned a second language, the grey-matter density in the left inferior parietal cortex was greater compared to monolingual brains. This region has been shown to become activated during verbal-fluency tasks. Additionally, the degree of grey-matter density was correlated with their second language performance.</p>
(Zhu et al., 2007)	<p>-16 Participants</p> <p>-13 Chinese college students (8 men and 5 women)</p> <p>-13 Western college students (8 men and 5 women).</p> <p>-The Western participants were Caucasians English-native speakers (6 English, 4 American, 2 Australian and 1 Canadian). These participants studied in China for less than one year when they participated in this study.</p>	<p>Self-concept</p> <p>While in an fMRI scanner, western and Chinese participants were shown a set of adjectives and asked whether each adjective describes themselves or their mother.</p>	<p>Both groups showed similar brain activation, in the ventral medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) and anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), when thinking about themselves. The mPFC and ACC have been shown to be activated when people reflect about themselves (self-referential processing and self-reflection). However, only the Chinese participants showed activation in ventral mPFC when thinking about their mothers. These results support the independent/interdependent hypotheses that easterners perceive the self as interconnected with others, while westerners perceive the self as autonomous and separate regardless of the strength of the relationships.</p>

Chapter 3: Small Scale Project Report

Introduction

The aim of this preliminary study was to assess the feasibility of conducting a larger study. The information gained from this study shaped the design of the larger study to provide much-needed information concerning the factors promoting or hindering engagement of culturally diverse communities during the initiation, design, planning, and implementation of projects. Therefore, the objective of this preliminary study was to assess the feasibility, appropriateness, and potential effectiveness of the recruitment protocol, interview schedule, preliminary data collection, and analysis approaches to be used in the larger study. The preliminary study was also conducted to identify potential problems that could arise during the larger study and to increase the researcher's training and confidence in conducting qualitative research, and especially Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

My organization, a government agency, has made the commitment to be a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive organization. In 2018, it initiated a program to develop and implement a racial equity tool, as part of a broad effort to ensure that our policies, practices, and procedures recognize and address social injustice as it impacts the work of the organization. One of the core objectives of the equity tool is to build a more collaborative relationship with the communities we serve by engaging them in our project management decision-making processes. The organization is in the process of implementing the equity tool as a pilot in the procurement department. The goal is to eventually deploy the tool across the entire organization, including its three project management departments. The aim of the present series of studies was to provide much-needed information to advance inclusive and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

equitable stakeholder engagement of ethnically and culturally diverse local (ECDL) communities in project decision-making processes.

The theoretical underpinning of this study is stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984). Most research studies on project stakeholder management use stakeholder theory as a conceptual model to examine the relationship between the project organization and the project stakeholders (Eskerod & Huemann, 2013). Freeman (1984) defined stakeholders as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (p. 46). Stakeholder theory asserts that the main purpose of an organization is to create value that satisfies the needs of its stakeholders (Freeman, 1984).

As the literature review outlined in Chapter 2 showed, while there is considerable research on the cultural dimension of project stakeholder management in the context of private sector cross-national projects, empirical research on the factors influencing the engagement of ECDL communities in public sector domestic projects is lacking. Additionally, the existing research on local community is primarily focused on the organization and its needs and interests and the factors that influence the stakeholders’ compliance with the organization’s strategies and objectives. While the private sector focuses on maximizing shareholder equity, the public sector is expected to focus on maximizing social equity and access to opportunities for all. Therefore, this study contributes to the further development and expansion of the normative formulation of stakeholder theory (Donaldson & Preston, 1995) by providing an empirical account of the factors promoting or hindering inclusive stakeholder engagement of culturally diverse local communities that exist in the context of a dominant culture.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Terms of Reference/Objectives and Literature Review

This preliminary study was undertaken shortly after completion of the literature review outlined in Chapter Two, which provided the foundation for this study. An update to the literature review was conducted, at the end of this preliminary study, to identify additional relevant work to the main study. The reader is, therefore, kindly referred to Chapter Four for an updated literature review for both this preliminary study and the main study. A summary of the key findings, relevant to the present study, is included here for the reader's convenience and to permit this chapter to stand alone.

Communities most impacted by inequities, such as environmental injustice, often lack the capacity to participate in decisions that impact them and are the least likely to even be considered as stakeholders (Beckman, Khare, & Matear, 2016). Consequently, it is not surprising that communities that live in proximity to projects tend to perceive them as a threat (Derakhshan, Mancini, & Turner, 2019; Di Maddaloni & Derakhshan, 2019). Moreover, local community's distrust in the project organization and fear of retribution for speaking up negatively influence their level of engagement in projects (Derakhshan et al., 2019). While there is a growing recognition of the need to understand stakeholder engagement of the local community, there is limited empirical research that focuses explicitly on the local community as a stakeholder (Aaltonen, 2011; Teo & Loosemore, 2017). Therefore, inclusive approaches to project stakeholder engagement are increasingly important to better counter the historic marginalization and discrimination ECDL communities face.

Inclusive stakeholder engagement leads to improved project performance (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b). Approaches to stakeholder engagement that welcome and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

encourage community concerns, rather than suppress or marginalize them (Teo & Loosemore, 2017), lead project managers (PM) to anticipate and mitigate risks to the project (Boutilier & Zdziarski, 2017). They enable the emergence of creative solutions during the critical planning phases of the project (Aapaoja, Haapasalo, & Söderström, 2013). They also leverage knowledge of the community to improve decisions and mitigate uncertainty (Aaltonen, Kujala, Lehtonen, & Ruuska, 2010), which leads to better project decisions (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017a; Eskerod, Huemann, & Ringhofer, 2015; Eskerod, Huemann, & Savage, 2015; Olander, 2007). More importantly, inclusive stakeholder engagement leads community's support of the project, which leads to the project realizing its social sustainability outcomes (Cuganesan & Floris, 2020).

Conversely, a lack of inclusive approaches to stakeholder engagement results in project decisions being opposed by community (Sun, Yung, Chan, & Zhu, 2016), which often leads to the general perception of community opposition as the so-called NIMBY (not in my back yard) attitude (Burningham, Barnett, & Thrush, 2006; Petrova, 2016). This is a common "blanket" explanation to stakeholders' opposition to the project (Burningham et al., 2006; Dear, 1992; Petrova, 2016). On the one hand, the local community may be perceived as a threat to the project (Olander, 2007) making it, therefore, a risk that PMs need to manage. On the other hand, the community may perceive the project as a failure, even if it met all time, cost, and scope objectives (Olander, 2007), which can result in loss of reputation and future opportunities (Graetz & Franks, 2016).

PIC projects involving culturally diverse communities have to balance conflicting stakeholder interests and needs. Therefore, they should be considered complex projects that

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

require complex skills (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b; Sabini, Muzio, & Alderman, 2019).

Additionally, differences in cultural norms and attitudes add a layer of complexity because culture influences key project management aspects that impact engaging ECDL communities.

Cultural differences influence how project management processes are interpreted (Rees-Caldwell & Pinnington, 2013; Zhang, Marquis, Filippov, Haasnoot, & Van der Steen, 2015).

Culture influences approach to uncertainty (Loosemore & Muslmani, 1999; Ullah Khan, 2014), risk management (de Camprieu, Desbiens, & Feixue, 2007; Liu, Meng, & Fellows, 2015), relationships (Chen & Partington, 2004), information sharing (Kohlbacher & Krähe, 2007; Mahalingam & Levitt, 2007; Weir & Hutchings, 2005), and conflict (Damian & Zowghi, 2003; Pheng & Leong, 2000; Swierczek, 1994). Therefore, to mitigate these types of cultural differences that may hinder inclusive stakeholder engagement, it is important for project managers to take the time to understand the cultural practices of stakeholders to reduce misunderstanding (Jain, Simon, & Poston, 2011).

PMs need to acquire additional skills to engage external stakeholders, such as ECDL communities (Martinez, 2018). McVea and Freeman (2005) advocated for adapting stakeholder engagement practices to recognize the diversity of the project stakeholders, which requires a deep understanding of existing cultural norms and routines (De Bony, 2010). Therefore, soft skills, such as social and cultural competence, are required to adapt project management approaches to the socio-cultural context of the project (Lin, Kelemen, & Kiyomiya, 2017). For example, emotional Intelligence is critical to building relationship with internal and external stakeholders (Mazur, Pisarski, Chang, & Ashkanasy, 2014; Müller & Turner, 2007). Additionally, Ullah Khan (2014) recognized cultural competence is important to deliver successful projects

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

across cultures. A lack of understanding of cultural differences and a failure to utilize cultural knowledge can lead to time delays and cost overruns in projects (Mahalingam & Levitt, 2007).

The social impact of projects on local community and interactions between projects and local community, including marginalized stakeholder groups, have not been fully examined (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b). Researchers have criticized project management practice for its transactional approach to stakeholder engagement that emphasizes management-of-stakeholders to make them comply with the project objectives (Eslerod & Huemann, 2013). Consequently, project stakeholder engagement tends to focus on stakeholders who control project resources (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b). Construction projects in particular have been criticized for a lack of attention to social sustainability considerations and single-minded focus on the triple constraints of scope, cost, and schedule (Goel, Ganesh, & Kaur, 2020). Therefore, over the last decade, there has been a call for a focus on a more equitable, inclusive, and socially responsible management-for-stakeholders (Eslerod & Huemann, 2013; Eslerod, Huemann, & Ringhofer, 2015; Eslerod, Huemann, & Savage, 2015). Researchers have specifically called for stakeholder engagement to take into account the cultural and socio-economic context of the project (Eslerod & Larsen, 2018; Lin et al., 2017; Martinez, 2018).

Rational for the Preliminary Study

Due to the sensitive nature of diversity, equity, and inclusion related topics, especially in the aftermath of the racially charged rhetoric of the 2016 U.S presidential election and the subsequent racial justice protests across the country, many local government agencies were cautious about discussions of diversity, equity, and inclusion topics that might lead to public relations exposure. My status as a researcher with an insider's perspective, due to my

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

profession as a practicing Project Manager and more than 15-years of experience as an employee of a local government agency, has afforded me valuable insights into the potential challenges and resistance that I may face recruiting participants and conducting this research during a time of historic racial reckoning in the U.S. Therefore, this preliminary study was conducted to identify potential problems that could arise during the study. In particular, I anticipated that Project Management departments within local government organizations might be concerned about allowing access to their PMs who worked on controversial projects that negatively impacted ECDL communities. I was also concerned that even if I were granted access to these PMs, they might not feel comfortable speaking freely about their experiences. The preliminary study provided valuable information that helped me navigate these sensitivities, obtain buy-in from the organization's leadership to conduct my research, and mitigate potential risks along the way to successfully complete this research project.

The preliminary study explored how PMs engage ECDL communities when these communities are a project stakeholder in the context of local government projects and programs in a major metropolitan area in the United States. The study explored these individuals' understanding and experience of the challenges, barriers, and critical success factors for engaging ECDL communities as project and program stakeholders.

Therefore, the research question is:

How do project managers engage ECDL communities when these communities are a project stakeholder in the context of local government projects and programs in a major metropolitan area in the U.S.?

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Methodology

By undertaking this research, I seek to understand project managers' experiences and perceptions of engaging culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders. Therefore, the research is more aligned with the qualitative approach, which helps develop an understanding of a phenomenon by examining people's existing experience (Smythe & Giddings, 2007). I used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the research approach for this project. IPA enables the exploration of how individuals experience and perceive a phenomenon (J. A. Smith, P. Flowers, & M. Larkin, 2009). IPA is ideal for this study because the factors, which influence PMs' experiences and perceptions of engaging culturally diverse communities, can never be fully understood by only examining external factors. Only through deep engagement with the narrative of the stories of the PMs and how they make sense of their experience can we uncover and make sense of the lived experiences of engaging culturally diverse communities.

For this preliminary study, I interviewed three participants. I used semi-structured in-depth interviews to develop a detailed understanding of the PM's lived experiences and perceptions of engaging culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to utilize an interview schedule to guide my conversation with participants without using it in the exact order in which it was written (see "Appendix 1- Interview Schedule").

The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using IPA. The following six-step process for analyzing IPA data, by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), guided my approach to analyzing the three interviews:

1. Read and re-read
2. Initial noting
3. Develop emergent themes

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

4. Search for connections across emergent themes
5. Move to the next case
6. Look for patterns across cases

I have obtained commitment from different project management groups within the organization chosen of this study, to provide participants for my research. Because the study is aligned with the organization's initiative to establish equity tools, I have also obtained preliminary agreement from management to conduct the main study at their organization.

All participant information is kept confidential. No information was collected through this study that could be used to identify participants or their organizations, so participation was reported anonymously. Additionally, participants were informed that, during the entire process, they always have the option to not answer any question that you feel uncomfortable responding to. An Informed Consent Form was reviewed with all participants (See "Appendix 2-Informed Consent Form"). A Research Fact Sheet, that expands on the consent form and provides additional information on the research project, was provided to participants (see "Appendix 3-Research Study Fact Sheet").

Project Activity

For the preliminary study, I interviewed three project managers from different departments responsible for PIC projects that impact communities at the organization used for this study. The selection criteria were participants who must have actively and directly engaged ethno-cultural minority communities as their stakeholders on at least one project.

Study Participants

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) recommended that "IPA studies are conducted on relatively small sample sizes, and the aim is to find a reasonably homogeneous sample, so that,

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

within the sample, we can examine convergence and divergence in some detail” (p. 3). Alase (2017) emphasized that the focus of an IPA study is on getting “rich” and “thick descriptions” of the lived experiences of the research participants and suggested that sample size can be as little as two participants. For this preliminary study, I recruited three participants.

The participants have been purposefully selected because there is a very limited number of PMs that meet the selection criteria at the organization used for this study. Participants were selected by their managers because the topic of engagement of culturally diverse communities was very sensitive, due to ongoing conflict with neighboring communities impacted by the organization’s ongoing projects.

Participants were assigned pseudonyms (Tom, Brad, Rich) to help ensure anonymity. All participants were full time PMs and worked in different divisions. They were representative of the broader population of PMs at the organization, were from different business divisions, and had different professional backgrounds (Environmental PMs and Construction PMs). They also came from different cultural backgrounds and, growing up, had different levels of exposure to different cultures. Additionally, they worked on different types of projects that involve culturally diverse communities (environmental cleanup vs. construction). The participants had experience engaging different communities impacted by the organization’s projects such as Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hispanic American, African American, and Native American communities. Table 1 provides additional information on each participant.

Table 1:

Study Participants

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

#	Participant Name	Role on Projects	Number of Years with the Organization	Number of Years of Professional Experience
1	Brad	Project Manager	10	20
2	Rich	Environment Program Manager	12	25
3	Tom	Project Manager	17	26

Data Collection

I used an interview schedule consisting of open-ended questions. The schedule was designed to encourage the participant to share as much as possible about their personal and professional lives as they relate to their experiences of engaging ECDL communities. Some questions are followed-up using probes and prompts to elicit more in-depth-information from participants (see “Appendix 1-Interview Schedule”).

Before conducting the three interviews, I tested the content and clarity of the interview schedule by interviewing a colleague, who is a PM. I modified some questions to remove ambiguity. The interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes each. For each of the three participants, I recorded the interviews and then transcribed them verbatim.

Ethical approval was obtained from the research ethics committee of Professional Development Foundation Board of Studies in partnership with Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology at Canterbury Christ Church University.

Data Analysis

After data collection, I used nVivo software to manage and code the data and develop themes. I started the process by reading each interview multiple times, searching for meanings and patterns. As I read each interview, I marked passages for subsequent coding phases and captured my initial thoughts in the form of analytical memos and annotations.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

I then conducted multiple cycles of line-by-line open coding for each interview. As I read each interview, I assigned codes to passages that appeared to be interesting. I coded for as many potential themes and patterns as possible. This initial line-by-line coding generated 475 codes. I then conducted multiple cycles of analyzing the codes and merging and collapsing those that seem to be duplicates or those that did not ultimately appear to be relevant to the research question.

Once I reduced the number of codes to approximately 250, I began to group them under high level categories while sorting them into common themes. This initial cycle of categorization resulted in 23 subordinate themes, which were organized into six overarching superordinate themes as shown in “Appendix 4-Initial Themes”. Subsequent cycles of grouping, with a focus on those that adequately addressed the research question and appearing prevalent across participants’ accounts, resulted in a final set of 11 subordinate themes organized into five overarching superordinate themes. Table 2 shows an illustration of a theme and subthemes with example codes and quotes.

Table 2:

Table illustrating superordinate theme, subthemes, codes, and quotes

Superordinate Themes	Subordinate themes	Example Codes	Example Quotes
Perceived Institutional Pressures	Guidelines and Policies	Importance of clear policies	I mean here the organization that’s going to work with some people. And I think some people you just need to have the policies in place (Rich).
		Variations in interpretation of guidelines	There is a rulebook but the earnestness with which folks apply those rules can vary greatly (Brad).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Superordinate Themes	Subordinate themes	Example Codes	Example Quotes
		Internal processes as barriers to engagement	I told [manager] before this is not a process that encourages hiring women owned or small business I mean because they are a small company they cannot afford to put together a nice glossy marketing brochure (Tom).
	Misalignment	Lack of clear guidelines for engagement	So I think there is some wiggle room, some interpretation of what we do here at the organization but usually I found this swing towards the more conservative side than the more creative and generous side (Rich).
		Community engagement perceived as a burden	[PMs] focus more on how do we control scope, schedule, and budget? And the act of dealing with minimizing impacts on the community and that kind of thing is really seen as just an inconvenience that is to be overcome (Brad).
		Gaps between values and practices	What I find is that usually the organization is really not really interested in continuous engagement with the public (Tom).
	PM Role Conflict	Conflict between desire to help and org's constraints	You know we are being graded by whether we made the budget. All those numbers. But then we all want to help the community (Tom).
		Role of advocate for community	[Management] wanted me to just start tearing the stuff up the next day and just you know fix it it's like well I'm going to go talk to folks even though I have a lot of time to do so I'm going to engage these folks and we did (Brad).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Superordinate Themes	Subordinate themes	Example Codes	Example Quotes
		Navigate different expectations	I think project managers are having to navigate different things so that they are able to achieve the ultimate goal which is getting that community engaged but still operating under a certain mandate a certain parameters [from their organization] (Rich).

Throughout the data collection and data analysis phases, I was cognizant of the fact that, while my insider status proved to be highly advantageous in helping me navigate the challenges of conducting research on a sensitive topic, this status also had the potential of producing bias and preconceptions in how I approach data analysis. IPA recognizes researchers' understanding and interpretation is shaped by their individual experience and preconceptions (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Shinebourne, 2011; J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, IPA acknowledges the role of the researcher's interpretation and their influence on the research process and outcomes (Wagstaff & Williams, 2014).

To minimize the influence of my insider status, bias, and assumptions, I used analytical memos throughout the research process to capture my thoughts and reactions to the participants' accounts. Reviewing these analytical memos helped me reflect on my role as a researcher and reminded me, throughout the data collection and analysis process, that while my perspective has a place in the research, it is more important that I honor the participants' voices. While researchers can never fully detach themselves from their research (Groenewald, 2004), reflecting on how my own experience, knowledge, and skills are contributing to my

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

understanding of the findings helped me remain aware of my own voice in order to keep my interpretations grounded in the participants' accounts. Table 3 shows examples of analytical memos.

Table 3:

Example Analytical Memos

Topic	Example Analytical Memo
Role of Public Relations Department in project stakeholder engagement	The heart of the problem, I think, is that outsourcing the skills and the role of engaging culturally diverse communities has resulted in a lack of cultural competence that is embedded in project management. Project managers who have been exposed to different cultures tend to be more sophisticated in their understanding of the unique needs of culturally diverse communities. But this outsourcing of cultural competence to public relations is potentially further delaying the maturity of project management knowledge about culturally diverse communities. There's also the simplistic prescription of a translation and interpretation effort that seems to be what most people in project management think of when they think of culturally diverse communities. There does not seem to be a deeper understanding of culture and cultural differences. So, therefore, the focus has been more on language and translation and interpretation services. So, this focus on the service elements of the engagement reveals a lack of knowledge that may be the result of this outsourcing because project management groups have not really invested in developing the skills of the project managers.
Role of the project manager's cultural background and exposure to diversity	This is about the experience of growing up in one culture where you are considered to be a part of the mainstream or majority population, so to speak, and then you moved to another culture where you experience being treated as a minority. I can identify totally with this experience. This is very interesting, and I wonder how the other project managers deal with the phenomenon and how does this lived experience influence their approach to engagement vs. the approach of project managers from the dominant culture?
Project Managers' focus on cost, schedule, and scope	Project managers are predominantly engineers. And so, they tend to be very linearly focused on the execution and delivery of the project. So, this is a challenge for them to think about the dimension of

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Topic	Example Analytical Memo
	cultural diversity and other elements of engagement. Project managers tend to think that we need to focus on is the project scope deliverable budget schedule. Engagement and other stuff are the responsibility of somebody else.
PM power paradox	Project managers have so much power to do damage yet limited power when it comes to expanding the budget or timeline to meet the needs of the community. Interesting to me is the leeway and the margins that you have to operate in [as a PM]. It is almost like the organization just says, look here's a bunch of money, here is a bunch of people. Go do it. We will tell you what you should not do when we see it but for now, go do it.

Findings

The primary aim of this preliminary study was to assess the feasibility of conducting a larger study. The objective was to assess the feasibility, appropriateness, and potential effectiveness of the participant recruitment protocol, interview schedule, preliminary data collection, and analysis approaches to be used in the larger study. To provide an assessment of the data collection and analysis approach undertaken in this preliminary study, this section will first present the key themes derived from the analysis of participants' accounts. Secondly, an assessment of the feasibility, appropriateness, and effectiveness of the participant recruitment protocol and interview schedule will be presented.

Data collection and analysis

One of the objectives of the preliminary study was to increase the researcher's training and confidence in conducting qualitative research, and especially Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings from the data analysis are presented here to

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

demonstrate that IPA, when applied to the topic and context of the present study, can deliver rich data on the challenges, barriers, and critical success factors for engaging culturally diverse communities as projects and programs stakeholders. By focusing specifically on the PMs' experiences and perceptions of the factors that influence engaging culturally diverse communities, the preliminary analysis of the data identified five superordinate themes and 11 subordinate themes, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4:

Superordinate Themes and Subthemes

Superordinate Themes	Subordinate themes
Impediments to Community Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unequal Representation• Community Constraints
Perceived Institutional Pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidelines and Policies• Misalignment• PM Role Conflict
Project Manager's Professional Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal Commitment• Intrinsic motivation• Competency Development
Fostering Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building Trust• Engagement Return on Investment• Engagement as an Emotional Experience
Engagement Practices and Knowledge	

Superordinate theme 1: Impediments to Community Participation (ICP)

This theme was comprised of two subordinate themes: Community Constraints and Unequal Representation. ICP describes participants' perceptions of the range of challenges and barriers that undermine the participation of local ECDL communities in local movement projects.

Subtheme: Community Constraints

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

This subtheme describes participants' views of the factors contributing to the low level of participation of ECDL communities in project-related community meetings. One key factor mentioned by all participants is ECDL communities' lack of understanding of the system. "In the case of citizens who are new to the country, they are not really well resourced and don't know how to interact with the process like this or how to make sure their rights are protected" (Brad). One participant, a refugee when he first came to the U.S., grew up in an immigrant and refugee community and described his own experience participating in community meetings. "First of all, we don't even know what they talk about. Why do we have a community meeting? As a minority and not speaking English well, you don't understand the system in the U.S." (Tom). Furthermore, participants pointed to the communities' general reluctance to deal with government. "But I also understand that you know from a minority perspective a lot of time we don't really like to get involved with the government that much right" (Tom).

Many immigrant and refugee community members come from societies where, historically, it is risky to voice opinions or speak out against government decisions. Participants noted that the PM needs to be aware, even when they participate, ECDL community members may not feel comfortable communicating concerns during project community meetings. "There are folks that come from certain societies they would not even begin to question the government dictum" (Brad). Additionally, participants indicated that socio-economic factors influence the participation of ECDL communities' participation. Participants pointed to the lack of time, working long hours and often multiple jobs, to just make ends meet. "I was low-income myself. All we worry about is making money. You can't afford time to go to a community meeting" (Tom).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Subtheme: Unequal Representation

All participants agreed that ECDL communities tend to be underrepresented in community meetings, despite the efforts PMs expend to engage ECDL communities. Participants stated the same members of non-minority communities tend to participate in community meetings. “But if you go to the meeting which we went to and made presentations on all that, you will see a lot of them are white” (Tom).

One factor cited by participants that contributes to this lack of participation is community members are just not used to being engaged. “I went out and talk[ed] to folks to say how do you use the facility, and they were absolutely dumbfounded that anybody was talking to them” (Brad). What was not clear from these interviews is whether ECDL communities are not used to being engaged in general or just by the organization. In any case, when ECDL communities participate in community meetings, a participant stated they tend to not provide feedback when compared to non-minority communities. “In [non-minority communities], you hear a lot of feedback. Positive and negative. Certainly negative...not so much from immigrant communities and minority communities” (Rich). This participant also indicated there is a tendency for the same small number of non-ECDL community members to speak up and dominate the conversation. “. . . you’re going to get the noisiest squeakiest 20% of the people in the room and the other 80% will walk out of the meeting feeling like they were not listened to. They never even spoke up” (Brad).

Participants were aware of how these dominant voices undermine equal participation by ECDL communities and some of them have developed strategies to overcome this situation. Some of these strategies will be outlined in other themes. Unequal representation and lack of

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

feedback were also noted in how projects are covered in social media consumed by local communities. “There is potential for trolling, the potential for folks, small group of folks, to drown out and steer the conversation in the really detrimental way and I think that’s dangerous” (Brad).

Superordinate theme 2: Perceived Institutional Pressures (PIP)

The superordinate theme, Perceived Institutional Pressures, was comprised of three themes: Guidelines and Policies, Misalignment, and PM Role Conflict. PIP describes participants’ views of the range of factors that challenge the PM’s efforts to engage ECDL communities.

Subtheme: Guidelines and Policies

Participants emphasized the importance of clearly defined expectations and guidelines from the organization for how the PM needs to approach community engagement on projects. [A guideline] “has to come from the organization, it has to come from the project sponsor that we need to look at this just as important not just those hard numbers you know” (Tom). Participants described the lack of clarity on how PMs are expected to implement community engagement and how this results in significant variations in how the project managers interpret the guidelines. “How do you define above and beyond from what is mandated required in order. Or even what is interpreted by the site manager...again it’s not specifically written” (Rich). The lack of clear guidelines also results in a lack of objective measure to assess the quality of engagement against clearly defined goals. This results in overestimates of how much engagement is needed.

Or they [other project managers] think ‘I think I’m doing more than most people’ and yet because their vision is limited, well I think most of us want to believe that we care about things like the environment and the community and you know social justice

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

environmental justice, but as we've learned, in particular the last couple of years, our lens where we see those things are very different. (Rich)

As the previous quote clearly suggests, participants are aware that clear guidelines are needed now more than ever before, due to the current changing political landscape and current anti-immigrant political climate.

A key benefit of clearly defined guidelines is to ensure consistency and continuity for how the organization approaches community engagement from project to project.

If a different group of project managers came in from the organization to a community down there and said 'hey here's what we're doing, give us a call if you have any questions'. It would be treated with sort of are 'you guys from [the organization]'? (Rich)

This consistency in executing community engagement strategy is not only needed for the success of each project but also to build long term trust in the organization to implement future projects.

Subtheme: Misalignment

A reoccurring theme in participants' interviews is the PM's challenge in getting other teams inside their organization to participate in engagement planning and execution efforts. Participants expressed frustration that often internal organizational departments are not unified in their support of the PM's community engagement efforts. "You know, internally we want to gather as much input at all levels as much as possible. Internally, the toughest part is getting people to have the time to help you provide the feedback" (Tom). Project managers gave many examples of facing pushback and lack of support from other departments within the organization. "So, I really pushed hard, I mean hard with the building permit department for an eastern style flush mount toilet, and they refused to let me do it. They refused to let me do it" (Brad).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Participants stated due to the need to control costs, the organization tends to limit community engagement to the early planning phase of the project. Once feedback is gathered at this phase, further engagement with the community is limited. This is mainly because further engagement may lead to changes to the plans, which in turn may have cost implications.

What I find is that usually the organization is really not really interested in continuous engagement with the public that is. We want to give you something, and then once you have looked at it and get back to us, we are not interested in going back to you because we don't want to change anything from that point forward. (Tom)

Participants also cited examples where the organization's internal policies and procedures hinder community engagement/participation.

[Procurement rules] is not a process that encourages hiring women-owned or small business. I mean because they are a small company, they cannot afford to put together a nice glossy marketing brochure and always try to look at what you are posting all the time. You just cannot afford to do that. (Tom)

Subtheme: PM Role Conflict

The misalignment between the organization's goals for community engagement and its processes, can lead to a heightened conflict between the PM's roles, such as incompatible obligations as employee to the organization and as public servant to their fellow citizens of ECDL. "The fact that we are in the public sector these are our citizens you know...it's your duty to step up and make sure that they are taken care of" (Brad).

Project managers are expected to balance the needs of the community with the project triple constraints of meeting schedule, cost, and scope expectations of the organization. "We thought 'what do we think we are going spend' and I told him (manager) what we think. 'Well we want to dial back on certain things' because we are graded based on those numbers" (Tom). A failure to balance these competing priorities can lead to negative impacts on ECDL

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

communities. “Your last outcome should be that you have gone up and terrorized the population because you’re trying to put improvements” (Brad).

Participants also felt a lack of recognition and acknowledgment of the effort of the project manager on engagement of ECDL communities. Even when engagement efforts result in building the communities’ confidence in the organization, participants felt that their efforts are not considered as part of their performance evaluation.

But I think even bigger it helped develop and maintain a level of social validation for the organization that we can go to a community like [name of ECDL communities] and build the project a very risky and dangerous project digging out all those contaminated materials and keep fish and families safe. That’s huge. [Did] we spent a lot of time adding up those indicators and quantities? Not really. (Rich)

This role conflict and lack of consideration of engagement efforts in the PM performance evaluation, can lead some PMs to a greater focus on meeting the project goals and less on ECDL needs and concerns.

You do have folks who will have like a very construction-oriented approach. They focus more on how we control scope, schedule, and budget. And the act of dealing with minimizing impacts on the community and that kind of thing is really seen as just an inconvenience that is to be overcome. (Brad)

Superordinate theme 3: Project Manager’s Professional Identity (PMPI)

The superordinate theme, Project Manager’s Professional Identity, was comprised of three themes: Personal Commitment, Intrinsic Motivation, and Competency Development. PMPI draws together participants’ perceptions of the PM’s intrinsic motivation and commitment that drive the quality of their engagement of ECDL.

Subtheme: Personal Commitment

Participants believed engagement is about building relationships and trust with the community, which takes time and requires long term investment.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

The concept of ‘well I put in my year and ½ in [working with ECDL communities] and learned a lot thank you I am moving on to the next one [project]’. That has always troubled me because that time spent takes six months to a year I think just to understand the parameters with which you’re working in the community. (Rich)

To overcome the role conflict discussed in a previous theme, participants emphasized the need for the PM to have a personal commitment to serving the community by engaging them meaningfully in project decisions. “It’s personal because it takes a lot of time and it takes a lot of invested time building up to that and it takes a lot of personal interest. Right?” (Rich).

Participants believed personal commitment is based on deep appreciation of ECDL communities, cultural diversity, and the challenges that these communities face.

To appreciate, not just understand, but to appreciate. I think so many of us don’t really appreciate the challenges and that’s where they lack the commitment. It’s like ‘I really don’t need to go there every month. It’s after five anyways’. I think it’s just lack of appreciation. (Rich)

Commitment requires focus beyond the PM triple constraints of project scope, schedule, and budget.

I think it’s invest[ing] time in because engineers tend to pick up the plan from the last version, talk to a few people about how we got here, but really they are caught up in lines and numbers; what’s being built. (Rich)

If PMs lack appreciation of ECDL communities and personal commitment, there is a risk that they focus solely on project objectives at the expense of the broader needs of the community, which can be detrimental to the wellbeing of ECDL communities.

[some PMs] think ‘I’m just going to roll out and do whatever because you know now, I can have this power to go out and do whatever I need to do to build the facility’. That is exactly the wrong person that you want to have in this [PM] position. And yet there are folks who get into this line of work who that is their overall attitude. (Brad)

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

In the absence of clear guidelines and consideration of the PM's engagement efforts in performance evaluation, personal commitment, and appreciation of ECDL communities guide the PM's decisions.

Subtheme: Intrinsic motivation

The lack of clear guidelines leads to the need for PMs to be creative and innovative in designing engagement efforts that meet the unique needs of their project and the communities impacted. Project managers need intrinsic motivation and personal commitment because creativity and innovation require a sense of agency and initiative to navigate the obstacles they face in balancing the need of the organization and those of the community. When discussing personal commitment in shaping PM's approach to engaging ECDL communities, participants felt that intrinsic motivation was the best predictor of the quality of the engagement efforts. "But really there is a rulebook but the earnestness with which folks apply those rules can vary greatly. And it's based on a number of factors. One is what kind of human you are" (Brad).

Participants suggested differences in motivation lead to different interpretations of the rules and, as a result, different engagement approaches and outcomes. They recommended the organization put policies in place which can mitigate inconsistencies in approaches to engagement of ECDL communities. "I mean here at [name of the organization], [lack of policies] that's going work with some people. And I think for some people you just need to have the policies in place" (Rich).

Intrinsic motivation was found to be crucial for sustaining the PM as they face obstacles to engaging ECDL communities. Participants shared a number of cases where the PM has to confront barriers to balance the needs of the organization and the needs of the community.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Barriers often come in the form of pushback, when decisions benefitting the ECDL communities have cost implications for the organization.

So, one of the things that there was a lot of pushback on but in our community health and safety plan we like to collect air samples to represent diesel exhaust and particles and other things. And people are like why? It's not required. Yeah, that's a damn good question. Who's going to pay for it? How we fund it? How we justify it? And we ended up doing it. (Rich)

Participants gave many indicators of motivated PMs. For example, PMs tend to have a history of community service outside of their work at the organization, some even before their work began at the organization. "I also do work at this organization and I was on an environmental coalition board for years because it felt like it was part of what I do part of my personality" (Rich).

Subtheme: Competency Development

Participants discussed the type of skills necessary to effectively engage ECDL communities and the importance of establishing formal training programs to develop these skills in all the PMs who engage ECDL communities.

What makes an effective project manager in a culture of diverse communities? Well for some, it's going to be 'tell me how to do it'. 'Okay I'll tell you. Because we thought about this. You need to go to community meetings once a month'. 'What?' 'I'm telling you, you need to do it'. 'Okay'. Right? Because people really don't question too much when they are told to do things. In fact, a lot of people want to know how to do their job. (Rich)

Participants also indicated that agility and flexibility are important skills that PMs need to acquire to be effective in engaging ECDL communities. Project managers are expected to adapt their processes to fit the needs of the community.

We don't just start with a plan on day one and we use [it] for three years and never change it. But I would say those changes are fluid and we see where maybe we are not as effective here, maybe we could do be doing more here. (Rich)

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

The ability to adapt is important for the creativity and innovation required for customized solutions to the unique needs of the community.

Well, we were required to write a community engagement plan and what I realize after soliciting different project managers and different [federal agency] project managers getting examples what we needed to do in [ECDL communities] and what others were doing across the country was not going to work. (Rich)

To customize solutions requires collaborating with ECDL communities. Participants emphasized the importance of understanding and appreciating the cultural diversity of ECDL communities. “I would say that what is it that people need to know or do to be effective. I talk about you know understanding the culture better. To appreciate it more” (Rich). Understanding and appreciating the diversity of thought helps the PM to harness the expertise and ingenuity of the communities in co-creating solutions for mutual benefits of the community and the organization. “Appreciating that everybody has a voice, appreciating that there are very diverse ideas of how to get something done because people have done things differently everywhere for thousands of years” (Brad).

To collaborate on developing customized solutions, PMs are expected to adapt their communication styles to work effectively in multidisciplinary teams of colleagues and partners.

So, I always adjust my approach (to) how I communicate based on the team dynamic. Like for the cleanup project, where the environmental team is so used to be the dominant because it’s an environmental project. (Tom)

Interestingly, with respect to what participants felt was the most important skill to develop in PMs, the ability to listen was the most frequent response: “If you’re going to have a training, it would be to have an open mind and open heart to listen to folks. Because that’s what it’s all about” (Brad).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Superordinate theme 4: Fostering Relationships (FR)

The superordinate theme, Fostering Relationships, was comprised of three themes: Building Trust, Return on Engagement, and Engagement as an Emotional Experience. This theme describes the participants' understanding of the difference between real genuine engagement that builds relationships with ECDL communities and what participants referred to as "checking the boxes/cookie cutter" engagement.

Subtheme: Building Trust

This theme describes the participants' understanding of the essential elements of genuine community engagement that build an ECDL community's trust in the PM and the organization. Participants repeatedly emphasized the important role that the PM plays in gaining the trust of the community in the organization. There are many benefits for this trust and the most important one is gaining community support of the project. "I would say if there is certain things that we are shooting for, certain objectives or goals, one of them will be have the support of the community in times when we needed it. Right?" (Rich). Participants cited numerous examples demonstrating the benefits of gaining community support for the project. A participant cited an example of a situation where a community member targeted her anger at him about an issue not related to the work of his project.

But what was really interesting is that I think, over the years of developing a good relationship with the community members, the new guy [that] took over [community advisory group] stood up on my behalf and said 'you know what, that's enough. We hear what you're saying. The [organization] has nothing to do with your problems in your house. That's enough'. That was kind of cool. (Rich)

Participants were very specific about the type of engagement that builds trust which was different from the typical 'community outreach', tending to be a one-way communication

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

from the organization to the community. Participants made a clear distinction between genuine engagement such as a two-way dialogue with the community, and the 'check-the-box' type community outreach.

Many outfits that go out and build big capital projects they put a lot of effort into trying to listen to the public. I don't know that they are as effective as incorporating those inputs into their projects. And some of them just do it as like box-check de facto step to get them to the environmental process. (Brad)

Participants emphasized that genuine engagement requires demonstrating to the community that you have listened to them by taking their input seriously.

If you are spending the money to listen to people, well then listen to people. If you are spending resources on that, put those resources to better to a higher effect, make them matter. You know. And folks don't always do that. (Brad)

Genuine engagement is a continuous process of involving the community throughout the lifecycle of the project, not just done at the early stages to meet regulatory approvals.

I can understand from several perspectives we may have to go back and get more funding because, if you have more comments and different needs and then also, as a public agency, when we bid out the project, when we award the contract, we cannot change it afterwards. Well, you can change anything if you want to put money into it. So, you know that's some of the reasons why we want to freeze engagement, external engagement anyway. (Tom)

Subtheme: Return on Engagement

In addition to gaining community support for the project, participants cited numerous benefits for engaging ECDL communities. This theme describes how participants understood the return on investment in engagement of ECDL communities. Participants believed that investing time and effort on engagement was not only the right thing to do for the community, but also delivered a high return on investment for their project and the organization. "We realize that having their support, at the end of the day, was way worth the extra \$50,000 or

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

\$75,000 we were spending on this element of community outreach and engagement” (Rich).

Participants felt that engaging ECDL communities, in order to get their input and involve them in solving problems, always led to better project decisions and, more importantly, adoption of these decisions by the community.

We plan out our haul route and let the community review it and give them a bunch of alternatives. ‘Okay this route, what are the negative and positive? So, this is the least impact route’. At least, they may not love it, but they understand the other is even more impact[ful] to them. (Tom)

Getting input from the community and engaging them in decisions leads to a more predictable execution of the project, increasing the likelihood that the project will meet its budget, schedule, and scope objectives.

Well, I think on a project level, I think that all the time and money spent on outreach and engagement, paid off in terms of allowing us to schedule and predict the progress of the project, allowed us to address community concerns, and allowed us to address incidents that happened during the project. (Rich)

There are also long-term benefits gained from building trust with the community beyond the project. Participants cited numerous examples where the community gained confidence in the organization’s ability to execute projects in the future with minimum impact on ECDL communities.

But I think even bigger it helped develop and maintain a level of social validation for the organization that we can go to a community like [ECDL communities] and build the project a very “risky and dangerous” project digging out all those contaminated material[s] and keep fish and families safe. (Rich)

Another benefit to engagement is that the organization can assess project risks in a timely fashion and put in place measures to mitigate them. Lack of timely engagement can result in exposure to financial risks.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

When the [organization] bought the property, it was negotiated with the understanding that the cleanup level is only to the industrial level...their input came back to the federal government and ultimately to the organization that now we want the organization to clean up to a residential level. So, all of a sudden, a million-dollar price tag become a \$60 million project. (Tom)

Subtheme: Engagement as an Emotional Experience

Participants recommended that PMs anticipate that the ECDL communities may not support the project, even if the project is for the benefit of the community and despite all the efforts of the PM. “Though folks think you’re doing cleanup, it must be totally supported by everybody because you’re doing good for the environment. That’s not always the case, there’s always controversy involved” (Rich). Participants discussed the emotional dimension of engaging ECDL communities. Concerns about the project impacts on the community trigger a range of emotions during community meetings. “So, people are angry, they are frightened. You know, all the human emotions take place here. And I don’t care where you’re from, you know, what background you have, these are common human emotions” (Brad).

Building relationship with the community and gaining their trust, depends on how the PM responds to this emotional dimension of engagement. Participants indicated that they learned the importance of not taking the community’s response personally. “You have to understand that this is not directed at you. This is directed at who you represent, the agency that you represent” (Brad). Participants emphasized the importance of having empathy for the community by understanding their response in the context of the community’s history working with the organization and other factors that might be completely unrelated to the PM’s project. “To build that relationship with somebody after they may have [been] traumatized or other

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

things, you've got to have that kind of empathetic feel for where you're coming from. So, you have to have some empathy there and understanding" (Brad).

Superordinate theme 5: Engagement Practices and Knowledge (EPK)

The superordinate theme, Engagement Practices and Knowledge, describes participants' views of the best practices and strategies that PMs use to build trust and gain ECDL communities' support for their projects. Participants felt that it is important for the PM to understand the impact of the project on the community and to work with the organization and the community to eliminate or at least mitigate the impacts.

You can put a highway through the neighborhood, an access control highway, you might as well just drop the river right through the middle of that neighborhood because it has the same damn impact as a river going through that area once that thing goes into motion. So, if you don't look at it like that, you're not looking at it the right way. (Brad)

To fully appreciate the project impact on the community, participants stated the PM must understand the concerns of the community.

You collect the concerns, you really make sure they understand what you're trying to do as well. And then you ask for their concern, and then, so you really try to be a good listener and ask, be able to communicate back to the people making sure to get back to the people, that's very key. (Tom)

To gain the trust of ECDL communities, it is important to demonstrate that you are working on their concerns and that you are making an effort and doing your best to address them. "[How] you do that is to show that their input is impacting what you are doing, somehow you are working their concerns into the project in the form of mitigation or avoidance or any of that sort of thing" (Brad). It is also important to demonstrate how input from ECDL communities has been incorporated in project decisions and plans.

It's much better for the community to show up for the meeting and yes talk talk talk but then stop and [say] 'hey you know what, this is what we heard from you guys last time,

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

we are changing this, we are changing that, we are doing this, thank you for your input'. Suddenly they leave feeling a lot different than just somebody who's there, you know screaming and yelling and then walking out, but they are actually, yeah we're actually having a conversation. (Rich)

Participants recognize at times it is not possible to address some community concerns. It is important, in this case, for the PM to demonstrate they are making their best effort to protect the community.

You can demonstrate that you are doing your best to minimize the impact on them and then folks understand more when it's like, okay let's work together to minimize all this stuff or avoid it these are things that I just can't get around. (Brad)

Participants also emphasized it is important to remain engaged with the ECDL communities, even when addressing their concerns is not feasible.

When you can't do anything else for them...you still stay engaged, you still advocate for them, you still show them like they are not abandoned, that there is somebody out there who was keeping an eye out for their best interest. (Brad)

In summary, the analysis of the preliminary study data identified a number of key findings that directly address the research question and that will be further explored in the main study.

- Cultural and socioeconomic factors influence participation and under-representation of ECDL communities in projects.
- Lack of clear guidelines combined with institutional barriers constrain the PM capacity to effectively engage ECDL members.
- Engagement is a balancing act due to the competing objectives of the organization and the needs of the communities.
- Engagement is an emotional experience requiring the PM to be flexible and adaptive and to have empathy. Emotional intelligence is needed to sustain the PM while balancing competing priorities and navigating organizational misalignments and barriers.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- PM's intrinsic motivation, personal commitment, and understanding of scope and implications of their role, shape the depth, breadth, and quality of the engagement.
- Engagement requires creativity and innovation to navigate the role conflict and organizational misalignments in order to develop solutions to novel problems that are unique to the project and to the community.
- The return on engagement is realized when ECDL communities support the project, increasing the likelihood it will meet its budget, schedule, and scope objectives.

Additionally, conducting a full-data analysis in the preliminary study helped me understand how to better approach data coding to avoid issues in the larger study. Specifically, I learned from mistakes how to label codes in a meaningful way that I can identify during later stages of the data analysis and the writing process. The lack of consistency in how I coded some interview passages created significant rework, as I found myself, at times, having to go back and re-read the underlying interviews' source text. This was very time-consuming and disruptive to the data analysis process. Therefore, I need to improve how I label codes in the first pass.

Learning to use NVivo was a significant challenge. While I found nodes, analytical memos, and annotations to be powerful data analysis devices, it became challenging to bring related data together from all these different devices during theme development and writing processes. Therefore, to the extent possible, I need to build links between these devices as I code data. One key NVivo feature I plan to use in the main study is the "See Also Links" function to create connections between related items. This will significantly facilitate and streamline the analysis and writing processes.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Recruitment protocols

The initial attempt to recruit from one important department was not successful. I identified there was sensitivity about discussing certain projects, due to ongoing conflict with local communities. For the main study, I need to reframe the focus of the study to address this concern and still answer the research question. My recruitment approach will be modified to emphasize the research focus as the PM's experience and practices, not the actual projects. This clarification of the scope of the research may alleviate management concerns and lead to a commitment to participate in the main study.

Interview Schedule

The interview questions tested in this preliminary study will be asked in the same way for the main study. After the first interview, a refinement and sequencing of some questions was tested on the second and third interview with positive results. Participants were candid about challenges they face, especially those related to institutional structures or lack thereof. They also spoke about the prevailing mindsets and ways of thinking of other PMs, which present potential impediments to community engagement. Barriers were identified at the organizational, level, and PM levels. Therefore, no major changes are planned for the main study.

There were instances that for some questions, participants kept referring to roles other groups play in engaging communities on some projects. This pointed to the potential need for additional interviews with a particular group, the Public Relations department, to provide contextual background for the handoffs between the PMs and consultants assigned to the project.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Conclusions and Recommendations

The primary aim of this preliminary study was to assess the feasibility of a larger research project. The preliminary study assessed the recruitment protocol, interview schedule, preliminary data collection, and analysis in the larger study. The study demonstrated that the research approach, research design, and data analysis could deliver rich data on the challenges, barriers, and critical success factors for engaging culturally diverse communities as projects and programs stakeholders. Additionally, the preliminary study provided valuable insights that informed the approach to the larger study. Therefore, it is recommended that a larger project be carried out using a similar methodology and expanding the data collection to include more participants to further validate the results. The next chapter will present the larger study.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

References

- Aaltonen, K. (2011). Project stakeholder analysis as an environmental interpretation process. *International Journal of Project Management*, 29(2), 165-183.
- Aaltonen, K., Kujala, J., Lehtonen, P., & Ruuska, I. (2010). A stakeholder network perspective on unexpected events and their management in international projects. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 3(4), 564-588.
- Aapaoja, A., Haapasalo, H., & Söderström, P. (2013). Early stakeholder involvement in the project definition phase: Case renovation. *ISRN Industrial Engineering*, 2013.
- Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (ipa): A guide to a good qualitative research approach. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 5(2), 9-19.
- Beckman, T., Khare, A., & Matear, M. (2016). Does the theory of stakeholder identity and salience lead to corporate social responsibility? The case of environmental justice. *Social Responsibility Journal*.
- Boutillier, R. G., & Zdziarski, M. (2017). Managing stakeholder networks for a social license to build. *Construction Management and Economics*, 35(8-9), 498-513.
- Brocki, J. M., & Wearden, A. J. (2006). A critical evaluation of the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (ipa) in health psychology. *Psychology and Health*, 21(1), 87-108.
- Burningham, K., Barnett, J., & Thrush, D. (2006). The limitations of the nimby concept for understanding public engagement with renewable energy technologies: A literature. *Accessed February, 27*.
- Chen, P., & Partington, D. (2004). An interpretive comparison of Chinese and western conceptions of relationships in construction project management work. *International Journal of Project Management*, 22(5), 397-406.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Cuganesan, S., & Floris, M. (2020). Investigating perspective taking when infrastructure megaproject teams engage local communities: Navigating tensions and balancing perspectives. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(3), 153-164.
- Damian, D. E., & Zowghi, D. (2003). *An insight into the interplay between culture, conflict and distance in globally distributed requirements negotiations*. Paper presented at the System Sciences, 2003. Proceedings of the 36th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences.
- De Bony, J. (2010). Project management and national culture: A Dutch–French case study. *International Journal of Project Management*, 28(2), 173-182.
- de Camprieu, R., Desbiens, J., & Feixue, Y. (2007). ‘Cultural’ differences in project risk perception: An empirical comparison of china and canada. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25(7), 683-693.
- Dear, M. (1992). Understanding and overcoming the nimby syndrome. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 58(3), 288-300.
- Derakhshan, R., Mancini, M., & Turner, J. R. (2019). Community’s evaluation of organizational legitimacy: Formation and reconsideration. *International Journal of Project Management*, 37(1), 73-86.
- Di Maddaloni, F., & Derakhshan, R. (2019). A leap from negative to positive bond. A step towards project sustainability. *Administrative Sciences*, 9(2), 41.
- Di Maddaloni, F., & Davis, K. (2017a). Project manager's perception of the local communities' stakeholder in megaprojects. An empirical investigation in the uk. *International Journal of Project Management*.
- Di Maddaloni, F., & Davis, K. (2017b). The influence of local community stakeholders in megaprojects: Rethinking their inclusiveness to improve project performance. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(8), 1537-1556.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Donaldson, T., & Preston, L. E. (1995). The stakeholder theory of the corporation: Concepts, evidence, and implications. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(1), 65-91.
- Eskerod, P., & Huemann, M. (2013). Sustainable development and project stakeholder management: What standards say. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 6(1), 36-50.
- Eskerod, P., & Larsen, T. (2018). Advancing project stakeholder analysis by the concept 'shadows of the context'. *International Journal of Project Management*, 36(1), 161-169.
- Eskerod, P., Huemann, M., & Ringhofer, C. (2015). Stakeholder inclusiveness: Enriching project management with general stakeholder theory. *Project Management Journal*, 46(6), 42-53.
- Eskerod, P., Huemann, M., & Savage, G. (2015). Project stakeholder management—past and present. *Project Management Journal*, 46(6), 6-14.
- Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Goel, A., Ganesh, L., & Kaur, A. (2020). Project management for social good. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 13(4).
- Graetz, G., & Franks, D. M. (2016). Conceptualising social risk and business risk associated with private sector development projects. *Journal of Risk Research*, 19(5), 581-601.
- Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(1), 42-55.
- Jain, R. P., Simon, J. C., & Poston, R. S. (2011). Mitigating vendor silence in offshore outsourcing: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 27(4), 261-298.
- Kohlbacher, F., & Krähe, M. O. (2007). Knowledge creation and transfer in a cross-cultural context—empirical evidence from Tyco flow control. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 14(3), 169-181.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Lin, Y., Kelemen, M., & Kiyomiya, T. (2017). The role of community leadership in disaster recovery projects: Tsunami lessons from Japan. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(5), 913-924.
- Liu, J., Meng, F., & Fellows, R. (2015). An exploratory study of understanding project risk management from the perspective of national culture. *International Journal of Project Management*, 33(3), 564-575.
- Loosemore, M., & Muslmani, H. A. (1999). Construction project management in the persian gulf: Inter-cultural communication. *International Journal of Project Management*, 17(2), 95-100.
- Mahalingam, A., & Levitt, R. E. (2007). Institutional theory as a framework for analyzing conflicts on global projects. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 133(7), 517-528.
- Martinez, C. (2018). Stakeholder participation in property development. *Lund University, Faculty of Engineering*.
- Mazur, A., Pisarski, A., Chang, A., & Ashkanasy, N. M. (2014). Rating defence major project success: The role of personal attributes and stakeholder relationships. *International Journal of Project Management*, 32(6), 944-957.
- McVea, J. F., & Freeman, R. E. (2005). A names-and-faces approach to stakeholder management: How focusing on stakeholders as individuals can bring ethics and entrepreneurial strategy together. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 14(1), 57-69.
- Müller, R., & Turner, J. R. (2007). Matching the project manager's leadership style to project type. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25(1), 21-32.
- Olander, S. (2007). Stakeholder impact analysis in construction project management. *Construction Management and Economics*, 25(3), 277-287.
- Petrova, M. A. (2016). From NIMBY to acceptance: Toward a novel framework—VESPA—for organizing and interpreting community concerns. *Renewable Energy*, 86, 1280-1294.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Pheng, L. S., & Leong, C. H. (2000). Cross-cultural project management for international construction in China. *International Journal of Project Management*, 18(5), 307-316.

Rees-Caldwell, K., & Pinnington, A. H. (2013). National culture differences in project management: Comparing british and arab project managers' perceptions of different planning areas. *International Journal of Project Management*, 31(2), 212-227.

Sabini, L., Muzio, D., & Alderman, N. (2019). 25 years of 'sustainable projects'. What we know and what the literature says. *International Journal of Project Management*, 37(6), 820-838.

Shinebourne, P. (2011). The theoretical underpinnings of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). *Existential Analysis: Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis*, 22(1).

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. Thousand oaks, CA: Sage.

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Smythe, L., & Giddings, L. S. (2007). From experience to definition: Addressing the question 'what is qualitative research?'. *Nursing Praxis in New Zealand*, 23(1).

Sun, L., Yung, E. H., Chan, E. H., & Zhu, D. (2016). Issues of nimby conflict management from the perspective of stakeholders: A case study in Shanghai. *Habitat International*, 53, 133-141.

Swierczek, F. W. (1994). Culture and conflict in joint ventures in asia. *International Journal of Project Management*, 12(1), 39-47.

Teo, M., & Loosemore, M. (2017). Understanding community protest from a project management perspective: A relationship-based approach. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(8), 1444-1458.

Ullah Khan, A. (2014). Effects of cultural assimilation on the performance of a construction project—evidence from uae. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 21(3), 430-449.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Wagstaff, C., & Williams, B. (2014). Specific design features of an interpretative phenomenological analysis study. *Nurse Researcher*, 21(3).

Weir, D., & Hutchings, K. (2005). Cultural embeddedness and contextual constraints: Knowledge sharing in chinese and arab cultures. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 12(2), 89-98.

Zhang, Y., Marquis, C., Filippov, S., Haasnoot, H.-J., & Van der Steen, M. (2015). *The challenges and enhancing opportunities of global project management: Evidence from chinese and dutch cross-cultural project management*. Harvard Business School Working Paper, No. 15-063.

Appendices:

Appendix 1-Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Participant Name:

Date:

Part 1: Background

This section will gather background information that helps to create a context for the participant's experiences with engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities.

1. How did you come to be a Project Manager?
2. What does the concept of culture mean to you?
3. From an ethnic/cultural perspective, how would you describe the communities where you grew up?

Part 2: The Details of Experience

In this section, the participant will be asked to reconstruct concrete details of how they manage stakeholders with a focus on the detailed description of their experience engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities.

The focus is to understand:

- How project managers identify different stakeholder groups, their needs, interests, and priorities, and adverse project impacts
- How they plan stakeholder engagement
- How they actually manage the engagement
- How they monitor the level and quality of the stakeholder engagement throughout the project lifecycle

Identify Stakeholders:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

4. Describe the process you go through to identify stakeholder communities impacted by the project and how you determine project impacts on ethno-culturally diverse communities?
5. Describe the process you go through to gain an understanding of ethno-culturally diverse communities' needs, interests, and priorities in their role as project stakeholders?

Plan Stakeholder Engagement:

6. Describe your approach to planning stakeholder engagement when ethno-culturally diverse communities are a stakeholder of your project?
 - How do you plan for when, where, and how the community will be engaged during the project?
 - In what ways are these stakeholders involved in this planning process?
7. In what ways do you change/alter your approach to planning stakeholder engagement, when ethno-culturally diverse communities are impacted by your projects?
 - What do you do differently?
 - What adjustments do you have to make?

Manage Stakeholders Engagement:

8. Describe what it is like to engage ethno-culturally diverse communities and how that experience is different for you compared to engaging other types of stakeholders?
9. Describe how ethno-culturally diverse communities participate in various scoping, planning, designing or other project related meetings on your projects?
 - Could you describe such meetings and share some anecdotes?
 - How do you ensure adequate participation?
10. Describe what strategies have worked in engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities and why?
 - Can you give an example of such strategy and how it worked?
 - What do you do specifically to elicit their input?
 - How do you gain agreement and come to decisions?
 - Can you give some examples of strategies that did not work effectively and why??
 - How did you and your team have to adapt/change your strategies?

Monitor Stakeholder Engagement:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

11. On an ongoing basis, how did you evaluate the level of stakeholder engagement of ethno-culturally diverse communities throughout the lifecycle of your project?
 - What do you consider the success indicators or benchmarks for the level of engagement?
 - What is your method for tracking progress?
12. In what ways did you have to change/alter your approach to stakeholder management to be more effective in engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities?
 - What adjustments did you have to make?

Part 3: Reflecting on Meaning and Change

In this final section, participants will reflect on the meaning of their experiences and synthesize what they have learned in order to offer advice to improve stakeholder engagement practices and the project management profession in the context of engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities.

Challenges/Barriers/Support

13. Reflecting back on the project, what was the most challenging aspect of engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders?
 - What existing project management or organizational processes or policies either helped or hindered managing ethno-culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders?
 - What type of support have you received?
 - What type of support do you wish you had received?

Training

14. What kind of training preparation do you think project managers need in order to prepare them for managing ethno-culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders?
 - What type of training have you received that prepared you for managing ethno-culturally diverse communities?
 - What other type of training do you wish you had received?

Final Reflection

15. Given what we have discussed during this interview, if you could go back and do it over again, is there anything you would change in how you managed ethno-culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders and why?

Closing:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

16. The interview will end with a statement such as: That is all the questions I have for you today. Is there anything else about your experience of engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders that I should have asked you about and didn't or anything else you would like to share?

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 2-Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent¹

For participation in a Research Project

The purpose of this document, in accordance with the requirements of our Code of Research Ethics is to make explicit the nature of the proposed involvement between the researcher and the person or organization agreeing to supply information (the participants) and to record that the research participants understand and are satisfied with the proposed arrangements.

The title of the research project is:

Factors that promote or inhibit engagement of culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders in Local Government Projects

The researcher:

The principal researcher leading this research is: Samad Aidane

Contact details:

The Project:

The aim of this study is to explore how project managers engage ethno-culturally diverse communities when the communities are a project stakeholder in the context of local government projects and programs in a major metropolitan area in the U.S. The study will explore these individuals' understanding and experience of the challenges, barriers, and critical success factors for engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities as project and program stakeholders.

What participation in the study will involve:

Participants will be asked to grant one or more interviews of up to an hour and a half's duration. The interviews will be recorded on audiotape. It is understood that the interviewee is free to decline to answer any question, to terminate the interview at any time and to require that any section of the whole of the recording be deleted.

¹ Some content in this form was adapted from consent form used at Western Michigan University.
<https://wmich.edu/research/forms>

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Use of data:

The aim will be eventually to present the research along with the data collected in appropriate contexts, academic and professional, through publications, conference presentations, teaching and so on. If so requested, the researcher will refrain from using data that the participant considers sensitive. The participants will be given copies of any publications based on the research.

Anonymity of participants:

All information acquired will be treated as confidential. Unless specifically agreed otherwise, references in publications, talks etc. to particular organizations, individuals etc. will be anonymized and features which might make identification easy will be removed.

Declaration by the research participant(s):

I/We have read and am /are satisfied with the arrangements as set out above.

Signature of
participant:

Date:

Researcher's
signature:

Date:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 3-Research Study Fact Sheet

Research Study Fact Sheet²

What am I trying to find out in this study?

To understand the experience of local and regional government project and program managers as they engage local ethno-cultural minority communities impacted by their projects and programs. Specifically, the research will explore and describe these individuals' understanding of the challenges, barriers, and critical success factors for engaging culturally diverse communities as project and program stakeholders.

What is the rationale for the study?

From my work in the field as both a cross-cultural trainer and senior project manager, I see a growing need for project and program managers to play a key role in mitigating social inequities by promoting engagement of ethno-cultural minority communities in decisions throughout the lifecycle of local government programs. Up to this point, there is no literature within the project and program management profession that deal with cross-cultural stakeholder engagement in the context of local ethno-cultural minority communities as project stakeholders. This study will address this gap.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

The topic of the research is fully aligned with local government agencies drive to achieve social equity and advance opportunities for all. Findings from the study will assist efforts by local and regional governments to develop and/or enhance project and program management extensions to inclusive outreach, engagement strategies, and use of equity tools.

Who can participate?

Project or program managers from different local government agencies who have actively and directly engaged ethno-cultural minority communities as their stakeholders.

What is expected from participants?

There will be two rounds of guided open-ended interviews that will take roughly one hour each to conduct. The interviews will take place face-to-face at a location

² Some content in this form was adapted from consent form used at Western Michigan University.
<https://wmich.edu/research/forms>

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

convenient to participants. An additional communication over email will be asked in the form of one reflection piece based on the conversation generated from the first interview.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?

All participant information will be confidential, and participants may choose not to answer any question during the process. No information will be collected through this study that could be used to identify research participants or their organizations so participation will be anonymous. Any recorded names and information will be kept in a locked location and will not be released to anyone or used directly in print. Any reports, publications, or presentations on this data will use pseudonyms in place of names. Any responses that are shared from the interviews will be either aggregated or will be assigned a pseudonym so that participants' identities are concealed to the greatest extent possible.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 4-Initial Themes

Initial Themes

Superordinate Themes

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
2. PERCEIVED INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES
3. PM BELIEFS
4. PM IDENTITY
5. PM PRACTICES AND KNOWLEDGE
6. VALUING BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

Subthemes

1. Community Constraints
2. Cultural Factors
3. Unequal Representation
4. External Influences
5. Guidelines and Policies
6. Misalignment
7. Beliefs about Community
8. Emotional Experience of Engagement
9. Importance of Fostering Relationships
10. Project Dynamics
11. Personal Motivation
12. PM Cultural Background
13. Professional Experience
14. Professional Identity
15. Role Conflict
16. Change Management
17. Effective Engagement Practices
18. Engagement Tools and Techniques
19. Learning and Competency
20. THEME-Other Stakeholders Influences
21. Benefits
22. Challenges
23. Consequences

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Chapter 4: Applied Research Project

Introduction

There is currently a limited understanding, agreement, and research on how organizations operationalize inclusive and equitable stakeholder engagement within the context of project stakeholder management in public sector infrastructure and construction (PIC) projects. The government of the City of Durham, NC, a GARE member, has adopted the following definition for equitable community engagement:

Community engagement alone is not enough. It needs to be equitable. For engagement to be equitable, it must aim for participation from a group representative of a community's geography, race/ethnicity, age, gender, and other demographic characteristics. It must place specific emphasis on those who will be most adversely impacted by the project and those who are most often marginalized in these conversations. Equitable community engagement starts by recognizing the reality that systemic barriers cause certain populations to have less access to city processes. To overcome those barriers, the City must invest engagement resources towards the people who are often underrepresented in participation. (City of Durham, 2019)

The present study aimed to provide much needed information on the factors that influence engagement of ECDL communities during the initiation, design, planning and implementation of local government projects and programs. It achieved this objective by examining the phenomenon of stakeholder engagement of ECDL communities, through the lived experience of the project manager (PM). By focusing specifically on understanding the experience and perceptions of PMs, we are able to understand the factors that influence engaging ECDL communities as projects and programs stakeholders.

This research is useful for the implementation of equity tools in the organization where research was carried out and in other government agencies. A racial equity tool is a set of questions to guide local government agencies in assessing how their decisions, including

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

policies, practices, and budgets benefit and/or burden communities, specifically ECDL communities. According to the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), more than 30 state and 150 city governments are working to implement racial equity tools to guide policy, program, and budget decisions (Nelson, Spokane, Ross, & Deng, 2015). To advance equity and opportunities for all constituencies, a key objective of equity tools is to increase public participation in government decisions. In the context of PIC projects, inclusive and equitable community engagement is an important component of public engagement to enable citizens to participate in project decisions.

Terms of Reference/Objectives and Literature Review

This section will examine the existing research at the intersection of three strands of research relevant to understanding how inclusive engagement of ECDL communities is conceptualized within the existing project management literature. The three strands of research are: stakeholder management, sustainability, and local community.

While the majority of existing stakeholder management research focused on the contentious relationship with local community (Goel, Ganesh, & Kaur, 2020; Van Krieken, 2018), a number of researchers have linked the success of projects to the effectiveness of stakeholder management. Di Maddaloni and Derakhshan (2019) found that not only building a collaborative relationship with the local community is feasible, but that inclusive stakeholder engagement even leads to improved project performance (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b). Aapaoja, Haapasalo, and Söderström (2013) emphasized the value of engaging stakeholders early, enabling an open exchange of ideas and facilitating the emergence of creative solutions during the critical planning phases of the project. Additionally, community's support of the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

project leads to the project realizing its social sustainability outcomes (Cuganesan & Floris, 2020) and this support is gained through inclusive stakeholder engagement. On the other hand, a lack of stakeholder involvement can result in a confrontational relationship with stakeholders, which may lead to the perception the project is a failure even if it met all time, cost, and scope objectives (Olander, 2007).

Understanding the full diversity of stakeholders is key to inclusive stakeholder management. Aaltonen, Kujala, Lehtonen, and Ruuska (2010) criticized the current stakeholder management models for not reflecting the increasingly diverse nature of project environment. They argued that understanding the full diversity of stakeholders is critical to understanding their interests and building relationships in order to leverage their local knowledge in making decisions and mitigating risks associated with unexpected events (Aaltonen et al., 2010). Eskerod and Larsen (2018) proposed PMs should look at projects as embedded in the context of stakeholders' perceptions of experience. Additionally, researchers have called for stakeholder engagement to take into account the cultural and socio-economic context of the project (Lin, Kelemen, & Kiyomiya, 2017; Martinez, 2018).

Communities that live in proximity to projects tend to perceive them as a threat (Derakhshan, Mancini, & Turner, 2019; Di Maddaloni & Derakhshan, 2019). Research has found that those most impacted by inequities, such as environmental injustice, often lack the capacity to participate in decisions that impact them and are the least likely to even be considered as stakeholders (Beckman, Khare, & Matear, 2016). Given the history of marginalization, ECDL communities in proximity to projects tend to suffer the burdens and receive none of the benefits of the project. ECDL communities tend to be reluctant to participate in projects and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

their level of engagement is shaped by both their lived experience with past marginalization and with the organization's past projects. Derakhshan, Mancini, et al. (2019) found that the local community's distrust in the project organization and fear of retribution for speaking up negatively influence their level of engagement in projects. This experience shapes ECDL communities' perspective of the organization's present and future actions. Therefore, building a collaborative relationship requires PMs to understand the ECDL communities' experience within the historical context of their organizational relationship with ECDL communities (Di Maddaloni & Derakhshan, 2019; Eskerod & Larsen, 2018). This understanding can help PMs to adapt their approach to community engagement to ensure ECDL communities' participation and mitigate the cultural and socio-economic barriers to participation.

Over the last decade, there has been a call for a focus on a more equitable, inclusive, and socially responsible management-for-stakeholders (Eskerod & Huemann, 2013; Eskerod, Huemann, & Ringhofer, 2015; Eskerod, Huemann, & Savage, 2015). Researchers have criticized project management practice for its transactional approach to stakeholder engagement that emphasizes management-of-stakeholders to make them comply with the project objectives (Eskerod & Huemann, 2013). Consequently, project stakeholder engagement tends to focus on stakeholders who control project resources (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Within the project management literature, research that is relevant to inclusive and equitable stakeholder engagement in projects is situated under the broader literature on sustainability in project management and more specifically its social dimension. Projects are how organizations implement change and realize their strategic objectives (Project Management Institute, 2017). This is why they are gaining attention as a focus of sustainability because they are seen as vehicle for promoting sustainability (Poon & Silvius, 2019) and, in turn, positive social change (Silvius, 2017). Referred to as 'Sustainable Project Management', sustainability is considered a 'new school of thought' in project management (Silvius, Kampinga, Paniagua, & Mooi, 2017). This interest in sustainability in project management (Poon & Silvius, 2019; Sabini, Muzio, & Alderman, 2019) and interest in social sustainability in particular is predicted to continue to grow over the next decade (Walker & Lloyd-Walker, 2019).

Social sustainability refers to the commitment of the project organization to meeting the social needs of current and future stakeholders, including surrounding communities (Rostamnezhad, Nasirzadeh, Khanzadi, Jarban, & Ghayoumian, 2020). These social needs extend beyond health and safety (Rostamnezhad et al., 2020; Wang, Zhang, & Lu, 2018) to also encompass social justice, human dignity, and inclusive participation of stakeholders Doloi (2012). In particular, Gaziyeu (2019) identified stakeholder management as an integral requirement of social sustainability in projects and achieving social and ethical outcomes and inclusive stakeholders' engagement.

However, the temporary nature of projects creates a built-in paradox: sustainability is focused on long term goals while projects focus on short term assignment (Andersen, Dysvik, & Vaagaasar, 2009). Dalcher (2012) even suggested that because they focus on short-term

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

success and fail to consider longer term impacts of decision and actions, projects contradict the notion of sustainability. Additionally, because projects are temporary, they require more efforts to integrate social sustainability. Therefore, researchers have called for examination of sustainability considerations at the organizational level (Goel et al., 2020) and how existing models of social sustainability apply to projects (Loosemore & Lim, 2018). If left to their own devices, projects can either be a force to advance equity or exacerbate historic marginalization and discrimination and further deepen social inequity.

There are growing societal expectations that projects, such as PIC, that operate within a community deliver social value (SV) to those communities (Loosemore, 2016). Daniel and Pasquire (2019) defined social value as the social, economic, and environmental well-being that the community obtains from the organization conducting economic activities in the community. They identified five drivers for delivering SV: the business imperatives for an organization, the return on investment from creating SV, global interest in the SV, opportunities in the SV sector, and legislation and regulation (Daniel & Pasquire, 2019). However, to deliver SV in construction projects, organizations need to change their project management practices and, especially, procurement practices (Loosemore, 2016).

Construction projects, in particular, have been criticized for lack of attention to social sustainability considerations and for having a single-minded focus on the triple constraints of scope, cost, and schedule (Goel et al., 2020). Recently, some researchers began to examine the application of corporate social responsibility (CSR) aspects to projects. Loosemore and Lim (2018) found that, while interest in corporate social responsibility is increasing in the construction industry due to rising public concern about rising inequity in the industry, there is

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

a general lack of interest in social sustainability and building relationships with local communities (Loosemore & Lim, 2018). In fact, research found that local communities are perceived as a liability in the construction project delivery (Loosemore, 2016).

Loosemore (2016) research on SV further found that CSR initiatives at the project level do not seem to work because CSR models developed in a permanent business context do not seem to take into account the “transitional, nomadic and project-based” nature of temporary project organizations (Loosemore & Lim, 2018). While CSR is sometimes used to mean SV, Daniel and Pasquire (2019) made a clear distinction between the two terms. CSR tends to be a top-down approach to delivering value, where the organization makes decisions with limited input or influence, if any, from the community. SV, on the other hand, is a bottom-up approach that empowers communities to influence the process and outcomes of value creation (Daniel & Pasquire, 2019).

Social procurement is emerging as an example of a strategy that governments use to leverage their purchasing powers on large PIC projects to deliver SV to communities (Loosemore, Alkilani, & Murphy, 2021). Social procurement is especially used to advance opportunities for historically disadvantaged stakeholder groups (Barraket & Loosemore, 2018; Farag, McDermott, & Huelin, 2016), such as ECDL communities. Many governments have established policies to mandate social procurement for project-based organizations, such as the construction industry. However, despite these efforts, the success of public projects in delivering SV outcomes has been inconsistent. Social contracting remains largely transactional and driven by the need to meet compliance requirements (Barraket & Loosemore, 2018). Furthermore, due to its subjective and qualitative nature, it has been challenging to assess the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

SV outcomes of projects. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, construction projects have the potential to deliver significant SV (Daniel & Pasquire, 2019; Loosemore, 2015).

PMs play a central role in integrating social sustainability considerations in project decisions (Goel et al., 2020). PMs perform a balancing act in negotiating the gaps between their organization's social equity aspirations and the constraints imposed by its project delivery processes. Balancing these often conflicting goals reflects the tension between 'management of stakeholders' and 'management for stakeholders' debated in current Project Management research (Cuganesan & Floris, 2020; Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b). Integrating social sustainability considerations expands the traditional role of the PM, as it requires the PM to shift their approach from "management-of-stakeholders" to "management-for-stakeholders" (Goel et al., 2020). How PMs accomplish this balancing act is key to the success of an organization's relationship with ECDL communities and its drive to advance social equity.

Individual values and characteristics of the PM, such as cultural background, education, gender, and more importantly, how they value social sustainability, are factors that influence the extent to which social sustainability considerations are integrated in projects decisions (Sabini et al., 2019). For example, their intrinsic motivation was found to be an important factor that influences how PMs address social sustainability (Poon & Silvius, 2019). Therefore, researchers have called for a greater emphasis on understanding how the integration of social sustainability considerations in project decisions impacts the role of PMs and how they cope with the ambiguity and added complexity that these considerations bring to their role (Sabini et al., 2019).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Projects involving ECDL communities have to balance conflicting stakeholder interests and needs. Therefore, they should be approached as complex projects requiring complex skills (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b; Sabini et al., 2019). Martinez (2018) suggested that PMs need to acquire additional skills to engage external stakeholders. Therefore, PM competence (Goel et al., 2020) and skill development (Rostamnezhad et al., 2020) are important for incorporating social sustainability in projects. Social, emotional, and cultural skills are essential to engaging ECDL communities. Lin et al. (2017) found that soft skills, such as social and cultural competence, are required to adapt project management approaches to the socio-cultural context of the project. Emotional Intelligence is critical to building relationship with internal and external stakeholders (Mazur, Pisarski, Chang, & Ashkanasy, 2014; Müller & Turner, 2007). PMs need to develop the emotional resilience required to overcome the psychological pressures they face as they navigate the challenging aspects of their conflicting role and negotiate different expectations and relationships with the community and their organization.

Ullah Khan (2014) recognized cultural competence is important to deliver successful projects across cultures. Ochieng and Price (2010) found PMs must be culturally competent and emphasized that a lack of understanding of cultural differences and a failure to utilize cultural knowledge can lead to time delays and cost overruns in projects (Mahalingam & Levitt, 2007). Cultural competence is essential recognizing cultural differences particularly during the initial phases of the project is particularly important (DeLone, Espinosa, Lee, & Carmel, 2005). McVea and Freeman (2005) advocated for adapting stakeholder engagement practices to recognize the diversity of the project stakeholders. Teo and Loosemore (2017) advocated that PMs tap into the social capital of local community to resolve concerns, which requires a deep understanding

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

and respect for the local culture and history. Adapting stakeholder engagement practices to the cultural context required a deep understanding of existing cultural norms and routines (De Bony, 2010). Aaltonen (2011) suggested there is a link between PMs cultural competence and their ability to assess risks effectively. De Bony (2010) pointed out the need to adapt project management practices in order to mitigate the impact of cultural differences on collaboration, coordination, and decision making.

Given the central role that PMs have in advancing inclusive stakeholder management and the implications for selection and ongoing development of PMs (Poon & Silvius, 2019), Goel et al. (2020) argued that promoting social responsibility requires intervention at the management processes level and for examination of social sustainability considerations at the organizational level policies.

Consistency in how the organization approaches stakeholder engagement of ECDL community is crucial for building a positive relationship with the community, which is crucial for achieving the project's sustainability objectives. Research by Derakhshan, Mancini, et al. (2019) found that consistency in approach to community engagement adds more evidence to support the community's positive perception of the organization. Lack of clear guidance and strategies at the organizational level can result in barrier to social responsibility in projects (Alotaibi, Edum-Fotwe, & Price, 2019). Lack of clearly defined guidelines, for how PMs are expected to approach community engagements, may lead to significant variations in approaches to stakeholder engagement (Martinez, 2018). This in turn may result in inconsistent engagement outcomes for the communities. Additionally, lack of guidelines may lead to failure of some teams within the organization to support PM's effort due to other competing priorities and lack

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

of mandate. Research by Martinez (2018) found a lack of support from the organization challenges PMs' ability to engage communities effectively. When engagement occurs at the individual level, and there is a lack of support for the PM's efforts, this leads to inconsistent engagement experience which can undermine the community's trust in the project and organization.

There is a growing focus on the importance of embedding inclusive stakeholder engagement and social sustainability considerations in organizational structures. Research from Martinez (2018) found a consensus on the importance of institutionalization of equitable stakeholder engagement in organizations. Aaltonen (2011) found that the project team's assumptions about stakeholders are related to the degree of institutionalization of processes that govern stakeholder engagement practices. Institutionalizing engagement into its project delivery process requires establishing clearly defined expectations and guidelines for how PMs and their team approach community engagement, especially when ECDL communities are involved in projects. Adoption of sustainable practices in project management is accelerated when PMs are supported by the organization's strategies, policies and expertise (Poon & Silvius, 2019). Silvius et al. (2017) found that without a clear mandate from the organization leadership, PMs tend to prioritize meeting the project cost, budget, and time objectives above other considerations such as community engagement. Only through institutionalization of community engagement can organizations ensure that their projects do not perpetuate the historical marginalization and disempowerment of ECDL communities.

Taken together, the existing literature indicates a general lack of conceptual clarity on how organizations operationalize integrating inclusive stakeholder engagement and social

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

sustainability in projects and how this impacts stakeholder engagement aspect of the PM's role. Although there is a recognition of the importance of local community as a stakeholder (Aaltonen, 2011) and their support for the projects (Teo & Loosemore, 2014), a clear understanding of stakeholder engagement of ECDL communities is currently lacking in the project management literature (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b). While there is evidence that there are factors that influence the PM in addressing sustainability in general (Poon & Silvius, 2019; Silvius & de Graaf, 2019), there is a lack of understanding of the factors that influence the social dimension of sustainability (Rostamnezhad et al., 2020) and the impact of projects on local community in particular (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b), especially ECDL communities. A better understanding of the social impact of projects in general and the interests of different subgroups of the local community in particular may lead to better project outcomes for both the project organization and the local community (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b).

This Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study explored how PMs engage with ECDL communities when these communities are a project stakeholder in the context of public infrastructure and construction projects and programs in a major metropolitan area in the United States. The study explored these individuals' understanding and experience of the challenges, barriers, and critical success factors for engaging ECDL communities as project and program stakeholders.

Therefore, the research question for this IPA study is: *How do PMs make sense of their lived experience of engaging ethnically and culturally diverse local community stakeholders affected by PIC projects?*

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Method

This Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study explored how PMs engage ECDL communities when these communities are a project stakeholder in the context of public infrastructure and construction projects and programs. The study explored these individuals' understanding of the factors that influence engaging ECDL communities as project and program stakeholders. Therefore, the research is more aligned with the qualitative approach, which helps develop an understanding of a phenomenon by examining people's existing experience.

I used IPA as the research approach for this project. IPA originated in the UK in the 1990s (Smith, 1996) and was initially adopted within health and counseling psychology (Callary, Rathwell, & Young, 2015; Eatough & Smith, 2008). Due to its comprehensiveness as a qualitative research method (Wagstaff & Williams, 2014), IPA has since been adopted in various disciplines such as organizational studies, education, sports science, and humanities (Eatough & Smith, 2008). IPA's popularity has grown because it appeals to researchers interested in understanding a phenomenon from a first-person perspective and value the subjective knowledge for gaining a psychological perspective of a phenomenon of interest (Eatough & Smith, 2008). IPA aims to capture how individuals experience a particular phenomenon, within a specific context, and the meaning they attach to this experience (Rajasinghe, 2019).

Phenomenology research examines the rich details of participant's way of making meaning of their lived experience (Finlay, 2009). IPA is rooted in phenomenological psychology (J. A. Smith, P. Flowers, & M. Larkin, 2009). The two schools of thoughts that have been prominent in phenomenology research are Edmund Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and Martin Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology research (Finlay, 2009).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

IPA acknowledges the role of the researcher's interpretation and their influence on the research process and outcomes (Wagstaff & Williams, 2014). It assumes that individuals cannot be passive perceivers of objective reality (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). As Groenewald (2004) points out, researchers can never fully detach themselves from their research and, rather than pretending to so, researchers may embrace their experience, knowledge, and skills as valuable source of information that contributes to their interpretation and understanding of their research findings. Therefore, IPA recognizes researchers' understanding and interpretation is shaped by their individual experience and preconceptions (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Shinebourne, 2011; J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

IPA is ideal for this research because to understand how project managers perceive ECDL communities, it is important not just to examine behavior and events and experiences, but also the meaning that PMs attach to them "including cognition, affect, intentions" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 30). IPA is selected for this research because it is ideal for shedding light on mental and psychological processes. IPA is particularly helpful to novice researchers as it offers a robust tool that can be an alternative to the more generic descriptive data analysis methods (Rajasinghe, 2019). Many of the interpersonal processes involved in cross-cultural encounters are implicit. Therefore, understanding cultural nuances is complex and requires depth of reflection. IPA is ideal for this study because the factors, which influence PMs' experiences and perceptions of engaging ECDL communities, can never be fully understood by only examining external factors. Only through deep engagement with the narrative of the stories of the PMs and how they make sense of their experience can we uncover and make sense of the lived experiences of engaging ECDL communities. Additionally, IPA is ideal for examining complex

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

and emotionally laden topics (Smith & Osborn, 2015), such as racial equity and social justice, which are topics discussed in the present study. This is especially sensitive topic today in light of the current racial reckoning in the country to systemic racism, racial violence, and police brutality with the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other African American victims.

I used semi-structured in-depth interviews to develop a detailed understanding of the PM's lived experiences and perceptions of engaging ECDL communities as project stakeholders. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to utilize an interview schedule to guide my conversation with participants without using it in the exact order in which it was written (see Appendix 1-Interview Schedule).

The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using IPA. The following six-step process for analyzing IPA data, by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), guided my approach to analyzing the three interviews:

1. Read and re-read
2. Initial noting
3. Develop emergent themes
4. Search for connections across emergent themes
5. Move to the next case
6. Look for patterns across cases

All participant information is kept confidential, and participants were able to choose not to answer any question during the process. No information was collected through this study that could be used to identify participants or their organizations, so participation was reported anonymously. Informed Consent Form was reviewed with all participant (See "Appendix 2-Informed Consent Form"). A Research Study Fact Sheet, that expands on the consent form and provides additional information on the research project, was provided to participants (see "Appendix 3-Research Study Fact Sheet").

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Ethical approval was obtained from Ethics Panel of Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology at Canterbury Christ Church University in partnership with Professional Development Foundation Board of Studies.

Project Activity

Researcher as Insider

As discussed in the previous chapter, my status as a researcher with an insider's perspective has afforded me valuable insights into the internal working of project management organizations within local government. This insider's perspective helped me navigate the challenges of conducting research on a sensitive diversity, equity, and inclusion-related topic during a time of historic racial reckoning in the U.S. Due to the racially charged rhetoric of the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the subsequent racial justice protests across the country, many local government agencies were concerned about discussing diversity, equity, and inclusion topics that might lead public relations exposure. My insider status has provided me access that would be difficult for an "outsider" researcher to gain. This insider's knowledge helped me navigate these sensitivities, obtain buy-in from management to conduct my research, and mitigate potential risks to successfully complete this research project.

Project Site

The research took place in a public sector organization in a major metropolitan area in the United States. Over the years, the organization completed a number of projects in proximity to ECDL communities. Some of these communities have been identified as "environmental justice" communities by the United States federal government. Environmental

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

justice communities are those with a high concentration of racial, ethnic, and low-income vulnerable populations and the number of proximate pollution facilities (Hynes & Lopez, 2007).

Because the present study is aligned with the target organization's initiative to establish equity tools across all its operations, I obtained agreement from different project management groups to interview their PMs.

Participants

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) recommended that "IPA studies are conducted on relatively small sample sizes, and the aim is to find a reasonably homogeneous sample, so that, within the sample, we can examine convergence and divergence in some detail" (p. 3). Since the focus of an IPA study is on getting "rich" and "thick descriptions" of the lived experiences of the research participants (Alase, 2017), sample size can be as small as five participants (Smith et al., 2009).

I interviewed 13 PMs from different departments responsible for projects that impact communities at Organization A. The selection criteria were participants must have actively and directly engaged ethno-cultural minority communities as their stakeholders on at least one project. The participants have been purposefully selected because there is a very limited number of PMs that meet the selection criteria at the organization where research was carried out. Additionally, participants were selected by their managers because the topic of engagement of ECDL communities was very sensitive within the organization, due to ongoing conflicts with local communities that live within proximity to the organization's base of operations and its projects sites.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Participants were assigned pseudonyms (Tom, Brad, Rich...) to help ensure anonymity.

All participants were full time PMs and worked in different divisions. They were representative of the broader population of PMs at the organization, from different business divisions, and had different professional backgrounds (environmental PMs and Construction PMs). They also came from different cultural backgrounds and, growing up, had different levels of exposure to different cultures. Additionally, they worked on different types of projects that involve ECDL communities (environmental cleanup vs. construction). The participants had experience engaging different communities impacted by the organization’s projects such as Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hispanic American, African American, and Native American communities. Table 1 provides additional information on each participant.

Table 1:

Study Participants

#	Participant Name	Role on Projects	Number of Years of Professional Experience	Number of Years with the Organization
1.	Brad	Program Manager	20	10
2.	Rich	Program Manager	25	12
3.	Tom	Project Manager	26	17
4.	Jill	Program Manager	20	3
5.	John	Project Manager	11	18
6.	Sue	Engineer	7	17
7.	Rachel	Engineer	16	16
8.	Donald	Engineer	20	20
9.	Sam	Program Manager	10	32
10.	Roger	Project Manager	10	5
11.	Kim	Project manager	2	8
12.	Laurie	Project Manager	20	13
13.	Bill	Project Manager	30	2

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Data Collection

I used a semi-structured interview schedule consisting of open-ended questions. The schedule was designed to encourage the participant to share as much as possible about their personal and professional lives as they relate to their experiences of engaging ECDL communities. Some questions are followed-up using probes and prompts to elicit more in-depth-information from participants.

Before conducting the three interviews, I tested the content and clarity of the interview schedule by interviewing a colleague, who is a PM. I modified some questions to remove ambiguity. The interviews with participants, which lasted approximately 90 minutes, were recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

After data collection, I used NVivo to manage and code the data and develop themes. Similar to the preliminary study, I started the process by reading each interview multiple times, searching for meanings and patterns. As I read each interview, I marked passages for subsequent coding phases and captured my initial thoughts in the form of analytical memos and annotations. Using the codes identified in the preliminary study, I then conducted multiple cycles of line-by-line open coding for each interview. As I read each interview, I assigned codes to passages that appeared to be interesting. I coded for as many potential themes and patterns as possible. Although most of the codes from the preliminary study were relevant to the present study, new codes were added when needed.

I then conducted multiple cycles of analyzing the codes and merging and collapsing those that seemed to be duplicates or those that did not ultimately appear to be prevalent

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

across all 13 interviews. I then began to group codes under high-level categories while sorting them into common themes and subthemes. While the high-level categories from the preliminary study were used as starting points, new and higher levels of abstractions and relationships between codes and categories began to emerge.

Additionally, different categories became more noticeable and more relevant when I compared data and codes from across all 13 interviews. For example, in the preliminary study, a number of codes were grouped under subcategories “Building Trust”, “Engagement Return on Investment”, and “Engagement as an Emotional Experience”. These subcategories were in turn grouped under a broader category of “Fostering Relationships”. In the present study, it became clear from analysis of the codes that the category “Fostering Relationships” was part of an even broader category. A new category, “The Engagement Experience”, was developed to capture the distinction that participants draw between genuine engagement designed to build trust, understanding, and partnership with the communities and one that has the objective of merely meeting minimum compliance requirements and checking the box. Therefore, codes from the “Building Trust” category were combined with additional codes to create the new category “Fostering Collaborative Relationship”. Together with “Engagement Return on Investment”, this new category was combined with another new category, “Community Response to Projects”, and grouped under “The Engagement Experience” category.

Table 2 shows an illustration of a theme and subthemes with example codes and quotes. This initial cycle of categorization resulted in 6 superordinate themes. Subsequent cycles of grouping, with a focus on those that adequately addressed the research question and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

appeared prevalent across participants' accounts, resulted in a final set of five major superordinate themes. This final set of themes will be discussed next.

Table 2:

Table illustrating superordinate theme, subthemes, codes, and quotes

Superordinate Themes	Subordinate themes	Example Codes	Example Quotes
The Engagement Experience (The Engagement Process)	Community Response to Projects	Emotional reactions	We knew going into that project that people we were going to have feelings and we need to get let them express those and find a positive way to get them involved in the project so they felt that they had some ownership rather than it being imposed upon them (Laurie).
		Negative perceptions	And then when you start tell them our story, our perspective and then they start to realize that Oh I never thought about it that way, I just assumed that again you guys are always about what's in your best interest not our best interest (Jill).
		Community protest	But you are going to have to make sure that they are engaged from the very beginning or they will do what they did to the [name of the project] project. They called the [elected officials], they storm the [elected officials] meeting, they will make a song, and they will dance (John).
	Fostering Collaborative Relationship	Collaborative decision-making	We realize that going into public meetings and telling the communities we have already thought about it all, we have already figured it all out, this is the best thing to do, was not the best approach him (Steve).
		Social capital	It was important to get support because when there is lack of support when there is distrust then your job becomes a lot more difficult (Rich).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

		Sense of ownership	Find a positive way to get them involved in the project so they felt that they had some ownership rather than it being imposed upon them (Laurie).
	Return on Engagement	Risk mitigation	Allowed us to address community concerns, and allowed us to address incidents that happened during the project (Rich).
		Willingness to compromise	He works so much with the different tribes that they may not fully trust him but they have enough experience with him that if he says something they believe that he is telling them the truth even if they don't like it (Laurie)
		Positive project outcomes	Engaged the community and then allowing them the influence the design in such a way that we were able to get the work done (John)

Findings and Discussion

This combined findings and discussion chapter is organized into five superordinate themes and 10 subordinate themes identified through the data analysis, as shown in Table 3. This section combines a presentation and interpretation of the findings with a synthesis of existing literature.

Table 3:

Superordinate Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subtheme
Theme 1: A Voice for the Vulnerable and Marginalized (Community Factors)	Engaging the cultural and socio-economic reality Distrust, fear and suspicion

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Theme 2: Bridging the Intention– Implementation Gap (Organizational factors)	Valuing Equity Organizational Misalignments
Theme 3: The Engagement Experience (The Engagement Process)	Community response to projects Fostering Collaborative Relationship Return on engagement
Theme 4: Negotiating roles and relationships	Balancing Roles Engagement as an Emotional Experience Personal Commitment to equity
Theme 5: Building Capacity for inclusion (Best Practices and training)	

Theme 1: A Voice for the Vulnerable and Marginalized (Community Factors)

Participants described ECDL communities as a vulnerable segment of society with a history of being subjected to discrimination and marginalization. As a result, the voice of these communities remains underrepresented in the broader stakeholder groups of the organization’s projects. This theme focuses on the range of factors that participants believed undermine ECDL communities’ participation in the organization’s project, despite all the engagement efforts of the PM.

Subtheme: Engaging the cultural and socio-economic reality

A reoccurring theme from the interviews is that stakeholder engagement of these communities is situated in a distinct cultural and socioeconomic context that is significantly

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

different from that of predominantly white communities. Participants perceived these communities as made up of predominantly immigrant and refugee populations.

When we typically say it is culturally diverse area in this region, we are talking about lower income areas as well. And you know it was heavily contaminated area through the years...through governmental policies like redlining that forced people of non-white ethnicity into less desirable parts of town. (John)

This context gives rise to several factors that result in the underrepresentation of these communities in the organization's project stakeholder groups. "But if you go to the meeting which we went to and made presentations on all that, you will see a lot of them are white" (Tom). One factor cited by participants that contributes to this lack of participation is that ECDL communities' members are just not used to being engaged. "I went out and talk[ed] to folks to say how do you use the facility, and they were absolutely dumbfounded that anybody was talking to them" (Brad). Participants believe that ECDL communities have been historically marginalized and subjected to racial discrimination and, therefore, tend to be excluded from participation in project decisions. One participant even cited an example of witnessing discrimination on their own projects in these communities.

So we called the police department to see if they can help us out and you know when they asked us what the incident was we said 'well we spilled some contaminated material on the street and we are asking if you can maybe dispatch an officer to help us with traffic control'. And the response from the dispatcher was 'what's the big problem? it is [name of ECDL community], Right? (John)

Some participants spoke about their own experience living in these types of communities. "I live through that myself every day you know. I came from a challenging background. Got to the U.S. as a refugee. I kind of lived through all the prejudice. And discrimination and all that stuff. I know how that is" (Tom).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

These findings indicate that engagement of ECDL communities occurs in a historical context and that the community's experience with marginalization and with the organization's past projects shapes its perception of the organization's present and future actions. This perception, in turn, shapes their participation in projects. This finding is supported by research from Derakhshan, Mancini, et al. (2019), who found past experience shapes community perception of the organization. Therefore, it is important that PMs understand the cultural, historical, and socio-economic dynamics when ECDL communities are involved in projects and ensure that stakeholder engagement practices are tailored to account for the unique characteristics and history of ECDL communities.

Participants also indicated that socio-economic factors influence the participation of ECDL communities. "We all recognize it as a lower income neighborhood" (John). Participants believed that these communities struggle to make ends meet and, therefore, this takes priority over participating in a project. "People that lived there they're just trying to get by" (Donald). Participants pointed to the lack of time due to having to work long hours and often multiple jobs to just make ends meet. Some participants spoke from their own experience of having lived in these ECDL communities. "I was low-income myself. All we worry about is making money. You can't afford time to go to a community meeting" (Tom). These findings point to the fact that, unlike members of communities with higher socio-economic means, who tend to be disproportionately represented in projects, ECDL communities' socio-economic reality is a barrier to their participation in projects decisions.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Subtheme: Distrust, Fear and Suspicion

Many immigrant and refugee community members come from societies where, historically, it is risky to voice opinions or speak out against government decisions. Participants pointed to the communities' general reluctance to participate in government matters. "But I also understand that you know from a minority perspective a lot of time we don't really like to get involved with the government that much right" (Tom). Other participants spoke about a general distrust of government. "We got a sense that again once it comes to like something from the government yes people don't necessarily trust the government" (Jill). The findings that ECDL communities are reluctant to participate in projects are in line with research by Derakhshan, Mancini, et al. (2019). They found that the local community's distrust in the project organization and fear of potential retribution for speaking up negatively influence their level of engagement in projects.

Another factor mentioned by all participants is ECDL community members' lack of understanding of the system and their rights as citizens to participate in local government decisions. "In the case of citizens who are new to the country, they are not really well resourced and don't know how to interact with the process like this or how to make sure their rights are protected" (Brad). One participant, a refugee when he first came to the U.S., grew up in an immigrant and refugee community and described his own experience participating in community meetings. "First of all, we don't even know what they talk about. Why do we have a community meeting? As a minority and not speaking English well, you don't understand the system in the U.S." (Tom).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Participants noted that the PM needs to be aware that members of ECDL communities, even when they participate, may not feel comfortable communicating concerns during project community meetings. “There are folks that come from certain societies they would not even begin to question the government dictum” (Brad). It is important that PMs adapt their approach to stakeholder engagement to the cultural background of the stakeholders, including taking into consideration how cultural differences influence communication styles. Many decisions that are important for adapting the project approach to stakeholder engagement rely on evidence-based, thorough, and comprehensive stakeholder identification and analysis. It is important that such identification and analysis are based on robust demographic data that is accurate and timely. Organizations, therefore, need to support project managers by investing in robust stakeholder identification and analysis processes and ensuring the availability of robust demographic data to support evidence-based project decisions.

Taken together, these findings suggest that, although project stakeholder management research tends to largely conceptualize local communities as homogenous stakeholder groups, ECDL communities are a segment of the population with distinct characteristics and a history of marginalization and discrimination. ECDL communities, unlike predominantly white communities, face cultural and socio-economic challenges that limit their participation and result in the underrepresentation of their voice in project decisions.

Theme 2: Bridging the Intention–Implementation Gap (Organizational factors)

The superordinate theme, Bridging the Intention–Implementation Gap, describes the range of the project organization-related factors that participants believed influence PMs’ efforts to engage ECDL communities.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Subtheme: Valuing Equity

Participants spoke about community engagement as a core component of the organization's focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion and is an organizational priority. "This equity stuff is becoming at the forefront and I think everyone is beginning to think about it" (Jill). For example, some pointed out that the organization has recently established a diversity and equity department and that this is an important indication that the organization is making equity a priority. "Hiring the diversity equity and inclusion director it's a huge step for us. And I think it will lead to more resources available [organization-wide]" (Laurie).

Engagement of ECDL communities appears to be part of the drive to address long-standing issues of equity because some of these communities have been identified by state and federal governments as facing social justice issues. As a result, projects impacting these communities are required to implement community engagement plans to increase their participation, as mandated by environmental and social justice initiatives by state and federal governments.

[State/Federal Agency] is asking everyone to sort of step up and say 'now let's try to, you know, bring some equity to these communities and sort of help pick them up and bring them up to the level of some of these other communities that have more advantages'. (Jill)

Participants emphasized the significant progress the organization made toward equity over the last few years. "We are doing a lot of work with equity and diversity. But that was not always the case. I mean certainly not when the [organization] was around in [year agency was founded]" (Jill). As an example of this process, participants pointed out some departments have, over the last few years, made changes to their internal process with a focus on equity. "I

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

know that [name of department] has incorporated a whole social justice aspect to their work that they're doing" (Laurie).

However, with all the progress, participants acknowledged that much work still needs to be done to bridge the gap between the organization's focus on equity and existing project management practices that must change to align them with the organizational goals. "[The elected Politicians who oversee the organization] talk about of social justice and inclusion and diversity it's much more than what I'm seeing the PMs do" (Rachel).

These findings point to the fact that, for an organization's commitment to equity to be meaningful, it needs to be operationalized in its project management processes. Silvius et al. (2017) found that without a clear mandate from the organization leadership, PMs tend to prioritize meeting the project scope, cost, and schedule objectives above other considerations such as community engagement. This also aligns with research that found that adoption of sustainable practices in project management is accelerated when PMs are supported by the organization's strategies, policies, and expertise (Poon & Silvius, 2019). The institutionalization of community engagement ensures that projects do not perpetuate the historical marginalization and disempowerment of ECDL communities.

Subtheme: Organizational Misalignments

An organization's project delivery process may constrain the PM's ability to engage ECDL communities effectively if it lacks clear guidelines for how PMs are expected to approach community engagements. Participants believed that organizations need to put policies in place for how PMs are expected to approach the engagement of ECDL communities. "I mean here in this organization, [lack of policies] that's going to work with some people. And I think for some

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

people you just need to have the policies in place” (Rich). Participants spoke about the absence of guidelines in their project delivery process and how they are often unclear on the level of community engagement that is expected of them. “My department keeps what we call a project delivery process manual and there’s nothing in there at this point that would cause someone that was new and using the manual to stop and think and ask themselves that question” (Laurie).

Participants spoke about the lack of an objective measure for PMs to assess the quality of their engagement efforts against clearly defined goals. PMs are often unable to assess how much engagement is too much or not enough. “How do you define above and beyond from what is mandated required in order. Or even what is interpreted by the site manager? Again it’s not specifically written” (Rich).

One effect of this lack of guidelines is that engagement efforts appear to take place at the individual PM level and not at the organizational level, leading to responsibility for engagement being fragmented and accountability diluted. As a result, significant variations in approaches to stakeholder engagement may lead to inconsistent engagement outcomes. These findings are in line with the findings by Martinez (2018), who reported similar variations in how PMs approach stakeholder engagement.

On the other hand, a key benefit of clearly defined guidelines is to ensure consistency and continuity for how the organization approaches community engagement from project to project. More importantly, this will ensure that the community has a consistent engagement experience from all the organization’s PMs. Inconsistent engagement approaches impact the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

community's perception of the organization and, therefore, may have the potential of undermining trust and the relationship between the community and the organization.

If a different group of PMs came in from the organization to a community down there and said 'hey here's what we're doing, give us a call if you have any questions'. It would be treated with sort of 'are you guys from [name of the organization]'? (Rich)

Consistency in how the organization approaches stakeholder engagement of an ECDL community emerged as a foundation for building a positive relationship with the community. Because every contact with the community counts, consistency of approach to community engagement is essential to gaining the trust of ECDL communities and their support for the project. Consistency is achieved when internal project delivery teams and processes are aligned around the common objective of delivering an equitable stakeholder engagement. These findings are in line with research by Derakhshan, Mancini, et al. (2019), who found that consistency in approach to community engagement adds more evidence to support the community's positive perception of the organization.

Another reoccurring consequence of the lack of guidelines that emerged from the interviews is the resistance of other departments within the organization to support the engagement efforts of the PM. Participants expressed frustration that often, internal organizational departments are not unified in their support of the PM's engagement efforts. "And I know me going above and beyond bothered some people. I know we did because they felt that it didn't need to be my focus. I'm like 'wow you tasked me with this, and I cannot ignore it'" (Kim). PMs gave many examples of facing pushback and lack of support from other departments within the organization. One participant gave an example of a project that built a facility used primarily by predominantly Muslim members of the community. The community

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

requested that a couple of bathroom stalls support ablution (the Islamic process of washing before prayer). “So, I really pushed hard, I mean hard with [name of department] for an eastern style flush mount toilet and they refused to let me do it. They refused to let me do it” (Brad).

Another consequence of a lack of guidelines is the failure of some teams within the organization to support the PM’s efforts due to other competing priorities and lack of a mandate. These findings support research by Martinez (2018) that found a lack of support from the organization challenges PMs’ ability to engage communities effectively.

Another factor that leads to an inconsistent engagement experience for the communities is the lack of guidelines for when and to what extent PMs delegate community engagement responsibilities to subject matter experts outside of the project. Some PMs seem to rely on other departments within the organization to provide subject-matter expertise in community engagement instead of developing this expertise within the project team. “We let public affairs honestly take the lead on that and give us the direction” (Laurie). These external departments even provide advice on cultural dos and don’ts. “They definitely did walk us through that like I said a couple of weeks ago [Ramadan] you would not want to invite certain communities and have donuts” (John). However, because these external departments are not integrated into the project delivery process, their involvement in projects may be inconsistent as it may vary based on the expectations of the PM assigned to the project.

Taken together, these findings suggest that it is essential for the organization to institutionalize engagement into its project delivery process by establishing clearly defined expectations and guidelines for how PMs and their teams approach community engagement, especially when ECDL communities are involved in projects. Research from Martinez (2018)

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

found a consensus on the importance of institutionalization of equitable stakeholder engagement in organizations. Aaltonen (2011) found that the project team's assumptions about stakeholders are related to the degree of institutionalization of processes that govern stakeholder engagement practices.

Theme 3: The Engagement Experience (The Engagement Process)

This theme describes the distinction that participants draw between genuine engagement designed to build trust, understanding, and partnership with the communities and one that has the objective of merely meeting minimum compliance requirements and checking the box.

Subtheme: Community response to projects

Given the history of marginalization, ECDL communities in proximity to projects tend to suffer the burdens and receive none of the benefits of the project. As a result, ECDL communities tend to believe that a typical government agency is more focused on its own interest and meeting its own objectives without consideration of the needs of the communities.

And then when you start tell them our story, our perspective and then they start to realize that 'Oh I never thought about it that way, I just assumed that again you guys are always about what's in your best interest not our best interest. (John)

Furthermore, researchers found that communities that live in proximity to projects tend to perceive them as a threat (Derakhshan, Mancini, et al., 2019; Di Maddaloni & Derakhshan, 2019). Therefore, participants cautioned that PMs need to anticipate that the ECDL communities may not support the project, even if the project is for the benefit of the community and despite all the efforts of the PM. "Though folks think you're doing

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

[environmental] cleanup, it must be totally supported by everybody because you're doing good for the environment. That's not always the case, there's always controversy involved" (Rich).

Nevertheless, even though they may not support the project and despite the barriers that hinder their engagement in projects, participants were keen to emphasize that ECDL communities want to get involved in projects. "In any kind of community that you are going to do a project in, very rarely it is just going to be 'whatever' from the community. They are going to want to be involved whenever possible" (John). Understanding the lived experience of ECDL communities can help PMs to adapt their approach to community engagement to ensure ECDL communities' participation and mitigate the cultural and socio-economic barriers to their participation.

Another facet of community response to projects is the role that the elected politicians, who oversee the government agency, play in exerting pressure on PMs to engage the communities. When the communities have concerns, PMs understand that the communities may contact elected officials if their concerns are not addressed. PMs try to avoid these types of escalations.

We never had to go to [the elected politicians who oversee the organization] meeting ...to explain how something went wrong or why somebody was mad at us we never had anybody in the community go to the [the elected politicians] and complain about anything that we were doing. (Sue)

As a risk mitigation, PMs avoid situations that lead to interference of an elected politician due to the unpredictable impact such involvement may have on their projects when an elected politician's agenda is not aligned with the project objectives. "Once you get that level of the organization involved, there is all sorts of other things that come raining down. We were able to avoid all of that" (Sue).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

These findings suggest that engaging ECDL communities requires PMs to satisfy often conflicting needs and priorities as a PM, an advocate, a public servant, and a representative of the organization. In the absence of clear guidelines and expectations, PMs are often stuck between a rock and a hard place, at times unable to satisfy their organization, the communities they serve, or even their own desire to help the communities. To mitigate these conflicts, the organization needs to assess its internal processes mission, vision, and values statement to ensure that its projects are alignment around the same objectives. Additionally, the role of leadership is crucial to ensuring that performance evaluations of PMs are aligned with the goals of the organization to advance equitable stakeholder engagement.

Subtheme: Fostering Collaborative Relationship

Existing research on project stakeholder management focused on the contentious relationship with local communities (Goel et al., 2020; Van Krieken, 2018). One surprising finding from the present study is that it is possible to build a collaborative relationship with ECDL communities if they believe the PM is making a sincere and genuine effort to engage them in project decisions. Participants made a clear distinction between genuine engagement, being a two-way dialogue with the community, and the “check-the-box” type community outreach. “It just means human relations. You’ve developed some level of relationship. And you’re going to be working around these people and you developed a trust” (Donald).

Trust is built when the community believes the project is striving to achieve positive benefits for the community. There are many benefits for this trust, and the most important one is building a collaborative relationship with the community.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

So if you go to a meeting in and say 'this is happening and this is what we are doing about it', there's a better sense of trust that 'okay they know what they're doing. They're trying. They're not trying to screw us'. So to me that is one of the biggest benefits. (Donald)

A key outcome that all PMs strive for is that a collaborative relationship leads to the community feeling a sense of ownership in projects. "Find a positive way to get them involved in the project so they felt that they had some ownership rather than it being imposed upon them" (Laurie). Participants acknowledge, unfortunately, that not all PMs strive for genuine engagement. "And some of them just do it as like box-check de facto step to get them to the environmental process" (Brad). Participants spoke about the many consequences of the "check-the-box" type of community outreach and the community's lack of trust in the PM or the organization. "It was important to get support because when there is lack of support when there is distrust then your job becomes a lot more difficult" (Rich).

Subtheme: Return on Engagement

Participants believed that investing time and efforts on engagement was not only the right thing to do for the community but also delivered a high return on investment for their project and organization. Participants felt that engaging ECDL community members taps into the knowledge of the community, leading to better project decisions and, more importantly, adoption and ownership of these decisions by the community.

Well, I think on a project level, I think that all the time and money spent on outreach and engagement, paid off in terms of allowing us to schedule and predict the progress of the project, allowed us to address community concerns, and allowed us to address incidents that happened during the project. (Rich)

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Tapping into community knowledge helps the PM anticipate and assess project risks in a timely fashion and put in place measures to mitigate them, leading to a more predictable execution of the project and increasing the likelihood that the project will meet its budget, schedule, and scope objectives.

Another essential benefit of genuine engagement is that communities are more willing to accept decisions if they are engaged. Participants cited many examples of decisions with which the communities did not agree but eventually accepted because they thought they were genuinely engaged. Genuine engagement builds social capital that leads communities to be willing to compromise and accept less than desirable decisions or outcomes because they trusted the PM and believed that the PM did their best to meet their needs. “He works so much with the different tribes that they may not fully trust him but they have enough experience with him that if he says something they believe that he is telling them the truth even if they don’t like it” (Laurie).

Participants believed that long-term benefits are gained from building trust with the community beyond the project. They cited numerous examples where the community gained confidence in the organization’s ability to execute projects in the future with minimum impact on ECDL communities. As an example of the community gaining confidence in the organization and its PMs, participants spoke of instances when the community would even advocate for the PM and their organization during heated discussions in meetings with the community. “If somebody says something negative about the [organization] they are like ‘well you know when we did this, they really considered our opinion and they really heard what we were saying’” (Laurie).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

These findings are important additions to the literature as they show the potential of a more positive relationship between an organization and the local community that is different from the predominantly antagonistic and contentious relationships between projects and communities found in previous research. These findings also show that including the input of the ECDL communities in project decisions can facilitate and improve project's decision-making. This finding supports the assumption that inclusive stakeholder engagement leads to improved project performance (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b).

Theme 4: Negotiating Roles and Relationships

This theme describes participants' perceptions of the different roles and relationships that PMs negotiate, as they balance meeting the needs of the community and the expectations from their organizations.

Subtheme: Balancing Roles

This subtheme highlights participants' views of the balancing act that PMs perform as they actively navigate the duality of their roles as employees of the organization and as public servants.

The majority of the participants spoke about the multiple roles they play when engaging the communities and how the organizational misalignments discussed earlier can lead to a heightened conflict between these roles. First and foremost, participants saw their primary role as a public servants to their fellow citizens of ECDL communities and engaging them as the civic duty of public servants. "The fact that we are in the public sector these are our citizens you know...it's your duty to step up and make sure that they are taken care of" (Brad). This role is

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

made even more explicit by the expectations of elected politicians with the authority to oversee the operations of the government agency. “[The elected politicians] were getting calls from their constituents and they also didn’t think we did a good job engaging the community” (Roger).

In addition to their role as public servants with obligations to the communities, PMs are also expected to meet the project triple constraints of meeting the schedule, cost, and scope expectations of their organization. “We thought ‘what do we think we are going spend’ and I told him (manager) what we think. ‘Well, we want to dial back on certain things’ because we are graded based on those numbers” (Tom). The pursuit of this balancing act reflects the tension between “management of stakeholders” and “management for stakeholders” debated in current project management research (Cuganesan & Floris, 2020; Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b).

The support of the organization’s leadership as the PMs balance these often-conflicting roles is crucial. Lack of such support tends to lead the PM to focus on meeting the project goals and less on ECDL needs and concerns.

You do have folks (PMs) who will have like a very construction-oriented approach. They focus more on how we control scope, schedule, and budget. And the act of dealing with minimizing impacts on the community and that kind of thing is really seen as just an inconvenience that is to be overcome. (Brad)

Participants spoke about the consequences of failing to balance the different expectations of their roles as PM and as public servant and the negative impacts on ECDL communities. “Your last outcome should be that you have gone up and terrorized the population because you’re trying to put improvements” (Brad).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

The findings from this theme extend on previous project stakeholder management research by providing insight into the PMs' perception of their role as public servants and how this perception influences their approach to stakeholder engagement of ECDL communities. How PMs accomplish this balancing act is key to the success of an organization's relationship with ECDL communities and its drive to advance social equity.

Subtheme: Engagement as an Emotional Experience

The majority of participants discussed the emotional dimension of engaging ECDL communities. Concerns about a project's impacts on the community trigger a range of emotions during community meetings. "So, people are angry, they are frightened. You know, all the human emotions take place here" (Brad). Building trust-based relationships with the community depends on how the PM responds to this emotional dimension of their experience engaging ECDL communities. "We knew going into that project that people were going to have feelings and we need to let them express them" (Laurie).

Participants learned to anticipate these emotions and developed strategies to handle such situations. "Some of them are very angry. Those are the people, you can't get them all, but you go after the meeting and talk to them. And be sincere" (Donald). Participants learned to overcome the negative response by continuing to engage, even during strong emotional responses.

What my goal is and I can do this 90% of the time if I'm sitting one-on-one with the person who was really angry and getting mad at me and would be almost in tears I can turn that conversation around. And make them a little bit more understanding about why we're there, make them feel a little bit better about it. (Sam)

Some participants thought that ECDL community members form their views of the organization based on a lack of knowledge or wrong assumptions about the organization's

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

efforts and intentions. “I am a big proponent to try to educate people...I feel a lot of times that people don’t necessarily have the story right” (Jill).

Because building relationships and trust is an emotional experience, as it takes time and personal commitment, engagement can take an emotional toll on the PM. PMs not only have to address the issues that emerge from their project but also deal with past grievances resulting from the historical context of their organization’s relationship with the community. PMs may also need to rebuild trust and set a new course for relationship building with the ECDL communities, despite all of the resistance and challenges.

Participants also spoke about the emotional impact on the PM. PMs are often treated as responsible for past grievances unrelated to their projects. “That’s still a hard thing to sometimes I feel like a little upset. I guess the fact that we are treated like the bad guy” (Jill).

Participants spoke about strategies they use to cope with community response and its impact on them. They developed strategies to deal with their own emotional response. “You just kind of learn that ‘I am there for work’ and once you leave you turn it off when you go home” (Sam).

PMs learned to depersonalize community response.

I don’t take it personally because I believe that everybody has an issue. I mean if they came to that meeting, then they are experiencing something that they are not happy with in their lives. So, I don’t take it personally, even if they make it personal, I turn that around and deal with it that way. (Sam)

They spoke about the importance of remembering that the community’s response should not be taken as an attack targeted at the PM. “This is not directed at you. This is directed at who you represent, the agency that you represent” (Brad).

PMs, therefore, need to develop the emotional resilience required to overcome the psychological pressures they face as they navigate the challenging aspects of their conflicting

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

roles and negotiate different expectations and relationships with the community and their organization. These findings supports research that demonstrated the connection between emotional intelligence and building relationships with internal and external stakeholders (Mazur et al., 2014; Müller & Turner, 2007). Through long-term sustained engagement, despite the challenges, PMs are able to build trust and foster a collaborative relationship with the ECDL communities.

Subtheme: Personal Commitment to Equity

To overcome the challenges of their role duality and lack of institutional supports, PMs draw on their intrinsic motivation and personal commitment to persevere and sustain themselves. Participants emphasized the important role that intrinsic motivation and personal commitment to equity play in helping PMs navigate the often absent or unclear guidelines and policies and conflicting expectations. “There is a rulebook but the earnestness with which folks apply those rules can vary greatly. And it’s based on a number of factors. One is what kind of human you are” (Brad). The current study agrees with research that found intrinsic motivation to be an important factor that influences PMs to address social sustainability (Poon & Silvius, 2019).

A key finding that emerged from this research is that intrinsic motivation and personal commitment to serving the communities appear to be key determinants of the quality of the engagement efforts. Given the amount of time and effort often required to build relationships with the community, participants felt that this intrinsic motivation and personal commitment seems to be the best predictor of the quantity and quality of the engagement efforts. “It’s personal because it takes a lot of time and it takes a lot of invested time building up to that and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

it takes a lot of personal interest. Right?” (Rich). The present study agrees with previous research that the individual values and characteristics of the PM influence the extent to which social sustainability considerations are integrated into projects decisions (Sabini et al., 2019).

Participants believed personal commitment is based on a deep appreciation of ECDL communities, cultural diversity, and the challenges that these communities face. “To appreciate, not just understand, but to appreciate. I think so many of us don’t really appreciate the challenges and that’s where they lack the commitment” (Rich). If PMs lack personal commitment, there is a risk that they focus solely on project objectives at the expense of the broader needs of the community, which can be detrimental to the wellbeing of ECDL communities.

Designing engagement strategies that both meet the needs of ECDL communities and advance the interests of their organization is challenging and requires creativity and innovation. Personal commitment helps the PMs to focus beyond the triple constraints of the project (scope, schedule, and budget). It gives them a sense of agency and initiative to overcome obstacles inherent in balancing the needs of the organization and those of the community. “So it goes back to again it is individuals that believe in a broader piece than just the project” (Rachel). Participants found personal commitment to be crucial for sustaining the PMs as they face obstacles to engaging ECDL communities. They shared several cases where the PM had to confront barriers to balance the needs of the organization and the needs of the community. Barriers often come in the form of pushback from their colleagues when decisions benefitting the ECDL communities have cost implications for the organization. “This is staff saying that this is the right thing to do and regardless of leadership we are doing it” (Rachel). Intrinsic

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

motivation and personal commitment appear to power the creativity and innovation needed for PMs to leverage existing resources and complex networks of internal and external partners to navigate the obstacles they face.

These findings highlight the central role of PMs in advancing equity, which has implications for the selection and ongoing development of PMs (Poon & Silvius, 2019). These findings support research by Goel et al. (2020), who found that promoting social responsibility requires intervention at the management processes level. Organizations committed to advancing equity in their project management and stakeholder engagement processes need to pay special attention to the selection, hiring, and ongoing development of project managers.

Theme 5: Building Capacity for Inclusion (Best Practices and Training):

This theme describes participants' experiences and thoughts about the type of skills and training that help PMs to effectively engage ECDL communities. Three areas for training were identified as important for the PM: cultural intelligence and unconscious bias, emotional intelligence, and a history of relationship with the community.

Participants stressed the importance of training that builds the PM's sensitivity to cultural differences. "First, I think you have to recognize that there are [cultural] differences" (Sue). They emphasized, therefore, that PMs need to adapt their approach to stakeholder engagement to the needs of ECDL communities "Different cultures show up differently. And the way we engage with them may need to be different" (Rachel). Participants provided many examples of situations where they had to learn about different cultures. "Just being in the house you have to understand that you absolutely take your shoes off" (Sam). Additionally,

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

participants spoke about how important it is for the PM to recognize that unconscious bias often influences important project decisions.

I think that a lot of work about unconscious bias has been done and certainly in the last couple of years and I think we need to figure out a way to build that into the [name of the organization] as part of the [name of the organization] culture. (Laurie)

Participants mentioned several examples where unconscious bias influenced how PMs approached the community. “We are assuming everyone may be on Facebook or that everyone has email” (Jill). PMs need to understand the cultural differences to tailor stakeholder engagement practices so that they are culturally responsive to the needs of ECDL communities.

Project Managers are a representation of the organization, its history with the community, and how the community was impacted by the organization’s projects in the past. Project Managers are often the target of community members airing grievances about issues unrelated to their projects. Emotional intelligence is a skill that helps PMs deal with community pushback without taking it personally. “If you are in the public meeting anything that that person just mad as hell right in front of your face yelling at you, yes stand there and take it. That’s what it is” (Sam). Specifically, participants spoke about the importance of training PMs in managing conflict. “Another one of my things is having difficult conversations. And that’s something that I’ve been working on and I think project managers are conflict averse” (Laurie). Such training helped participants cope with the emotional aspect of working through conflict. “I learned that people just want to be heard and how to diffuse situations too” (Jill). Participants emphasized that, ultimately, the goal of any training needs to help the PM connect with the community.

So I go to these things with this feeling like I don’t really belong and I don’t really relate. So I am already going feeling guilty with this notion that all these other people are going

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

to see this and they are not going to trust me and they are not going to like me and so training to be able to know how to deal with that type of situation would be very helpful. (Jill)

Emotional intelligence appears to be critical in helping PMs navigate the conflicting demands of their roles and balance their obligations to their organization with their role as public servants.

Participants spoke about another important training to help PMs understand the historical context of their projects. Specifically, they pointed to the importance of providing new PMs an overview of the history of the relationship between the organization and the communities and the issues they should be anticipating.

It would be just high-level 'hey you working on a project, it's outside of our fence here, be aware, this is some of the history, some of our growing pains that we had in the local communities over the years'. (Roger)

Such training can prepare the Project Manager to anticipate challenges and develop strategies to cope with the community response to the project.

But they also cautioned, however, that PMs tend to resist change. "I think it is just going to require some time and some education to make it be more than just something that just a box that needs to be checked" (Laurie). They again emphasized the importance of personal commitment to genuine community engagement as a motivation for learning new skills to engage more effectively.

But they have to want to. So you could put people in training and you can tell them that these things are important but I keep going back to and yet unless they have that growth mindset and they want to learn to lead from the heart it is just another training that we can say 'oh! Look! in the Learning Management System, we have more training'. (Rachel)

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Social, emotional, and cultural skills appear to be essential to engaging ECDL communities. This finding supports research by Lin et al. (2017). They found that soft skills, such as social and cultural competence, are required to adapt project management approaches to the socio-cultural context of the project. An organization's senior leadership has an important role to play in making such training important to employees. "It has to be driven from the top to say this is important enough to us that we want you to participate" (Laurie). They cautioned that "if you do a training, it's not to check the box" (Donald). Such commitment from leadership is not only important to the staff, but it also sends a message to the "community that we are not just talking here we really mean it and it's just so critical and everything that we do hinges on treating people with respect and treating people equitably and inclusively" (Laurie).

The findings from this theme suggest that engaging historically disadvantaged communities requires PMs to have sophisticated skills that increase awareness of and sensitivity to the socio-economic and cultural context of the ECDL communities. These findings support the recommendation that projects involving ECDL communities should not be treated just like any other project and, instead, need to be approached as complex projects requiring complex skills (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b; Sabini et al., 2019). These findings also support research by Martinez (2018) that suggests PMs need to acquire additional skills to engage external stakeholders and research that found PM competence (Goel et al., 2020) and skill development (Rostamnezhad et al., 2020) are important for social sustainability.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Researchers have been calling for more investigation of the cultural, social, and psychological factors underlying the relationship between project teams and external

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

stakeholders in general (Derakhshan, Turner, & Mancini, 2019) and the local community in particular (Busquet, Santpoort, Witte, & Spit, 2019; Cuganesan & Floris, 2020; Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b; Di Maddaloni & Derakhshan, 2019). This study contributes to the further development and expansion of stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) and extends prior project stakeholder management research on the relationship between projects and local communities (Close & Loosemore, 2014; Cuganesan & Floris, 2020; Derakhshan, 2020; Derakhshan, Mancini, et al., 2019; Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017b, 2017a; Di Maddaloni & Derakhshan, 2019; Teo & Loosemore, 2017). By providing an empirical account of the factors promoting or hindering inclusive stakeholder engagement of culturally diverse local communities, which exist in the context of a dominant culture, this study specifically advances the normative formulation of stakeholder theory. This normative perspective emphasizes the moral rights of all stakeholders and the fair distribution of benefits and harms arising from the organization's activities (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

The study contributes to the literature with the following findings:

This research highlights the pitfalls of considering local communities as a homogeneous stakeholder group and shows the importance of understanding the unique characteristics of ECDL communities. ECDL communities are complex. Engaging them on the ground takes place in a complex historical, cultural, and socio-economic context. Understanding these complexities, and the barriers to participation they create, and whose voice is ultimately heard, is at the heart of understanding the experience of engaging ECDL communities. Engaging ECDL communities is a fluid process that unfolds in a very unexpected and unpredictable way. It does not fit in a neat and orderly process that is so loved by the engineering-oriented mindset of the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

PM profession. Therefore, negotiating the complex and emergent nature of the challenges, that arise when engaging ECDL communities, requires the PM to be agile, creative, and innovative. It requires the PM to step outside of the bubble of the almost mechanical nature of internal stakeholder engagement and embrace uncertainty and complexity.

The findings highlight the existence of significant misalignment between the organization's goals and aspirations for inclusive stakeholder engagement and its project delivery processes in operation, which often undermine equitable stakeholder engagement and exacerbate the barriers to community participation in project decisions. For organizations committed to social justice, project stakeholder engagement is situated within the broader context of efforts to dismantle systems of racial inequity. Previous research has demonstrated that the level of proactive institutionalization of equitable stakeholder engagement directly influences the quality and consistency of stakeholder engagement. Disrupting institutional and structural barriers to equity requires organizations to operationalize this mission in their project delivery process by making equitable stakeholder engagement a priority. This means reimaging the entire project delivery through the lens of equity. At minimum, this requires organizations to intentionally institutionalize equitable stakeholder engagement through the embedding of practices, values, and expectations into the project delivery process.

Previous studies on local communities as project stakeholder have focused on the contentious relationship between project organization and community. Findings from this research suggest that PMs need to approach engagement of ECDL communities as a highly collaborative and participatory practice situated in a dynamic, fluid, and changing cultural, socio-economic, and historical context. The findings suggest that the one-off, inconsistent, or

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

surface community engagement designed to simply check the box do not help anyone.

Communities know genuine engagement when they experience it. Anything else only provides further evidence and further exacerbates the mistrust that communities feel towards the project organization.

Engaging ECDL requires PMs to wear many hats to satisfy often conflicting needs and priorities: as PM, as an Advocate, and a Public Servant, and a representative of the organizations. As they negotiate these multiple identities, PMs are often stuck between a rock and a hard place unable to satisfy their organization, the communities they serve, or even their own natural need of feeling sense of competence and accomplishment. As they navigate organizational misalignments and their role conflict, their ability to face these challenges and persevere appears to depend on engaging with the communities at a deep emotional level that is powered by their intrinsic motivation, personal commitment to service, and a deep understanding of the communities.

Examining engagement of ECDL communities, through the lens of the lived experience of PMs, this research found that equitable stakeholder engagement is a profoundly human, emotional, and relational experience. PMs are challenged with balancing the tensions between the two polarities of their role as PMs and public servants striving to deliver project outcomes that meet the needs of both the organization and the community. Intrinsic motivation and personal commitment to equity appear to influence the quality of their engagement efforts and outcomes. The participants' commitment to serving the communities was integral to how they approached stakeholder management as PMs. PMs with intrinsic motivation and a commitment to equity may have a predisposition to address situations that call for equitable stakeholder

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

engagement. They may also have a capacity to cope with the challenges, role ambiguity, and lack of support that seem to be integral to engaging ECDL communities. They may be in a better position or better equipped mentally and emotionally to cope with the challenging demands of advancing equitable stakeholder engagement.

Recommendations

Recommendations for practice

The findings of the central role of PMs in advancing equitable stakeholder engagements should move organizations to review their practices for selection, assessment, and ongoing development of their PMs. Cultural competence of PMs was found to influence the effectiveness of PMs' engagement of ECDL communities. Therefore, to increase the effectiveness of the organization's engagement of ECDL communities, attention must be given to the selection, assessment, and ongoing development of PMs.

Selection. Starting with selection, organizations should increase the diversity of their project management staff, from frontline project management to higher-level leadership roles within their project management organizations. Organizations could create a project workforce that reflects the broad range of diversity, including race, gender, language and cultural background represented in the demographics of the communities they serve. Such diversity in the project delivery organization improves understanding and effectiveness and engaging ECDL communities.

Assessment and Performance Evaluation. Organizations should develop and establish criteria to evaluate performance at the individual PM level and project level in meeting measurable ECDL community engagement goals. At the PM level, continuous performance

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

evaluation should include assessment of PM's performance objectives specific goals related to ECDL community engagement. At the project level, organizations should track the level of community trust in projects, just as they measure other project performance indicators. For examples, periodic surveys can measure how projects impact community trust in the project and in the organization. Making equitable community engagement outcomes part of the performance evaluation process reinforces the increased value that the organization places on community trust in the PM.

Ongoing Professional Development. It is recommended that organizations develop ongoing professional development programs with the goal of promoting equitable stakeholder engagement among their PMs. Findings from this research show that ECDL communities are different and have a distinct cultural identity and different lived experience compared with the mainstream population. Professional development for PMs should include cultural intelligence training informed by the latest research in cultural psychology and cultural neuroscience that provided evidence that our core mental processes such as empathy, mentalizing, theory of mind, attributions are shaped by culture and how that may in turn shape the PM's approach to engagement. Such programs should also include training that acknowledges the role of government policies in past and present injustice and discrimination, and how they present a barrier to community trust and collaboration. Such training can increase awareness of implicit bias at the individual staff level and ultimately at the organizational culture level.

Recommendations for Policy

Organizational Published Project Management Standards. This research suggests that the level of institutionalization of equitable stakeholder engagement directly influences the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

quality and consistency of the engagement that communities experience from projects.

Embedding equitable community engagement considerations into the organization's project delivery process is a strategy that can foster full and equitable civic participation in project decisions. Therefore, it is recommended that equitable stakeholder engagement should be infused throughout the culture and organizational structure of the project delivery organization. Organizations should develop and adopt project delivery procedures and strategies that specifically reinforce the importance of community engagement in promoting community trust in the project and organization and ultimately result in project success.

Funding for community engagement within the project budget. Recognizing that community members' expertise is valuable and brings benefits to the project organization, it is recommended that the project organizations make a strategic investment in partnership with ECDL communities by building funding for engagement in the project budget. For examples, stipends should be paid to community members to compensate for their time, efforts, and expertise. Such financial commitment to engagement would also address some of the socio-economic barriers to communities' participation.

Community Capacity Building. ECDL community members possess valuable knowledge that can improve project performance as well as mitigate project impacts on ECDL. This knowledge, however, tends to go untapped due to a lack of participation of communities in projects. As part of the institutionalization of equitable community engagement, community capacity building can be another effective strategy for increasing community participation in projects. It is recommended that organizations invest in the community representatives' leadership development for their members to participate meaningfully in project processes and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

advocate for their communities. Such leadership development programs can include an orientation on the organization's project management processes and procedures and skills that enable community representatives to participate in decisions and advocate for their communities effectively. These programs can also provide opportunities for formal and informal mentoring and support to build networks of relationships between the organization's project management leadership and community representatives.

Recommendations for Research

While the literature on stakeholder theory and project stakeholder engagement provides a theoretical framework for our understanding of how local communities are engaged on projects, the theory seems to be disconnected from the practical work of organizations and their PMs at the frontlines of the battle for social justice and dismantling institutional and structural barriers to equity. There is a lack of research that explores the implications of organizations' drive towards equity and social justice on project management in general and stakeholder engagement in particular. Therefore, we recommend future research to examine project stakeholder management through the lens of equity and social justice.

This study has confirmed or extended several findings from previous research on stakeholder engagement of ECDL communities by focusing on the particular factors that influence the engagement of ECDL communities. This research examines this dynamic from the perspective of the lived experience of the PM. Future research is needed to examine these findings from the perspective of ECDL communities.

Future research should also examine these findings from the perspective of other stakeholders within the project organization, especially concerning the process of

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

institutionalization of equitable stakeholder engagement and associated organizational change challenges. One area of significant importance is how organizations address training, selection, and assessment of their PMs. Another area of importance is how organizations approach building capacity in ECDL communities to increase their engagement in projects.

Limitations

This study focused on the perspective of the PM. The perspective of other roles within the project, as well as that of leadership within the organizations, is lacking. Such perspective will provide additional lens on the factors that influence the engagement of ECDL communities. Future studies should investigate this phenomenon from the perspective of the other subject matter experts who play a role in or provide support to the effort of engaging ECDL communities. One example would be incorporation of the role public relations, given that they provide support to projects. Another equally important perspective is that of the ECDL communities impacted by projects. Future studies should incorporate the perspective of lived experience of the ECDL such communities. This perspective will enrich the understanding of the factors that influence their participation in projects. This study also focused on the experience of PMs at a single organization. Future projects should examine if the findings from this research are supported by examining the experience of PMs at multiple organizations.

Conclusion

If “projects create the future”, as Huemann and Silvius (2017) proclaimed, then the findings from this research situate stakeholder engagement as a central tool for organizations to break the cycle of historical marginalization where ECDL communities carry all the burdens of projects and receive none of the benefits. Organizations need to understand and leverage the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

crucial role of the PM in advancing equity in project management through inclusive and equitable stakeholder engagement. As one participant put it, when reflecting on the role of the PM in advancing equity, the “PM is the tip of the spear!”.

The next chapter will provide a case study that extends on the findings from the present study by examining how one local government agency applied an equity lens to its project planning processes to ensure participation of historically underrepresented and marginalized stakeholder groups in its project decision-making process.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

References

- Aaltonen, K. (2011). Project stakeholder analysis as an environmental interpretation process. *International Journal of Project Management*, 29(2), 165-183.
- Aaltonen, K., Kujala, J., Lehtonen, P., & Ruuska, I. (2010). A stakeholder network perspective on unexpected events and their management in international projects. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 3(4), 564-588.
- Aapaoja, A., Haapasalo, H., & Söderström, P. (2013). Early stakeholder involvement in the project definition phase: Case renovation. *ISRN Industrial Engineering*, 2013.
- Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (ipa): A guide to a good qualitative research approach. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 5(2), 9-19.
- Alotaibi, A., Edum-Fotwe, F., & Price, A. D. (2019). Critical barriers to social responsibility implementation within mega-construction projects: The case of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Sustainability*, 11(6), 1755.
- Andersen, E. S., Dysvik, A., & Vaagaasar, A. L. (2009). Organizational rationality and project management. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*.
- Barraket, J., & Loosemore, M. (2018). Co-creating social value through cross-sector collaboration between social enterprises and the construction industry. *Construction Management and Economics*, 36(7), 394-408.
- Beckman, T., Khare, A., & Matear, M. (2016). Does the theory of stakeholder identity and salience lead to corporate social responsibility? The case of environmental justice. *Social Responsibility Journal*.
- Brocki, J. M., & Wearden, A. J. (2006). A critical evaluation of the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (ipa) in health psychology. *Psychology and Health*, 21(1), 87-108.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Busquet, M., Santpoort, R., Witte, P., & Spit, T. (2019). Living on the edge: Identifying challenges of port expansion for local communities in developing countries, the case of Jakarta, Indonesia. *Ocean & Coastal Management, 171*, 119-130.
- Callary, B., Rathwell, S., & Young, B. W. (2015). Insights on the process of using interpretive phenomenological analysis in a sport coaching research project. *Qualitative Report, 20*(2).
- City of Durham. (2019). Equitable community engagement blueprint. Retrieved from City of Durham website: https://www.durhamcommunityengagement.org/equitable_engagement
- Close, R., & Loosemore, M. (2014). Breaking down the site hoardings: Attitudes and approaches to community consultation during construction. *Construction Management and Economics, 32*(7-8), 816-828.
- Cuganesan, S., & Floris, M. (2020). Investigating perspective taking when infrastructure megaproject teams engage local communities: Navigating tensions and balancing perspectives. *International Journal of Project Management, 38*(3), 153-164.
- Dalcher, D. (2012). Sustainability and success. *PM World Journal*.
- Daniel, E. I., & Pasquire, C. (2019). Creating social value within the delivery of construction projects: The role of lean approach. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*.
- De Bony, J. (2010). Project management and national culture: A Dutch–French case study. *International Journal of Project Management, 28*(2), 173-182.
- DeLone, W., Espinosa, J. A., Lee, G., & Carmel, E. (2005). *Bridging global boundaries for is project success*. Paper presented at the System Sciences, 2005. HICSS'05. Proceedings of the 38th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences.
- Derakhshan, R. (2020). Building projects on the local communities' planet: Studying organizations' care-giving approaches. *Journal of Business Ethics, 1-20*.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Derakhshan, R., Turner, R., & Mancini, M. (2019). Project governance and stakeholders: A literature review. *International Journal of Project Management*, 37(1), 98-116.
- Derakhshan, R., Mancini, M., & Turner, J. R. (2019). Community's evaluation of organizational legitimacy: Formation and reconsideration. *International Journal of Project Management*, 37(1), 73-86.
- Di Maddaloni, F., & Davis, K. (2017a). Project manager's perception of the local communities' stakeholder in megaprojects. An empirical investigation in the uk. *International Journal of Project Management*.
- Di Maddaloni, F., & Davis, K. (2017b). The influence of local community stakeholders in megaprojects: Rethinking their inclusiveness to improve project performance. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(8), 1537-1556.
- Di Maddaloni, F., & Derakhshan, R. (2019). A leap from negative to positive bond. A step towards project sustainability. *Administrative Sciences*, 9(2), 41.
- Doloi, H. (2012). Assessing stakeholders' influence on social performance of infrastructure projects. *Facilities*.
- Donaldson, T., & Preston, L. E. (1995). The stakeholder theory of the corporation: Concepts, evidence, and implications. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(1), 65-91.
- Eatough, V., & Smith, J. A. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 179, 194.
- Eskerod, P., & Huemann, M. (2013). Sustainable development and project stakeholder management: What standards say. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 6(1), 36-50.
- Eskerod, P., & Larsen, T. (2018). Advancing project stakeholder analysis by the concept 'shadows of the context'. *International Journal of Project Management*, 36(1), 161-169.
- Eskerod, P., Huemann, M., & Ringhofer, C. (2015). Stakeholder inclusiveness: Enriching project management with general stakeholder theory. *Project Management Journal*, 46(6), 42-53.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Eskerod, P., Huemann, M., & Savage, G. (2015). Project stakeholder management—past and present. *Project Management Journal*, 46(6), 6-14.
- Farag, F., McDermott, P., & Huelin, C.-A. (2016). *The development of an activity zone conceptual framework to improve social value implementation in construction projects using human activity systems*. Paper presented at the Proceedings 32nd annual ARCOM conference.
- Finlay, L. (2009). Exploring lived experience: Principles and practice of phenomenological research. *International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation*, 16(9), 474-481.
- Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gaziyev, M. (2019). *Integrating sustainability into project stakeholder management*. Downloaded from academia.edu, Malmö University.
- Goel, A., Ganesh, L., & Kaur, A. (2020). Project management for social good. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 13(4).
- Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(1), 42-55.
- Huemann, M., & Silviu, G. (2017). Projects to create the future: Managing projects meets sustainable development. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(6).
doi:doi:10.1016/j.ijproman.2017.04.014
- Hynes, H., & Lopez, R. (2007). Cumulative risk and a call for action in environmental justice communities. *Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice*, 1(2), 3.
- Lin, Y., Kelemen, M., & Kiyomiya, T. (2017). The role of community leadership in disaster recovery projects: Tsunami lessons from Japan. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(5), 913-924.
- Loosemore, M. (2015). *Barriers to social enterprise in the uk construction industry*. Paper presented at the THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015 September 7-9.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Loosemore, M. (2016). Social procurement in uk construction projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 34(2), 133-144.
- Loosemore, M., & Lim, B. T. H. (2018). Mapping corporate social responsibility strategies in the construction and engineering industry. *Construction Management and Economics*, 36(2), 67-82.
- Loosemore, M., Alkilani, S. Z., & Murphy, R. (2021). The institutional drivers of social procurement implementation in australian construction projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 39(7), 750-761.
- Mahalingam, A., & Levitt, R. E. (2007). Institutional theory as a framework for analyzing conflicts on global projects. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 133(7), 517-528.
- Martinez, C. (2018). Stakeholder participation in property development. *Lund University, Faculty of Engineering*.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (Vol. 41): Sage publications.
- Mazur, A., Pisarski, A., Chang, A., & Ashkanasy, N. M. (2014). Rating defence major project success: The role of personal attributes and stakeholder relationships. *International Journal of Project Management*, 32(6), 944-957.
- McVea, J. F., & Freeman, R. E. (2005). A names-and-faces approach to stakeholder management: How focusing on stakeholders as individuals can bring ethics and entrepreneurial strategy together. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 14(1), 57-69.
- Müller, R., & Turner, J. R. (2007). Matching the project manager's leadership style to project type. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25(1), 21-32.
- Nelson, J., Spokane, L., Ross, L., & Deng, N. (2015). *Advancing racial equity and transforming government: A resource guide to put ideas into action*. Retrieved from Government Alliance on Race and Equity website: <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/advancing-racial-equity-and-transforming-government-a-resource-guide-to-put-ideas-into-action/>

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Ochieng, E. G., & Price, A. (2010). Managing cross-cultural communication in multicultural construction project teams: The case of Kenya and UK. *International Journal of Project Management*, 28(5), 449-460.

Olander, S. (2007). Stakeholder impact analysis in construction project management. *Construction Management and Economics*, 25(3), 277-287.

Poon, C., & Silviu, G. (2019). Factors that stimulate project managers to consider sustainability; exploring the stimulus patterns of Canadian project managers. *Journal of Management and Sustainability*, 9, 90.

Project Management Institute. (2017). A guide to the project management body of knowledge (6th ed.). *Project Management Institute, Inc*, 2-111.

Rajasinghe, D. (2019). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as a coaching research methodology. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 1-15.

Rostamnezhad, M., Nasirzadeh, F., Khanzadi, M., Jarban, M. J., & Ghayoumian, M. (2020). Modeling social sustainability in construction projects by integrating system dynamics and fuzzy-dematel method: A case study of highway project. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*.

Sabini, L., Muzio, D., & Alderman, N. (2019). 25 years of 'sustainable projects'. What we know and what the literature says. *International Journal of Project Management*, 37(6), 820-838.

Shinebourne, P. (2011). The theoretical underpinnings of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). *Existential Analysis: Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis*, 22(1).

Silviu, A. G., & de Graaf, M. (2019). Exploring the project manager's intention to address sustainability in the project board. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 208, 1226-1240.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Silvius, A. G., Kampinga, M., Paniagua, S., & Mooi, H. (2017). Considering sustainability in project management decision making; an investigation using q-methodology. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(6), 1133-1150.
- Silvius, G. (2017). Sustainability as a new school of thought in project management. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 166, 1479-1493.
- Smith, Flowers, & Larkin. (2009). Interpretive phenomenological analysis. Thousand oaks. In: CA: Sage.
- Smith, J. A. (1996). Beyond the divide between cognition and discourse: Using interpretative phenomenological analysis in health psychology. *Psychology and Health*, 11(2), 261-271.
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2015). Interpretative phenomenological analysis as a useful methodology for research on the lived experience of pain. *British Journal of Pain*, 9(1), 41-42.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research. *London, UK: Sage Publications*.
- Teo, M., & Loosemore, M. (2017). Understanding community protest from a project management perspective: A relationship-based approach. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(8), 1444-1458.
- Teo, M., & Loosemore, M. (2014). The role of core protest group members in sustaining protest against controversial construction and engineering projects. *Habitat International*, 44, 41-49.
- Ullah Khan, A. (2014). Effects of cultural assimilation on the performance of a construction project—evidence from uae. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 21(3), 430-449.
- Van Krieken, T. (2018). *Project management framework for the empowerment of disaster susceptible communities during the post disaster phase* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text Database database. (2343476906)
- Wagstaff, C., & Williams, B. (2014). Specific design features of an interpretative phenomenological analysis study. *Nurse Researcher*, 21(3).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Walker, D., & Lloyd-Walker, B. (2019). The future of the management of projects in the 2030s.

International Journal of Managing Projects in Business.

Wang, H., Zhang, X., & Lu, W. (2018). Improving social sustainability in construction: Conceptual framework based on social network analysis. *Journal of Management in Engineering*, 34(6), 05018012.

Appendices

Appendix 1-Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Participant Name:

Date:

Part 1: Background

This section will gather background information that helps to create a context for the participant's experiences with engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities.

1. How did you come to be a PM?
2. What does the concept of culture mean to you?
3. From an ethnic/cultural perspective, how would you describe the communities where you grew up?

Part 2: The Details of Experience

In this section, the participant will be asked to reconstruct concrete details of how they manage stakeholders with a focus on the detailed description of their experience engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities.

The focus is to understand:

- How PMs identify different stakeholder groups, their needs, interests, and priorities, and adverse project impacts
- How they plan stakeholder engagement
- How they actually manage the engagement
- How they monitor the level and quality of the stakeholder engagement throughout the project lifecycle

Identify Stakeholders:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

4. Describe the process you go through to identify stakeholder communities impacted by the project and how you determine project impacts on ethno-culturally diverse communities?
5. Describe the process you go through to gain an understanding of ethno-culturally diverse communities' needs, interests, and priorities in their role as project stakeholders?

Plan Stakeholder Engagement:

6. Describe your approach to planning stakeholder engagement when ethno-culturally diverse communities are a stakeholder of your project?
 - How do you plan for when, where, and how the community will be engaged during the project?
 - In what ways are these stakeholders involved in this planning process?
7. In what ways do you change/alter your approach to planning stakeholder engagement, when ethno-culturally diverse communities are impacted by your projects?
 - What do you do differently?
 - What adjustments do you have to make?

Manage Stakeholders Engagement:

8. Describe what it is like to engage ethno-culturally diverse communities and how that experience is different for you compared to engaging other types of stakeholders?
9. Describe how ethno-culturally diverse communities participate in various scoping, planning, designing or other project related meetings on your projects?
 - Could you describe such meetings and share some anecdotes?
 - How do you ensure adequate participation?
10. Describe what strategies have worked in engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities and why?
 - Can you give an example of such strategy and how it worked?
 - What do you do specifically to elicit their input?
 - How do you gain agreement and come to decisions?
 - Can you give some examples of strategies that did not work effectively and why??
 - How did you and your team have to adapt/change your strategies?

Monitor Stakeholder Engagement:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

11. On an ongoing basis, how did you evaluate the level of stakeholder engagement of ethno-culturally diverse communities throughout the lifecycle of your project?
 - What do you consider the success indicators or benchmarks for the level of engagement?
 - What is your method for tracking progress?
12. In what ways did you have to change/alter your approach to stakeholder management to be more effective in engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities?
 - What adjustments did you have to make?

Part 3: Reflecting on Meaning and Change

In this final section, participants will reflect on the meaning of their experiences and synthesize what they have learned in order to offer advice to improve stakeholder engagement practices and the project management profession in the context of engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities.

Challenges/Barriers/Support

13. Reflecting back on the project, what was the most challenging aspect of engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders?
 - What existing project management or organizational processes or policies either helped or hindered managing ethno-culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders?
 - What type of support have you received?
 - What type of support do you wish you had received?

Training

14. What kind of training preparation do you think PMs need in order to prepare them for managing ethno-culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders?
 - What type of training have you received that prepared you for managing ethno-culturally diverse communities?
 - What other type of training do you wish you had received?

Final Reflection

15. Given what we have discussed during this interview, if you could go back and do it over again, is there anything you would change in how you managed ethno-culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders and why?

Closing:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

16. The interview will end with a statement such as: That is all the questions I have for you today. Is there anything else about your experience of engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders that I should have asked you about and didn't or anything else you would like to share?

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 2-Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent³

For participation in a Research Project

The purpose of this document, in accordance with the requirements of our Code of Research Ethics is to make explicit the nature of the proposed involvement between the researcher and the person or organization agreeing to supply information (the participants) and to record that the research participants understand and are satisfied with the proposed arrangements.

The title of the research project is:

Factors that promote or inhibit engagement of culturally diverse communities as project stakeholders in Local Government Projects

The researcher:

The principal researcher leading this research is: Samad Aidane

Contact details:

The Project:

The aim of this study is to explore how PMs engage ethno-culturally diverse communities when the communities are a project stakeholder in the context of local government projects and programs in a major metropolitan area in the U.S. The study will explore these individuals' understanding and experience of the challenges, barriers, and critical success factors for engaging ethno-culturally diverse communities as project and program stakeholders.

What participation in the study will involve:

Participants will be asked to grant one or more interviews of up to an hour and a half's duration. The interviews will be recorded on audiotape. It is understood that the interviewee is free to decline to answer any question, to terminate the interview at any time and to require that any section of the whole of the recording be deleted.

Use of data:

³ Some content in this form was adapted from consent form used at Western Michigan University.
<https://wmich.edu/research/forms>

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

The aim will be eventually to present the research along with the data collected in appropriate contexts, academic and professional, through publications, conference presentations, teaching and so on. If so requested, the researcher will refrain from using data that the participant considers sensitive. The participants will be given copies of any publications based on the research.

Anonymity of participants:

All information acquired will be treated as confidential. Unless specifically agreed otherwise, references in publications, talks etc. to particular organizations, individuals etc. will be anonymized and features which might make identification easy will be removed.

Declaration by the research participant(s):

I/We have read and am /are satisfied with the arrangements as set out above.

Signature of
participant:

Date:

Researcher's
signature:

Date:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 3-Research Study Fact Sheet

Research Study Fact Sheet⁴

What am I trying to find out in this study?

To understand the experience of local and regional government project and program managers as they engage local ethno-cultural minority communities impacted by their projects and programs. Specifically, the research will explore and describe these individuals' understanding of the challenges, barriers, and critical success factors for engaging culturally diverse communities as project and program stakeholders.

What is the rationale for the study?

From my work in the field as both a cross-cultural trainer and senior PM, I see a growing need for project and program managers to play a key role in mitigating social inequities by promoting engagement of ethno-cultural minority communities in decisions throughout the lifecycle of local government programs. Up to this point, there is no literature within the project and program management profession that deal with cross-cultural stakeholder engagement in the context of local ethno-cultural minority communities as project stakeholders. This study will address this gap.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

The topic of the research is fully aligned with local government agencies drive to achieve social equity and advance opportunities for all. Findings from the study will assist efforts by local and regional governments to develop and/or enhance project and program management extensions to inclusive outreach, engagement strategies, and use of equity tools.

Who can participate?

Project or program managers from different local government agencies who have actively and directly engaged ethno-cultural minority communities as their stakeholders.

What is expected from participants?

There will be two rounds of guided open-ended interviews that will take roughly one hour each to conduct. The interviews will take place face-to-face at a location convenient to participants. An additional communication over email will be asked in the

⁴ Some content in this form was adapted from consent form used at Western Michigan University. <https://wmich.edu/research/forms>

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

form of one reflection piece based on the conversation generated from the first interview.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?

All participant information will be confidential, and participants may choose not to answer any question during the process. No information will be collected through this study that could be used to identify research participants or their organizations so participation will be anonymous. Any recorded names and information will be kept in a locked location and will not be released to anyone or used directly in print. Any reports, publications, or presentations on this data will use pseudonyms in place of names. Any responses that are shared from the interviews will be either aggregated or will be assigned a pseudonym so that participants' identities are concealed to the greatest extent possible.

Chapter 5: Report of Professional Practice

Introduction

This chapter is a case study that investigated how an organization implemented organizational change to institutionalize equitable stakeholder engagement of ECDC communities in their project delivery decisions. The research question for this study emerged from the IPA study outlined in Chapter Four. Participants in the that study believed that it is important for organizations to establish a clearly defined set of guidelines for how project managers and their team approach community engagement, especially when ECDC communities are involved in projects.

Background

Due to the negative impact that public sector infrastructure and construction (PIC) projects can have on the local communities (Cuganesan & Floris, 2020; Di Maddaloni & Derakhshan, 2019), researchers have called for investigation of project social sustainability considerations in policies and practices at the organizational level (Goel, Ganesh, & Kaur, 2020). Findings from the Applied Research Project (ARP), outlined in Chapter Four, highlight the need for organizations to establish a clearly defined set of guidelines for how PMs and their team approach community engagement, especially when ECDC communities are involved in projects. Silvius, Kampinga, Paniagua, and Mooi (2017) found that without a clear mandate from management, PMs tend to prioritize meeting the project's cost, budget, and time objectives above other considerations such as community engagement. Aaltonen (2011) found that the project team's assumptions about stakeholders is related to the degree of institutionalization of

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

processes that govern stakeholder engagement practices. Additionally, previous research provided evidence that social sustainability requires intervention at management processes level (Goel et al., 2020).

As mentioned in previous chapters, more than 30 state and 150 city governments are working to implement racial equity tools to guide policy, program, and budget decisions, according to Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE) (Nelson, Spokane, Ross, & Deng, 2015). A racial equity tool is a set of questions to guide local government agencies in assessing how their decisions, including policies, practices, and budgets benefit and/or burden communities, specifically ECDL communities. To advance equity and opportunities for all constituencies, a key objective of equity tools is to increase public participation in government decisions. In the context of PIC projects, inclusive and equitable community engagement is an important component of public engagement to enable citizens to participate in project decisions.

Based on findings from the Applied Research Project, it is essential for the organizations to embed engagement into its project delivery process by establishing clearly defined expectations and guidelines for how project managers approach stakeholder engagement of ECDL communities involved in their projects. Embedding engagement into its project delivery process ensures consistency in how an organization approaches stakeholder engagement of ECDL communities. Based on existing research, this consistency emerged as a foundation for building a positive relationship with the community and gaining their trust and support for the project. Derakhshan, Mancini, and Turner (2019) found that consistency in approach to community engagement adds more evidence to support the community's positive perception

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

of the organization. This consistency is achieved when internal project delivery teams and processes are aligned around the common objective of delivering an equitable stakeholder engagement.

Research from Martinez (2018) found a consensus on the importance of institutionalization of equitable stakeholder engagement in organizations. Poon and Silvius (2019) found that adoption of sustainable practices in project management is accelerated when project managers are supported by the organization's strategies, policies, and expertise. The institutionalization of community engagement ensures that projects do not perpetuate the historical marginalization and disempowerment of ECDL communities.

This case study investigated how one local government agency operationalized equitable stakeholder engagement by developing and changing its internal project and program management processes. It describes how this organization embedded equitable stakeholder engagement considerations in the initiation, design, planning, and implementation of projects and programs. The findings develop our understanding about best practices and strategies from practical experience of a local government agency and make them available to other organizations who are embarking on embedding equitable stakeholder engagement considerations in their project delivery process. The research is especially relevant to project management offices (PMO) in organizations that serve, directly affect, or support the interest of ethno-cultural minority and immigrant communities and who are in the process or planning to integrate equity tools in their project delivery processes. The findings will also contribute to the growing project management research on equitable stakeholder engagement.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Research Question

The aim of this case study is to understand and describe how leaders at a selected local government agency operationalized equitable project stakeholder engagement in their project delivery processes to increase participation of ECDL communities in project decisions.

Therefore, the main research question addressed by this study is: What strategies do local government agencies utilize to operationalize equitable stakeholder engagement to increase participation of historically marginalized groups in project decisions?

Data from analysis of structured interviews and documents identified the core organizational changes needed to institutionalize equitable stakeholder engagement into the project management and delivery process.

Method

This qualitative descriptive single-case study used data collected from a semi-structured and secondary data source. According to Yin (2018), the purpose of a case study is to describe a phenomenon in its real-world context. Using a local government agency as a unit of analysis, the descriptive single-case study method was used to construct an in-depth description of the strategies that the organization utilized to operationalize equitable stakeholder engagement to increase the participation of historically marginalized groups in project decisions.

Research Site

The research took place at a local government agency established nearly 30 years ago to protect human health and the environment from hazardous materials and waste. It serves over 2 million residents and 60,000 businesses in a large metropolitan area in the US. This population is more diverse than the United States. Approximately, 68% of residents are White,

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

16% Asian, 9% Hispanic/Latino, and 6% Black/African American. Approximately, 27% of residents speak a language other than English, representing over 170 different languages. Ten percent of residents have limited English proficiency. Twenty-three percent of business are owned by minority residents from ECDL communities.

In 1997, the organization realized that its services and messages were not reaching all the communities under its jurisdiction. As one of the early initiatives to address these issues and advance equity, the organization established an Underserved Populations Workgroup to identify groups within the population less likely to participate in its programs. Since then, the organization has embarked on a mission to advance equity and social justice by establishing numerous equity-related initiatives, policies, and plans to integrate Environmental Justice and Service Equity in its programs and services.

In response to the growing diversity of the communities it serves, the organization continued to apply an equity lens to its service delivery processes. The organizations realized that it has served primarily the white middle-class population and that a large portion of the population, especially the ECDL communities were underserved. To address this issue, numerous initiatives were adopted to embed equities in the organization's policies and operations.

In 2015, the organization made equity in hiring a priority. It changed its policies to create a more equitable hiring processes and practices that ensure its workforce reflected the diversity of the communities it serves. In the same year, equity was embedded as an objective in the strategic plan. In 2016, the organization launched a comprehensive strategic racial equity planning initiative to identify where racial equity challenges and opportunities exist in its

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

projects, services, policies, and operations. The outcome of these efforts was the development of the Racial Equity Strategic Plan and Implementation plan. The Strategic Plan described the organization's vision of racial equity and how it will be approached. The Implementation Plan provides a 3-year high-level implementation guidance for each project and line of business. Both plans were adopted in 2018.

In 2016, after an extensive review of its project planning and delivery practices, the organization identified gaps that undermined the organization's ability to deliver projects efficiently and in a timely fashion. Inconsistent project initiation and approval process, unpredictable delivery timelines, and unclear roles and responsibilities are few of the gaps and challenges that project managers faced. To address these gaps, the organization initiated an effort to establish a formal Project Management Methodology that is aligned with the Project Management Institute (PMI) standards. In 2017, a new project management methodology, called "The PM Toolkit", was launched. It included numerous tools and templates to guide project managers in managing the entire lifecycle of the projects. An extensive training and coaching program was developed to support the launch and adoption of the new tool. See Appendix 2 for an overview of online training offered to project managers.

The organization is currently in the process of updating its comprehensive 10-year management plan. The update process, unlike previous iterations, is intentionally focused on the application of racial equity as a guiding principle. The organization's leadership designated this project as an opportunity to demonstrate by modeling how racial equity lens should be applied to the initiation, planning, and execution of projects.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

This case study examined how the policies outlined in the 2018 Racial Equity Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan have been integrated into the project planning processes as demonstrated in the planning of the 10-year Management Plan Update project. The analysis of project documentation and interviews with project management staff allowed for the examination of the changes to processes and practices needed to embed equity in project planning and in particular in stakeholder engagement.

Study Participants

Through my professional network, I recruited a local government agency to be the subject of the proposed case study. The organization provided me with two representatives of the Project Office department to participate in the study. One participant (Participant A) led the effort to integrate equitable stakeholder engagement in the organization's project delivery process. The other participant (Participant B) is a project manager who led a recent pilot project to demonstrate how the equity lens can be applied to the initiation and planning of a high visibility project.

Data Collection

Two sources were used to collect data: interviews and documents. The primary data collection method was semi-structured in-depth interviews with two participants. I used guided, open-ended semi-structured in-depth interviews to develop a detailed understanding of the participants' experience leading the organizational change initiative. According to Yin (2018), "Interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs or actions" (p. 120). Interviews are considered appropriate for this research because the research seeks to understand the experience of the participant during the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

journey of change, including the challenges they faced and the lessons they learned. An interview schedule was used to guide collecting data from participants (See Appendix 1–Interview Schedule). Two rounds of interviews with each participant took roughly 90 minutes each to conduct. The second-round interviews allowed for further probing of ideas and themes identified in the first round, as well as obtaining any clarifications for questions that emerged from the initial interview and the review of the roster of documents. Due to the current COVID-19, no face-to-face interviews were conducted. All interviews were conducted using Zoom online meeting.

Yin (2018) recommended collecting data from multiple sources to achieve triangulation, which he defines as “when a case study findings will have been supported by more than a single source of evidence” (p. 128). Therefore, another data source was collected as secondary data in the form of a set of documents that the participants voluntarily provided before and after the interviews. The documents provided can be classified into four categories. Policy documents provided evidence of how the organization institutionalized racial equity in its policies and strategic plans. Another set of documents provided evidence of how the organization changed its Project Management processes by developing a Project Management Toolkit to embed racial equity considerations in each of the Project Management processes, such as project planning, risk management, and stakeholder management. Along with the Project Management Toolkit, participants provided the Racial Equity Toolkit documents that help PMs embed racial equity considerations in project planning and stakeholder identification and analysis processes. Finally, participants provided documents as evidence for how the racial equity lens was applied to an actual project, using the Project Management Toolkit and the Racial Equity Toolkit. The

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

information in the four categories of documents corroborated the participants' account of how an equity lens was applied in their organization at the policy and strategic planning level, at the project management delivery process level, and in the initiation and planning documents of an actual project. Table 1 provides an overview of the secondary data source documents.

Table 1.

Documents included in the analysis

Document Type	Document Name
PM Toolkit Template	Closure Doc
PM Toolkit Template	Communication Plan
PM Toolkit Template	Initiation Check List
PM Toolkit Template	Lessons Learned-Facilitation Guide
PM Toolkit Template	Lessons Learned
PM Toolkit Template	Meeting Guidelines
PM Toolkit Template	PM Overview
PM Toolkit Template	Project Charter
PM Toolkit Template	Project Management Plan
PM Toolkit Template	RACI Roles and Responsibilities
PM Toolkit Template	Risk Management
PM Toolkit Template	Risk Register
PM Toolkit Template	Score Card
PM Toolkit Template	Team Contract
PM Toolkit Template	Work Breakdown Structure
Equity Toolkit Template/Guide	Equity Guide to Planning
Equity Toolkit Template/Guide	Stakeholder Analysis
Policy Documents	Racial Equity Implementation Plan
Policy Documents	Racial Equity Strategic Plan
Pilot Project Document	Draft Project Charter
Pilot Project Document	Draft Project Management Plan
Pilot Project Document	Draft Racial Equity Toolkit

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Data Analysis

This study adopted thematic analysis as outlined by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While there is no one specific way to conduct thematic analysis, the six-phase approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was followed to present the findings from the interview and the documents obtained during the data collection stage of the project. The six phases are:

1. Familiarize yourself with your data.
2. Generate initial codes.
3. Search for themes.
4. Review themes.
5. Define and name themes.
6. Produce the report.

After interviewing participants and collecting all the secondary source documents as outlined in Table 1, I transcribed the interviews and uploaded them and all the other documents to NVivo software, which was used throughout the data analysis process to manage and code the data and develop themes. I started the data analysis process by reading each interview and secondary source document multiple times to become familiar with the data. As I read each interview, I began jotting down notes about my initial reactions when segments of the transcripts contained interesting information relevant to the research question.

I then began a second cycle of reading the interviews and started the open coding process by assigning codes to passages that appeared to be interesting. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined coding as the process of “organizing your data into meaningful groups” (p. 88). In this initial cycle of coding, I coded for as many potential themes and patterns as possible. I

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

then conducted multiple cycles of grouping the codes into high-level categories while merging and collapsing duplicate codes and deleting those that were not relevant to the study.

Searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes followed an iterative process that involved moving back and forth from data to theme write-up. The process started by examining the categories identified in the review of codes and grouping them into conceptually related overarching categories. Searching for themes, defining, and naming them was a reflexive process that continued until a final set of themes and subthemes, deemed representative of the data, were identified.

Reviewing the roster of the secondary source documents outlined in table 1 above was also an iterative process that ran in parallel to the analysis of the interview data. The documents were used to develop a comprehensive understanding of how the organization embedded racial equity considerations in its policies, processes, and practices. Additionally, the roster of documents served to fill in the gaps and enrich the participants' accounts. As mentioned previously, discrepancies and gaps identified during the review of the roster of documents were resolved during the second interview with each participant.

Ethical Issues

All participant information is kept confidential. No data collected in this study will be shared with others and only the researcher will have access to this data. All information will be kept in a locked location and will not be released to anyone or used directly in print. No information was collected through this study that could be used to identify participants or their organizations. Additionally, the researcher will ensure any information shared is non-identifiable. All reports, publications, or presentations on the findings from this research will

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

use pseudonyms in place of names, ensuring no other identifying information about participants or their organization are included. Any information shared from the interviews will be either aggregated or assigned a pseudonym to maintain the confidentiality of the participants to the greatest extent possible. Additionally, participants were informed that, during the entire process, they always have the option to not answer any question to which they feel uncomfortable responding. All direct quotes will be screened for their degree of sensitivity to ensure only quotes which do not expose sensitive information will be shared. An Informed Consent Form was reviewed with all participants (See attached “Appendix 3– Informed Consent Form”).

Ethical approval was obtained from Ethics Panel of Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology at Canterbury Christ Church University in partnership with Professional Development Foundation Board of Studies.

Results

Introduction

This section presents the results of the case study that sought to understand the changes needed in the organization structure, and policies, procedures to institutionalize and operationalize equitable project stakeholder engagement to increase participation of historically marginalized groups in project planning decisions. The research question is: What strategies do local government agencies utilize to operationalize equitable stakeholder engagement to increase participation of historically marginalized groups in project decisions? Data from analysis of structured interviews and documents identified the core organizational

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

changes needed to institutionalize equitable stakeholder engagement into the project management and delivery process.

Analysis of interviews with participants and an examination of policies and strategic planning documents, project delivery process tool and templates, and project management plans revealed that the organization took a comprehensive approach to advancing equity. One of the participants described the organization's approach:

From my perspective, I take a holistic view, what it means to me is as an organization we need to understand why taking an equity point of view, the racial equity point of view, is important for meeting our mission. And starting from there what do we have to do to change and institutionalize it in the organization from soup to nuts including what skill sets our employees need to have, the tools they need to have, and the policies procedures and the way we do things need to be adjusted to make progress on our equity goals. (Participant B)

Table 2 includes the description of themes identified in the data analysis process.

Table 2.

Themes and Subthemes Identified through Data Analysis.

Theme	Description	Subthemes
Theme 1: Equity lens on policies and strategic planning	This theme describes the policies and strategic plans that shaped the evolution of the application of equity lens on project management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A legacy of racial equity and social justice• 2017 Racial Equity Strategic and Implementation Plan
Theme 2: Equity lens on hiring and capacity building	This theme describes the changes that were made to increase the diversity and skills of the workforce.	

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

<p>Theme 3: Equity lens on Project Planning</p>	<p>This theme describes how equity considerations are integrated in the project management processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalizing Project Management Standards • Racial Equity Toolkit • Robust stakeholder demographic data
<p>Theme 4: Alignment, Empowerment, and Support</p>	<p>This theme describes the equity vision, meaning, guiding principles, and values that aligned and undergird the organization’s equity work as outlined in its policies, strategic plan, project plan, and as described by participants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning and guiding principles • Supportive Environment • Fostering a culture of advocacy

Theme 1: Equity lens on policies and strategic planning

Over the past several years, the organization has embarked on its efforts to advance equity by integrating environmental justice and service equity in its program and services. This theme describes the policies and strategic plans that shaped the evolution of the application of equity lens on project management.

A legacy of racial equity and social justice

Over the last two of decades, the organization began its efforts to address the barriers that prevented historically underserved communities from receiving the benefits of its services and programs. These efforts started out as grassroots by different individuals from around the organization who were committed to racial equity. As Participant A stated:

There were a lot of equitable things happening because we were not an entirely white organization with just white perspective. People who knew better were engaging with different organizations and doing different things.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

These efforts were initiated by conducting a community needs assessment to determine barriers and priorities for engaging underserved groups, which have exacerbated the inequities that these communities experience. Like other local government agencies, it established social justice policies that recognized that effective engagement is critical to removing barriers to participation in services and programs. Between 2008 and 2015, the organization partnered with other local government agencies to develop number of equity-related initiatives, policies, and plans.

In 2009, it updated its strategic goals to prioritize reducing hazardous material exposures of traditionally underserved populations. In 2010, its management plan documented a significant demographic shift that occurred since its previous update (1997) and recognized the need to understand the social and cultural factors that might influence attitudes and behavior with respect to household hazardous waste. The plan also confirmed the organization's commitment to increasing participation of new communities and addressing the needs of underserved groups.

In 2011, the organization adopted a landmark Service Equity Policy to "help advance, focus, and guide" the organization's efforts to advance equity. This policy, guided by environmental justice principles and practices, clarified the organization's vision and commitment to including service equity considerations in all aspects of planning and increase access to its services to historically underserved populations. The policy also established the organization's commitment to two-way exchange of information with communities. Additionally, the organization made significant investments to improve the skills of its workforce to design, deliver, and evaluate services in a culturally competent way. As the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

organization evolved its understanding of equity and environmental justice, its leaders realized that more needed to be done to confront the root causes of inequities and in a holistic way.

2017 Racial Equity Strategic and Implementation Plan

In an effort to fully operationalize its commitment to equity, the organization formalized a clear vision and direction for its equity work by developing a Racial Equity Strategic Plan and Racial Equity Implementation plan in 2018. The strategic plan, which is updated every five years, outlined the organization's racial equity vision, framework, strategies, and goals. The implementation plan, which is updated every three years, is a living document and evolves as needs arise. The Implementation Plan turned the recommendations and strategies, outlined in the Strategic Plan, into actions by providing concrete steps that each department needs to take to meet the organization's equity strategic goals. The strategic plan created a mandate that all members of the organizations will apply an equity lens to their practices. As one participant put it "I built this project management tool it is like what is the saying 'you can lead a horse to the water but you can't make them drink', this [the strategic and implementation plan] makes them drink". Participant A further elaborated on the role of the policies in mandating adoption of equity practices in project management:

And so there is people who won't use PM tools because they are too busy and they too busy because they are not using PM tools and they are in that catch 22 and it like O.K well guess what you are required now to stop take a step back take a breath and put it into an organized fashion so that it worked better for you. That's my thing.

As a first step in developing the strategic plan, the leadership led an organization-wide visioning process to establish a clear racial equity vision that provides a foundation for the strategic plan and implementation plans and is applicable to all the work of the organizations and describes "what success will look like". The organization adopted the vision that "race is

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

not a determinant of hazardous material exposure in households and business” in the region. This vision then informed the development of goals, strategies, and commitments outlined in the strategic and implementation plan.

Another key component of the strategic plan are the organization’s three core racial equity goals. The first goal is to embed racial equity and environmental justice principles throughout its operations. The second goal is to recognize and reflect the racial diversity of the residents it serves. The third goal is to actively engage and partner with others to understand and address racism and utilize culturally relevant data to inform its work.

The plan also lays out four core strategic goals for the following three years. The first strategy is to build organizational capacity to address racial disparities and inequities. This strategy calls for increasing racial equity in hiring policies and practices and establishing measures to retain employees of color. To ensure that all employees understand race, racism, and institutional racism. Ensure that all employees have the skills to apply learning and are practitioners of embedding racial equity in their work.

The second strategy is embedding race and social justice policies and practices across the organization. This ensures the application of racial equity lens in planning, budgeting, setting priorities, and financial management. This strategy specifically called for the recommendations of the strategic plan to be reflected in all project management plans. Additionally, this called for the development of a comprehensive community engagement plan that ensures community input is reflected in all priorities, budgets, operations, and funding. All budget and spending plans are expected to align with the equity goals. The plan also called for

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

developing a Racial Equity toolkit, improving the methods for collecting demographic data from those the communities, and compensating community partners for their participation.

The third strategy is to be a community-centered organization that partners with communities for inclusive outreach and engagement. This calls for strengthening community partnership to improve service to underserved stakeholders. The Plan also called for improving community outreach and engagement through strategic partnerships and approaches.

Theme 2: Equity lens on hiring and capacity building

This theme describes the changes that were made to increase the diversity and skills of the workforce. The strategic plan called for the building the organizational capacity to address racial disparities and inequities. The plan outlined three key objectives: (1) increase racial equity in hiring policies and practices and establishing measures to retain employees of color, (2) ensure that all employees understand race, racism, and institutional racism, and (3) equip employees with the skills needed to apply what they learn and are become practitioners of embedding racial equity in their work.

The organization embarked on changing its hiring policies to create and develop a workforce that more closely reflects the diversity of the population and demographics of the communities it serves. Participant A stated:

This was another simultaneous parallel effort that really enriched our program was equitable hiring. We have taken massive steps in how we hire. Changed the make-up of our organization so most of our leaders now are people of color with different ideas.

To increase access and inclusion of minority applicants and candidates, the organization implemented numerous changes to its hiring practices in 2015 to create a more equitable hiring process. For examples, race-identifying information is redacted from employment applications

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

and resumes. Racial equity questions are included in interviews. The new practices ensured a balanced and welcoming interviewing panels. They provided anti-bias training throughout the hiring and interviewing process. Additionally, the organization increased outreach to historically black colleges and universities and advertising in black, indigenous and people of color publications and communities. Participant A also described the resulting changes as follows:

In the past, it was “people of color just don’t apply so what are we supposed to do?” Well, you do it different. So, we are doing it different and people of color are applying and they are quality.

Employees are encouraged and expected to identify and implement best practices to hire, develop, and retain a racially diverse and culturally responsive workforce at all levels of the organization. The plan also encourages leaders to foster an equitable and inclusive workplace culture and calls for a focus on retention of employees of color.

The organization’s leadership recognized that not all employees have the same capacity, skills, and recourses to deliver on their equity commitments. The organization recognized in its strategic plan that undoing institutional barriers to equity will not happen overnight because they were built into the system for hundreds of years. Racial equity work, therefore, requires long term commitment to learning and growing as they take on the work of equity. One of the values they adopted is for the organization to be a “learning community”, approaching racial equity work with a learning and collaboration mindset. This meant practicing having “an open mind, being humble, curious, and kind”, as they engage in on-going evaluation of their work and apply lessons learned from implementation. Leadership encouraged everyone to share what they were learning and contribute ideas to improve operations and service. They also encouraged staff to embrace the mindset that failures are opportunities to learn and make

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

improvements. Leadership encouraged everyone to see mistakes as lessons learned and not as failures.

The organization is investing, on an ongoing basis, in training and development to ensure appropriate support and tools are available to employees. The following are examples of training offered employees to grow in their understanding of racial equity:

- Equitable hiring
- Equity planning, the racial equity planning team
- Culturally intelligent project teams
- Racial equity: Moving beyond access and inclusion
- Why we lead with race
- Trauma stewardship/building resiliency

An online racial equity library, with timely material, was established and employees are encouraged to view listen to and read. The organization hired staff dedicated to focus on racial equity to support the organization in its continued mission to advance equity. Additionally, staff were allowed time to participate in racial affinity groups or employee resource groups that promote a sense of community and inclusion. The organization is continuing to assess and identify internal opportunities to leverage existing resources and experts to support their needs. Leadership encourages opportunities for collaboration among teams to identify opportunities and resources to support each other in their equity work.

Theme 3: Equity lens on Project Planning

This theme describes how equity considerations are integrated into the project management processes.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Formalizing Project Management Standards

Projects are vehicles for how organizations implement their strategic goals. One of the most significant findings of this study is that formalizing the Project Management process was considered an important vehicle for how the organization can effectively execute on its strategic equity goals. In other words, bringing structure, consistency, and predictability to the way the organization was delivering on projects was considered a key strategy for advancing equity in the organization. Participant 2 described the impetus for reforming Project Management as follows:

Having learned about project management I saw there was an opportunity to achieve racial equity goals by improving project management or by first of all introducing project management to our organization because we did not have that skillset. And so, you have to start there and then seeing how project management can serve so many goals. And it's a ripe opportunity to get specific about racial equity goals and structure things to do so we can ensure making the kind of progress that we want.

In 2016, after an extensive review of its project planning and delivery practices, the organization identified numerous gaps that undermined its ability to deliver projects in a timely and effective manner. Inconsistent project initiation and approval process, unpredictable delivery timelines, and unclear roles and responsibilities are few of the gaps and challenged that project managers faced.

To address these gaps, the organization initiated an effort to establish a formal Project Management Methodology that is aligned with the Project Management Institute (PMI) standards. In 2017, a new project management methodology, called "The PM Toolkit", was launched. Appendix 4 and 5 provide an overview of new Project Management processes. It included a number of tools and templates to guide project managers in managing the entire

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

lifecycle of the projects. An extensive training and coaching program was developed to support the launch and adoption of the new tool.

The aim of the development of the project management toolkit was to establish a structured project delivery process by following a standardized project management methodology. The objective was also to create a repeatable and predictable project delivery process. It also aimed to establish practices and processes for governance and oversight by establishing a formal process for initiation, approval, monitoring, and execution of projects. All project managers are expected to plan and execute their project according to the PM Toolkit. The Toolkit and associated training were designed to encourage project managers to foster a culture of teamwork by promoting clear communication, defining clear expectations, and establishing clear roles and responsibilities. As a result of formalizing its project management standards, the organization today considers itself a “project-based organization”.

The organization is operationalizing its racial equity vision by requiring every tool and template in the project management methodology to include a set of questions designed to help project managers apply an equity lens to their decisions. Project managers are expected to apply this lens throughout the project lifecycle to ensure decisions and actions are aligned with and support the racial equity vision of the organization and the project.

The following describes six key templates from the project management process and how the questions of racial equity are incorporated. See additional examples in Appendix 6—Racial Equity in key PM Toolkit templates. The complete list of project management templates can be found in Appendix 7.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

During the project initiation stage, project managers complete a project management checklist to develop a project proposal. The proposal is formally approved by the project sponsor before any project work can be initiated. Figures 1 and 2 show the language that reflects the equity lens on project initiation:

Figure 1.

Racial Equity Considerations in the Project Initiation Checklist

Racial Equity

- As you develop a proposal for your project, ensure your proposal is aligned with the Program's Racial Equity Strategic and Implementation Plans.
- Once your proposal is approved and your project initiated, you will work with the Racial Equity team to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit to create a Racial Equity Vision for this project.

The Project Charter, which formally authorizes the work of the project to begin, includes the following questions that prompt the project manager to consider racial equity implications of the project:

Figure 2.

Racial Equity Considerations in the Project Charter Template

Racial Equity

As you develop this Project Charter, you are charged with ensuring that your project's racial equity vision and problem statement (attached in Appendix 1 of this Project Charter) are reflected in each step of the process.

Do this by asking yourselves:

How are we reflecting the racial equity vision with each step of this Project Charter process?

Explain:

Make any additions to the racial equity vision and outcomes using track changes.

What are the reasons for these additions?

After completing this Project Charter, ask: Have we preserved this Project's racial equity vision? Incorporate your answer into the Racial Equity Vision question in the Racial Equity Toolkit.

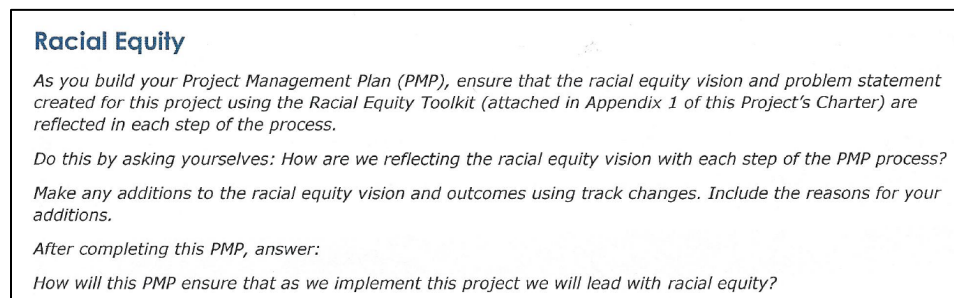
Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

The next step in the project lifecycle is the development of a Project Management Plan.

The Project Management Plan, which is a compendium that integrates the planning of all aspects of the project (scope, time, cost, risk, etc.), includes a section that describes the strategies that the project team will implement to achieve the racial equity vision. It includes the following questions:

Figure 3.

Racial Equity Considerations in the Project Management Plan



As part of the project planning, PMs are expected to apply an equity lens when developing the low-level project tasks and activities. The Work Breakdown Structure document, which defines each deliverable and the decomposition of the deliverable into small work packages, includes questions to address the following racial equity considerations.

Figure 4.

Racial Equity Considerations in the Work Breakdown Structure Template

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Racial Equity

As you and your team work through this Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), ensure your project's racial equity vision and problem statement (attached in Appendix 1 of the Project Charter) are reflected in each step of the process.

Answer this: How are we reflecting our racial equity vision with each step of this WBS process? How is that further reflected in the work packages and activities?

Make any additions to the racial equity vision and outcomes using track changes. Answer this: What are your reasons for those additions?

Once you have completed your WBS, complete the following statement:

Based on our answers to the previous questions, our WBS process and structure advance racial equity applied to this work by

Incorporate your response into the Racial Equity Vision question in the Project's Racial Equity Toolkit as appropriate.

An important component of project management planning is risk management. The Risk Management Plan, which describes the process for identifying, analyzing, and addressing the risks of the project, required project managers and their team to address racial equity considerations during the risk management planning process.

Figure 5.

Equity Considerations in the Risk Management Plan

Racial Equity

As you work through this Risk Management Process, ensure that your project's racial equity vision and problem statement (attached in Appendix 1 of the Project Charter) are reflected in each step of the process.

Answer this question:

How are we reflecting this project's racial equity vision with each step of the risk Management Process?

After completing this document, answer the following question:

How have we reflected this project's racial equity vision in our Risk Management Plan?

Make any necessary updates to your racial equity vision and outcomes using track changes.

When the project is completed, the project sponsor, who is usually a high-level executive within the organization, needs to provide their acceptance of the project deliverables

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

and approve the project to be closed. The Project Closure Document, which is used to formally approve and close the project, includes a set of questions that sponsors use to apply an equity lens in determining whether the project deliverables are approved or not. The document includes racial equity as a key criterion on which projects are assessed before the project is approved. As a criterion for final approval of the project, racial equity appears to be as important as budget, schedule results, scope criteria. The following shows the portion of the document that includes the racial equity considerations.

Figure 6.

Racial Equity Considerations in the Project Closure Template

Racial Equity

As you work through this Project Closing Form, ensure that your project's racial equity vision and problem statement (attached in Appendix 1 of the Project Charter) are reflected in each step of the process.

Ask yourselves: How are we reflecting the racial equity vision with each step in this Project Closing Form process? Make any additions to the racial equity vision and outcomes using track changes. Include your reasons for making the additions.

After completing this document, answer: How does this Project Closing Form advance or maintain this project's racial equity vision?

Incorporate your answer into the Racial Equity Vision in the Racial Equity Toolkit.

Project Description

[A description helps readers needing project's context.] [Adjust the table to fit your needs.]

	Goal	Success Criteria	Met?	Variance
Cost (example. delete this row)	To meet our approved project budget	Spend of \$30K +/- 5%	Final project expenditure was \$31,800	We came in at \$30K + 6%, so a +1% variance on approved spending
Cost				
Schedule				
Scope				
Racial Equity				
Resources				
Other?				

Racial Equity Toolkit

In addition to the PM Toolkit, the organization is also operationalizing its racial equity vision by requiring all PMs to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit in the planning of all projects to

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

ensure that the outcomes are racially just. The Racial Equity Toolkit lays out a process and a set of questions to help the PM examine who benefits and who is harmed by the projects and who is included in the decision-making process and who is left out. The toolkit also calls for the PM to invite stakeholders to collaborate on project decisions. The toolkit guides the project manager in creating authentic and long-term partnership with stakeholders. The toolkit consists of two main tools: Stakeholder Analysis and Equity Guide to Planning. Appendix 8 provides an overview of the activities and deliverables in the initiation and planning phases of the project.

Stakeholder Analysis Tool

The Stakeholder Analysis is a process and a tool that helps a project team to perform a deep analysis of the stakeholders potentially interested in and impacted by the project. The process guides the project team in gathering data on project stakeholders with the objective of grounding the project planning and subsequent phases in evidence-based knowledge about the stakeholders and especially those most impacted by the project. Using the tool, the project team examines the roles, needs, and interactions of the stakeholders. More importantly, the tool helps the project team to identify the benefits or any harms to stakeholder by the proposed project. The tool incorporates a feedback loop that ensures the project team has accurately captured and interpreted stakeholder input. The project team revisits the stakeholder analysis at each phase of the project to ensure that as new data is gathered, the project team has a clear understanding of the stakeholder groups, their roles, and best approach to working with them.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

The Equity Guide to Planning

The Equity Guide to Planning is a tool that helps PMs examine the equity impacts of the project planning process from beginning to end. Its aim is to improve access, inclusion, and participation and address historical and current disparities and inequities. As an outcome of the process, the project team identifies the action items for which it is accountable to ensure that project impacts are mitigated. The toolkit is applied at the start of each project and throughout the project lifecycle. This ensures that the project continues to be in alignment with the project vision.

At the outset of the initiation phase of all projects, the agency leadership conducts a toolkit and stakeholder analysis that informs the development of a project charter and selection of the project team and vendors and consultants. The Racial Equity Guide to Planning is used to develop a racial equity vision that will guide the project. The racial equity vision guides the project team to use the best available research data on the characteristics needs and values and preferences of the communities most impacted by the agencies' operations. The goal of the vision is to shape who is at the table during the planning process and how the project team developed the project management plan. The vision continues to shape the behavior of the project in terms of the type of data on which they base their decisions, how data is used, how they propose project goals and program alternatives they propose, and how they interact in culturally responsive ways with the communities they serve. The project racial equity vision is revisited at every phase of the project to ensure that the project is staying aligned with its vision. During the project planning phase, the assembled project team conducts a second analysis using the toolkit to develop a project management plan.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Robust Stakeholder Demographic Data

The racial equity toolkit enables the project team to base project decisions on evidence-based knowledge. However, applying an equity lens to stakeholder analysis and project planning can only be effective if it is based on robust demographic data. The organization's leaders understood that they needed reliable data on race and ethnicity of the people they served and the data they have is not collected in a consistent way. A key priority per the 2018 strategic and implementation plan is to improve the way the organization collected and analyzed demographic data about its communities. As Participant A described the research team:

We are using only data that is evidence based which means that we have some of top-notch scientists working with us, but all their data is evidence based by double checking with our communities. Is it true? Is it not true? How can you enrich our data? What are the nuances according to the communities that we are working with?

The research team, in collaboration with the other departments, developed a set of strategies for how to get robust data. Research and stakeholder engagement are considered interdependent processes yet distinct disciplines requiring different expertise. The research process evaluates the best available research data on the characteristics, needs, values, and preferences of the communities most impacted by the organization. The project plan contains a section called "Research Subplan" that describes the research questions and approaches used to ensure that the stakeholder analysis is evidence-based.

Theme 4: Alignment, Empowerment, and Support

The organization equity work began over a couple of decades ago. Over time, the organization has developed a sophisticated language around equity and social justice. The equity work has also been shaped by a set of values and guiding principles that have evolved

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

over the last couple of decades and shaped the way employees think about equity. This theme describes the meaning, guiding principles, and values that align and undergird the organization's equity work as outlined in its policies, strategic plan, project plan, and as described by participants.

Meaning and guiding principles

Over the years, a number of individuals from around the organization engaged in different initiatives to advance equity. However, over time, it became clear that a unified way of talking about equity was needed to ensure that everyone in the organization approached racial equity work using a common language. Therefore, in the 2017 Racial Equity Strategic plan and implementation plan, leadership adopted a clear vision and a set of definitions to guide the equity work ahead.

The Strategic and Implementation plans established the strategic direction that racial equity will be embedded in all planning, budgeting, and priority setting decisions and all decisions are expected to be grounded in meaningful community data, demographics, analysis and engagement. The strategic plan adopted a clear set of definitions (see Appendix 9-Racial Equity Glossary of Terms) that guided equity work however for this discussion, two pertinent definitions include:

Racial Equity: Is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. (Equity is the outcome, NOT just access to opportunity.) When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities not just their manifestation.

Racial Equity Lens: A racial equity lens is a tool and practice to transform and improve planning, decision-making, and resource allocation leading to more racially equitable policies and programs. Applying a racial equity lens to internal organizational development work helps to identify, talk about, and manage inherent power dynamics

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

that organizations grapple with every day, especially those that are white dominated, in culture and/or demographics.

Additionally, the organization adopted a number of guiding principles and values to provide a foundation for its equity work. The following are some of the core principles and values that guide its equity work:

Racial Equality vs. Racial Equity: There is a difference between racial equality and racial equity. Racial equality assumes that all everyone is the same and/or have the same needs. Racial equity recognized that not everyone starts from the same place.

Leading with Race: One of the crucial steps that leadership took is to establish “Leading with Race” as the organization’s equity framework. A guiding principle in this framework is that to address past and present inequities, it is important for the organization to confront root causes of inequities by leading with race. Leading with race means that, while race is understood as a social construct and not biological, the organization acknowledged that racial inequities exist, and the impact of racism is real. Additionally, leading with race is based on the principle that, by addressing the barriers experienced by people of color, the organization will remove barriers for other disadvantaged groups.

Targeted Universalism: Recognizes that different populations have different needs and experience different barriers and benefits related to the organization’s services. The organization is committed to better understanding these differences and continue to adjust its approach to be equitable.

Results-Based Accountability: is a way of thinking and taking action to improve the lives of communities by starting with the desired results and working backward to determine

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

indicator and performance measure. Results-Based Accountability was developed by Mark Friedman of the Fiscal Policies Institute, author of *Trying Hard is Not Good Enough*.

Racial Equity Lens: A racial equity lens is a tool and practice to transform and improve planning, decision-making, and resource allocation lead to more racially equitable policies and projects.

Supportive Environment

Project managers are supported by a number of other subject matter experts and provided sufficient resources to support their equity work.

Racial Equity Team. The Racial Equity team provides expertise and consultation on the application of racial equity best practices throughout the design, implementation, and evaluation to programs and activities across the organization. The team is also tasked with increasing awareness and skills among employees to strengthen racial equity and cultural competence. The team played a crucial role in the development of the Racial Equity Strategic and Implementation plans. It is also responsible for overseeing the execution of the Racial Equity Plans to ensure that the organization is reaching and serving all residents and businesses within the organization's jurisdiction. Recently, the organization hired a Racial Equity Manager and is in process of hiring a Racial Equity Planner. The Racial Equity Manager has the overall responsibility for guiding the equity work to ensure that the organization lives up to its vision to lead with race.

Research Services Team. The Research Services team supports projects and activities across the organization by providing expertise and consultation on technical and social science research and best practices throughout the design, implementation, and evaluation of the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

organization's services and projects. It is a multidisciplinary team responsible for conducting research and evaluation on various projects and issues of importance to the organization. This team is responsible for maintaining the organization's technical and scientific credibility by providing the evidence-based guidance on which policy options are considered, priorities are set, and programs are organized.

Financial Support. The organization made financial support for equity practices a key strategy for advancing its equity work. Advancing equity requires time, efforts, and resources and, therefore, the strategic plan calls for Racial Equity practices to be appropriately funded to support racial equity objectives and priorities of projects. Project budgets include financial compensation to community partners for their participation in projects. Because reaching historically underserved communities may be more costly than other communities, project managers are expected to budget appropriately. They are encouraged to request additional funding, if funds initially allocated for their projects are not sufficient.

Fostering a culture of advocacy

Advocacy has been a core value and practice for many individuals within the organization who have worked tirelessly for years to advance equity in their work. Long before equity became a leadership priority and adopted as an organization's goal, employees from around the organizations took on the work of raising awareness about equity issues. Participants spoke about how this advocacy has been in the "DNA" of these employees who were the original change agents who worked tirelessly to advocate for equity paved the way for embedding equity in the organization's policies and strategies.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Folks who since day one had been reaching out to different audiences that was already in their DNA. Me, it became part of my DNA because of my family. Other people it is still not in their DNA. (Participant A)

These grassroots efforts influenced leadership and in turn leadership provided support and funding for these efforts. Leadership's support for equity efforts has been crucial. The progress that the organization has made so far was also in part the result of a number of leaders who, over the last couple of decades, were willing to put their "social capital" on the line to serve as equity change agents.

And then I believe the turning point was when [name of manager] finally said "I am not going to ask for permission anymore, this is the way you are going to do it"... he/she worked his way up the organization to a position of power and authority. He could say that too. And then he did say it. And he said it to ears that were open. And whatever he did to help open those ears. (Participant A)

Leadership provided a clear racial equity vision. They supported embedding equity in policies and strategic plans. They encouraged conversations about equity at all levels of the organization. In addition to funding employee training, leadership funds employees to engage with others to advance equity work. For example, employees are encouraged to participate in racial equity employee resource groups or affinity groups. This support makes it hard for equity efforts to be discouraged or lose momentum.

Discussion

Introduction

This section presents a discussion of the findings from the previous section. The research project sought to understand the changes needed in the organizational structure, and policies, procedures to institutionalize and operationalize equitable project stakeholder engagement to increase participation of historically marginalized groups in project planning

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

decisions. The research question is: What strategies do local government agencies utilize to operationalize equitable stakeholder engagement to increase participation of historically marginalized groups in project decisions?

In this section, two theoretical models will be used to explain the findings and draw implications for how the organization operationalized equitable stakeholder engagement. Racial Equity in Planning Organizations (REPO) is a useful framework for understanding how public sector organizations align their planning racial equity goals with internal rules and norms (Solis, 2020). While the framework was developed for urban planning, it can be a useful lens to examine how organizations align their goal of achieving equitable project stakeholder engagement with their internal policies and practices. The framework posits that organizations (a) become aware of how their internal processes may be reproducing racial inequities, (b) they assess their organizational strengths and weaknesses to initiate racial equity efforts, (c) they engage in organizational learning about racial equity, and (d) they then analyze and change existing rules and norms.

Broad, Deep, and Continual (BDC) framework is a useful tool for understanding the strategies that the organization used to apply an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement (Lees-Marshment, Huff, & Bendle, 2020). The framework is especially useful for addressing the needs of local governments to engage historically marginalized or disenfranchised stakeholder groups. Accordingly, engaging historically marginalized or disenfranchised stakeholder groups requires approaches that “engage a wide breadth of stakeholders, engage them deeply and meaningfully throughout the decision-making process, and sustain this engagement in a continual manner” (Lees-Marshment et al., 2020, p. 765).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Combining REPO and BDC as a theoretical framework for analyzing the findings, five core elements of the organizational change strategy inform best practices for the process (the “how”) and content (the “what”) of operationalizing equitable stakeholder engagement.

Awareness, Literacy, and Understanding

The recent adoption of policies and strategic plan was the result of the advocacy and grassroots efforts that started over a couple of decades ago. Progress was slow and unfolded in an iterative and incremental way. During this period, the organization embarked on numerous efforts to raise awareness about the gap between their equity goals and their practices that were reproducing inequities. Employees were encouraged to get involved in advancing equity and leadership funded staff time to participate in various initiatives. The finding that raising awareness and assessing existing ways of thinking are part of the change journey is in line with findings from Di Maddaloni and Derakhshan (2019). They found that shifting perspective is important to developing inclusive approaches to stakeholder engagement. The organization also assessed their operations and policies to identify how their way of doing business was not leading to more access to communities and may be perpetuating inequities. They identified strengths and weaknesses and the type of tools and the skills they needed to address these gaps. They deepened their understanding about racial equity and social justice by investing in education and by encouraging their employees to engage in conversation across all organizations departments.

This gradual way of introducing organizational change may allow the adoption of the change to occur at a pace that the employees can handle. These findings are consistent with the REPO model. To operationalize equitable stakeholder engagement, the organizational

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

change journey moved through the three stages of the REPO model of awareness, assessment, understanding that seem to lay the foundation for the fourth element of the REPO model which is a change to “internal rules and norms” (Solis, 2020).

Organizational Alignment through Policies

Alotaibi, Edum-Fotwe, and Price (2019) found a lack of clear policies makes efforts like advancing equity “non-strategic, ad-hoc, and unfocused” (p. 15). While organizational change process started as an ad-hoc process at the individual level, over time the organization began to establish official policies and guidelines to demonstrate its commitment to equity. These efforts culminated in the adoption of a comprehensive policy and a strategic plan that prioritized equity as an organizational strategic goal. Providing tools, such as PM and Racial Equity Toolkits and aligning the organization around a unifying vision and guiding principles, such as leading with race, targeted universalism, and results-based accountability, created a shared language and understanding about equity and inclusion and guided the work of project managers. This is consistent with the finding by Martinez (2018) that establishing frameworks and tools is important to support equity work. This finding is in line with research by Goel et al. (2020) that confirmed the importance of organizational level policies as a means to institutionalize sustainability. This is also in line with findings by Poon and Silviu (2019) that organizational support through strategies, policies, and expertise to project teams accelerates awareness and adoption of sustainability practices.

Workforce Diversity and Capacity Building

The organization approached diversity and capacity building as essential components of its strategy to advance equity. In assessing the barriers to community engagement, the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

organization found that its workforce did not possess the knowledge the organization needed about the communities it serves. The organization perceived a diverse workforce, which reflects the demographic make-up of the communities they serve, as a pathway to gaining the knowledge needed to increase stakeholder inclusion. The workforce diversity efforts contributed to advancing equity in two ways: it addressed bias in hiring practices and, as the workforce became more diverse and more employees of color began to rise to leadership positions over time, these individuals' lived experience and knowledge informed grassroots advocacy efforts that fueled the organizational change. Diversifying the workforce as a strategy to advance equity is in line with finding by Poon and Silvius (2019) that selection of PMs can accelerate the awareness and adoption of sustainability practice in projects.

Given the central role of PMs in advancing sustainability (Dalcher, 2012), ongoing training and capacity building is an indispensable requirement for sustainable culture change. The findings show that the organization invested in training to support their equity goals. It was also important for PMs to understand how their job and their role are crucial to advancing equity and developing skills to apply learning and are practitioners of embedding racial equity in their work. This is in line with research from Alotaibi et al. (2019) that found a lack of awareness and knowledge to be a key barrier to implementing social responsibility in projects. This is also in line with research by Rostamnezhad, Nasirzadeh, Khanzadi, Jarban, and Ghayoumian (2020) that found education and training of employees to be a key factor affecting advancing social sustainability in projects.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Equity Lens on Project Management Practices

The equity policies and strategic plans adopted by the organization provided a mandate for all departments to apply an equity lens to their processes and changed them. This was a catalyst for the initiation of the Project Management Modernization project to formalize the project management methodology and embed equity in project-decision making process. A formal Project Management methodology enables a unified, consistent, and predictable approach to delivering projects. It also enables organizations to set equity performance goals in order to measure the effectiveness of projects. These findings suggest that operationalizing equitable stakeholder engagement involves applying an equity lens not only to how projects are managed (the process) but also to what projects deliver (the outcome). This finding is in line with research by Silvius et al. (2017) that points to the importance of organizations ensuring that project managers understand what it means to not only apply sustainability to the process of managing projects but also to deliver sustainable projects.

According to the BDC model, historically marginalized or disenfranchised stakeholders can be difficult to identify and engage. Therefore, successful stakeholder engagement requires broad engagement that ensures these stakeholders are identified and their input is solicited. The findings suggest that the organization ensured that stakeholder engagement is broad by changing the way they identified and analyzed stakeholders. Racial Equity toolkit was established as process for stakeholder identification and analysis. Stakeholder Analysis and Equity Guide to Planning were integrated in the project initiation and planning phases of the project. The importance of the initiation and planning phases in planning stakeholder

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

engagement is supported by research by Söderberg (2020) that considers initiation phase important in connecting the project to the goals of the organization.

The PM Toolkit and Racial Equity Toolkit processes rely on availability of robust demographic data that is accurate and timely. Decisions made on incomplete, faulty, or outdated information leads to inefficient execution of projects and, as a result, negative outcomes for the community. Robust demographic data is also crucial for the implementation of targeted universalism and results-based accountability to ensure that outcomes-based performance objectives and measure can be defined and tracked. Martinez (2018) highlighted the importance of stakeholder identification and analysis at the start of the project for adapting project management processes to context of stakeholder.

According to the BDC model, successful stakeholder engagement requires deep engagement that is rich and meaningful and that goes beyond just soliciting input or enabling public deliberation. Deep engagement is both a process (the quality of the engagement) and outcome (how the content of the engagement is turned to actions). The findings suggest that the organization ensured deep engagement by applying an equity lens to all project decisions and throughout the project lifecycle. Each project management process includes questions to help PMs apply an equity lens to their work by asking specific questions about who benefits and who is harmed by the project, who is included and who is not, what the project racial equity vision is. This approach enables the PM to think of ways to invite stakeholders to collaborate on advancing equity and establishing long-term relationships with the communities impacted by the project. This finding is consistent with that of Silvius et al. (2017) that sustainability should be integrated in project management decision making.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Although not all project management processes involve interaction with stakeholders, decisions made in processes not involving stakeholders may have implications for stakeholders. Therefore, while there was significant focus on changing the processes of the initiation and planning phase of the project, the organization took a holistic look at PM processes to ensure equity considerations are embedded throughout the project lifecycle, and not as a one-off effort at the start of the project.

Support and Empowerment

There is a recognition that integrating sustainability goals in project is challenging to PMs and, therefore, leadership support is crucial for advancing sustainability in projects (Sabini, Muzio, & Alderman, 2019). The findings suggest that supportive leadership was critical to organizational change to advance equity. The organization's leaders appear to approach the organizational change process with the mindset that they are a learning organization. They strived to provide the safety needed for employees to take risks and innovate, as challenges and setbacks are part of the learning journey. The initial small efforts evolved into bigger initiatives, coordinated with others across the organization, to share knowledge and provide support. This is in line with findings by Martinez (2018) that highlighted the importance of management's support to individual efforts when advancing sustainability.

Additionally, leadership provided alignment around a shared understanding of equity work. Establishing a common language and shared understanding around equity is crucial to increasing adoption of the organizational change. Through clear policies, strategic plans, vision, and guiding values, the organization established an alignment around a common understanding of its values and shared understanding of the organization's expectations around equity goals.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Finally, leadership provided valuable support to project managers with help from subject matter experts (SMEs) as equity, research, and communication teams. While in the past these SMEs played only a supporting role on projects and only when their support is solicited, they now play an active role in projects and share accountability for their outcomes.

Limitations, Implications, and Conclusions

Limitations

This research focused on understanding how one organization operationalized equitable stakeholder engagement. The findings were based on analysis of two data sources: interviews and documents. The Interviews were with two participants who were part of the team that led the organizational change initiative. The other data source was a set of documents related to policy and strategic planning level, project management delivery process, and initiation and planning documents of an actual project.

The main limitation of the present study is the focus on the perspective of the organization's leadership rather than the project managers who implement the organizational change within their projects. The research does not address how project managers perceive and implement the policies and practices resulting from the organizational change. The other limitation is the lack of focus on the perspective and experience of the communities that are impacted by the organization's projects. The research does not address how the communities perceive and experience the change in policies and practices that resulted from the organizational change. Additionally, expanding the research to include more organizations, embarking on similar organizational change, would provide valuable insights on the effectiveness of different organizational change strategies in improving the performance of

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

project managers and outcomes of projects for the communities. Future research could also investigate the benefits, for both the organization and the impacted communities, which could be realized from investing in the organizational change. Finally, future research could investigate the benefits adopting similar organizational change in the private sector to promote corporate social responsibility and address the challenges of economic, social, and governance issues.

Implications for Practice

Reflection, Assessment, and Literacy Phase

Organizations embarking on their journey to advance equity need to first engage in a process of self-reflection to gain awareness of the gaps between their equity values and the outcome of their practices, conduct an assessment of existing practices, and deepen their understanding of equity. Existing research identified a reflection phase as an important stage in the change journey which lays the foundation for the actual change in policies and project management practices. Organizations embark on this journey by adopting a learning mindset that embraces the uncertainty and confusion inherent in such a significant transformation of organizational culture.

Organizational Policies

Organizations need to have a deeper understanding of how their policies need to change to advance equitable stakeholder engagement. In addition to policies, organizations need to establish a way to measure performance of projects in complying with organizational policies.

Project Management Practices.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Not every organization has a formal Project Management process. Formalizing or reforming Project Management processes and practices can serve as a vehicle for advancing equity in the organization because it can increase the consistency and predictability of implementing projects. This will enable organizations to apply an equity lens not only to the processes of the project but also to its outcomes. Therefore, organizations should examine their existing Project Management processes and practices and determine what changes are needed to advance equity.

PM Selection.

Organizations advancing equity should include increasing workforce diversity as a critical component of the strategy. An organization's workforce, that reflects the communities it serves, is not just the right thing to do. Research has shown that diversity increases innovation and creativity. Workforce diversity is an enabler of advancing equity because it brings new perspectives, knowledge, and skills that the organization can leverage to better understand the communities it serves. The diversity of the lived experience of the workforce enables the organization to be more responsive to the needs of the communities it serves.

The present study shows that there are variations in how PMs approach stakeholder engagement. This points to the fact that project managers are not neutral or passive executors of their job. The present study has shown that background and motivation shape how a PM approaches stakeholder engagement. Because of the central role of the PM in advancing equity in their projects, organizations need to examine their current training models for diversity and inclusion and equity to ensure they are effective for developing the skills needed for advancing equity in project management.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Supporting Structures.

Organizations need to provide support to project managers in the form of subject matter experts (SMEs) such as from Public Relations, Research, and Equity. Such expertise is not typically available in projects. It is important that these types of SME have roles and responsibilities in and share accountability for the project outcomes, and are not only involved in projects on a volunteer or a need to basis as is the case usually in projects.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research focused on understanding how one organization operationalized equitable stakeholder engagement. The findings were based on an analysis of Interviews with two participants, who were part of the team that led the organizational change initiative, and thematic analysis of documents related to policy, strategic planning, and project management process. As such, the focus was on the perspective of the organization's leadership.

Future research should examine how project managers perceive and implement the changes in policies and practices resulting from the organizational change to advance to advance equitable project stakeholder engagement. Future research should also examine how the communities impacted by projects perceive and experience the change in policies and practices to advance equitable project stakeholder engagement. Future research should also examine the effectiveness of equitable stakeholder engagement practices from the perspective of the PM and the communities impacted by projects. Additionally, expanding the research to include more organizations would provide valuable insights on the effectiveness of different organizational change strategies in improving the performance of project managers and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

outcomes of projects for ECDL communities. Finally, future research should examine the barriers and facilitators of the institutionalization of equitable stakeholder engagement.

Conclusions

The REPO and BDC models were used as a theoretical framework to interpret the findings and explain how the organization made equitable stakeholder engagement a routine and part of the fabric of its project management process. The findings show that operationalizing equitable stakeholder engagement involves awareness of existing equity gaps, assessment policies and practices, learning about equity, and implementing systemic change. Systemic change is implemented through adopting pro-equity policies, increasing workforce diversity, investing in education, and embedding equity in project management practices. As a result of this organizational change, the organization ensured that stakeholder engagement is broad by changing the way they identified and analyzed stakeholders. They ensured that it is deep by embedding it in the decision-making process. They ensured that it is continual and sustainable by applying the equity lens throughout the project lifecycle processes, not just at the beginning.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

References

- Aaltonen, K. (2011). Project stakeholder analysis as an environmental interpretation process. *International Journal of Project Management*, 29(2), 165-183.
- Alotaibi, A., Edum-Fotwe, F., & Price, A. D. (2019). Critical barriers to social responsibility implementation within mega-construction projects: The case of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Sustainability*, 11(6), 1755.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Cuganesan, S., & Floris, M. (2020). Investigating perspective taking when infrastructure megaproject teams engage local communities: Navigating tensions and balancing perspectives. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(3), 153-164.
- Dalcher, D. (2012). Sustainability and success. *PM World Journal*.
- Derakhshan, R., Mancini, M., & Turner, J. R. (2019). Community's evaluation of organizational legitimacy: Formation and reconsideration. *International Journal of Project Management*, 37(1), 73-86.
- Di Maddaloni, F., & Derakhshan, R. (2019). A leap from negative to positive bond. A step towards project sustainability. *Administrative Sciences*, 9(2), 41.
- Goel, A., Ganesh, L., & Kaur, A. (2020). Project management for social good. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 13(4).
- Lees-Marshment, J., Huff, A. D., & Bendle, N. (2020). A social commons ethos in public policy-making. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 166(4), 761-778.
- Martinez, C. (2018). Stakeholder participation in property development. *Lund University, Faculty of Engineering*.
- Nelson, J., Spokane, L., Ross, L., & Deng, N. (2015). *Advancing racial equity and transforming government: A resource guide to put ideas into action*. Retrieved from Government Alliance on

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Race and Equity website: <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/advancing-racial-equity-and-transforming-government-a-resource-guide-to-put-ideas-into-action/>

- Poon, C., & Silvius, G. (2019). Factors that stimulate project managers to consider sustainability; exploring the stimulus patterns of canadian project managers. *Journal of Management and Sustainability, 9*, 90.
- Rostamnezhad, M., Nasirzadeh, F., Khanzadi, M., Jarban, M. J., & Ghayoumian, M. (2020). Modeling social sustainability in construction projects by integrating system dynamics and fuzzy-dematel method: A case study of highway project. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management.*
- Sabini, L., Muzio, D., & Alderman, N. (2019). 25 years of 'sustainable projects'. What we know and what the literature says. *International Journal of Project Management, 37*(6), 820-838.
- Silvius, A. G., Kampinga, M., Paniagua, S., & Mooi, H. (2017). Considering sustainability in project management decision making; an investigation using q-methodology. *International Journal of Project Management, 35*(6), 1133-1150.
- Söderberg, E. (2020). Project initiation as the beginning of the end: Mediating temporal tensions in school's health projects. *International Journal of Project Management, 38*(6), 343-352.
- Solis, M. (2020). Racial equity in planning organizations. *Journal of the American Planning Association, 1-7*.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications*: Sage.

Appendices

Appendix 1– Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Participant Name:

Date:

1. – What is your title and job duties/responsibilities?
 - How long have you performed in this position?
 - What other positions have you held in your current or other organizations?
2. – From your perspective, what does institutionalization of equitable community engagement at your organization mean?
3. – Why is community engagement important at your organization? What was the catalyst that got this movement going?
4. – What specific critical issues/challenges needed to be addressed?
 - Why is addressing this issue/initiative necessary? (Is this part of a strategic development strategy or continuation of another initiative?)
5. – Who is/was involved in leading the change?
6. – What events, people, or ideas had an influence or impact on the institutionalization process?
7. – How has your role and activities enhanced the institutionalization of community engagement?
8. – What strategies were used to increase the level of institutionalization of community engagement? What has worked and what has not? What resources and support were required or committed?
9. – Walk me through the progress made to date regarding the institutionalization of community engagement here at your org?
10. – What benefits, if any, do you see from the org’s efforts in institutionalizing community engagement?
11. – What do you perceive as important factors contributing to the success of institutionalizing community engagement efforts at your org?
12. – Describe the top critical challenges or barriers to enhance institutionalization of community engagement today at your organization?
 - How might other agencies overcome these barriers?
 - Tell me about the type of leader/role do you think is needed to address these critical challenges or barriers.
13. – How has the work of institutionalizing community engagement challenged beliefs and values?
14. – Is there something else you would like to add?













Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 2 - Training Program for Project and Program Managers

Project Management Training















Project Management Training (16 hours)

[See all](#)

 Module 1 Workbook	project management; Project Manager role; business case and goals; scope statement
 Module 2 Presentation	Project charter; stakeholders and communication
 Module 2 Workbook	
 Module 3 Presentation	Work breakdown structure
 Module 3 Workbook	
 Module 4 Presentation	Estimating; RACSI
 Module 4 Workbook	
 Module 5 Presentation	Network diagram; gantt charts
 Module 5 Workbook	
 Module 6 Presentation	Risk management; budgets
 Module 6 Workbook	
 Module 7 Presentation	Execution; teams and

Program Management Training Videos

[See all](#)

-  Name ▾
-  1) Intro to Program Management...
 -  2) Program Manager Responsibilit...
 -  3) The Program Plan.mp4
 -  4) Intro to Project Management...
 -  5) Project Management Process...
 -  6) Role of a Project Manager.mp4
 -  7) Goals and Objectiv...  
 -  8) Work Breakdown Structure.mp4
 -  9) RASCI.mp4
 -  10) Risk Management.mp4
 -  How We Get Things Done.mp4

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 3– Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent⁵

For participation in a Research Project

The purpose of this document, in accordance with the requirements of our Code of Research Ethics is to make explicit the nature of the proposed involvement between the researcher and the person or organization agreeing to supply information (the participant) and to record that the research participant understand and are satisfied with the proposed arrangements.

The title of the research project is:

The institutionalization of equitable project stakeholder engagement: challenges, successes, and lessons learned.

The researcher:

The principal researcher leading this research is: Samad Aidane

Contact details:

Samad Aidane

Phone#:

Email Address:

The Project:

I am a PhD. Student at Canterbury Christ Church University and I am conducting a study on how local government agencies are applying an equity lens to their project management processes, practices, and tools. According to the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), more than 30 state and 150 city governments are working to implement racial equity tools to guide policy, program, and budget decisions to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. Racial equity tools are guiding local government agencies in assessing how their decisions benefit and/or burden local communities, specifically culturally diverse communities and communities of color.

The aim of this study is to provide much needed information concerning how local government agencies are proactively developing and changing their project and

⁵ Some content in this form was adapted from consent form used at Western Michigan University.
<https://wmich.edu/research/forms>

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

program management processes, practices, and tools to embed racial equity considerations in the initiation, design, planning, and implementation of projects and programs.

By focusing specifically on understanding the experience of agencies who are in the process of changing their project delivery methods, we will be able to understand the challenges, successes and lessons learned to help other government agencies move their racial equity work forward. The research is relevant to project management offices (PMO) in any organization that serve, directly affect, or support the interest of ethno-cultural minority and immigrant communities and who are in the process or planning to integrate equity tools in their project delivery processes.

What participation in the study will involve:

The participant will be asked to grant one or more interviews of up to an hour and a half's duration. The interviews will be recorded on audiotape. The interviews will take place face-to-face at a location convenient to the participant. An additional communication over email will be asked in the form of one reflection piece based on the conversation generated from the first interview.

It is understood that the interviewee is free to decline to answer any question, to terminate the interview at any time and to require that any section of the whole of the recording be deleted.

Use of data:

The aim will be eventually to present the research along with the data collected in appropriate contexts, academic and professional, through publications, conference presentations, teaching and so on. If so requested, the researcher will refrain from using data that the participant considers sensitive. The participant will be given copies of any publications based on the research. If you choose to participate in this study, you agree with the following:

- The researcher will record your interview via audio recording so that it can be transcribed.
- The researcher will report results of the study in his final dissertation and in other publications. The researcher will ensure any information shared is non-identifiable, for example, by use of pseudonyms, ensuring no other identifying information about participant or their organization are included. Due to the identifiable and sensitive nature of participant responses, no data collected in this study will be shared with others and only the researcher (Abdessamad Aidane) will have access to this data.
- The researcher will use direct quotes in the PhD dissertation. All direct quotes will be screened for their degree of sensitivity to ensure only quotes which do not expose sensitive information will be shared.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- The researcher will use direct quotes in other publications. Participants will be offered a copy of the quotes that will be used in the report prior to publication in case they wish to challenge any statement made throughout the document. If participants disagree with any quotes, the researcher will either remove or modify them.

Benefits of participating in this study:

The topic of the research is fully aligned with local government agencies drive to achieve social equity and advance opportunities for all. Findings from the study will assist efforts by local and regional governments to develop and/or enhance project and program management extensions to inclusive outreach, engagement strategies, and use of equity tools.

Anonymity of the participant:

All participant information will be confidential, and the participant may choose not to answer any question during the process. No information will be collected through this study that could be used to identify the research participant or their organizations so participation will be anonymous. Any recorded names and information will be kept in a locked location and will not be released to anyone or used directly in print. Any reports, publications, or presentations on this data will use pseudonyms in place of names. Any responses that are shared from the interviews will be either aggregated or will be assigned a pseudonym so that participant's identities are concealed to the greatest extent possible. Unless specifically agreed otherwise, references in publications, talks etc. to particular organizations, individuals etc. will be anonymized and features which might make identification easy will be removed.

Declaration by the research participant(s):

I/We have read and am /are satisfied with the arrangements as set out above.

Signature of
participant:

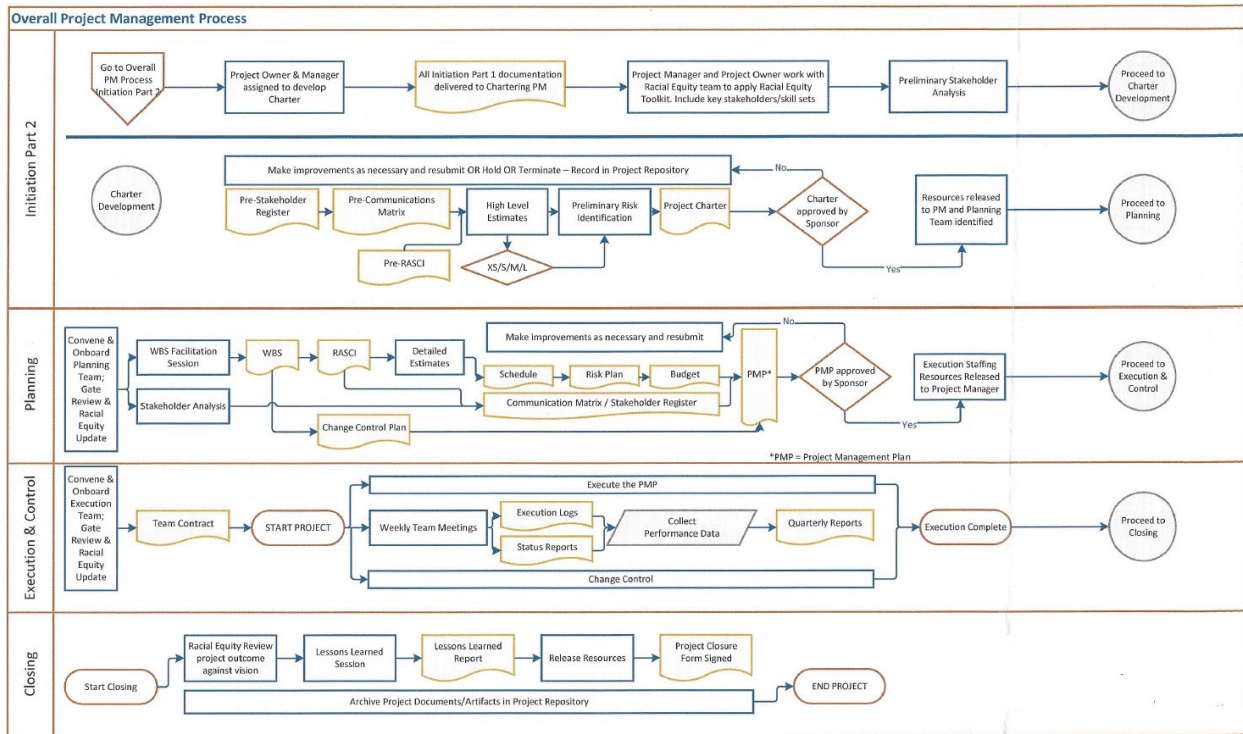
Date:

Researcher's
signature:

Date:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 4 – Overview of Project Management Process



Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 5 – Overview of PMToolkit tools and templates

Project Charter:

- describes the scope of work and desired objectives of a body of work
- the anticipated costs, resource needs, and time to complete the work
- the stakeholders who will benefit, impact, or be impacted by the work
- the specific deliverables and quality measures required
- once signed, the project charter provides authorization to begin the work

Roles and Responsibility Matrix (RASCI):

- describes who will do what to complete the work
- defines their level of involvement
 - R = *responsible* for a completing a deliverable
 - A = owns and monitors the deliverable or task, has *approval* power when completed
 - S = *supports* the completion of the work by accomplishing tasks
 - C = is a resource available to *consult* or provide guidance on an aspect of the work
 - I = identifies who needs to be *informed* about the deliverable

Work Breakdown Structure (WBS):

- breaks the project down into phases, deliverables, and tasks
- makes the work more manageable and delineates steps to complete the project
- makes the work easier to assign to project team members with the necessary skills
- ensures everyone knows their own and each other's tasks in relation to the deliverables
- provides detail making managing and evaluating the work efficient

Schedule:

- based on the WBS, illustrates the sequence in which tasks must be completed
- allows everyone to see all project-related activities, dependencies, and status on a timeline
- shows the deadlines and dependencies and relatedness of tasks
- provides for collaboration in time management

Other project management tools in the PMToolkit, which a project team can use or not depending upon the rigor required for the work, the project team's culture, or preference

include:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- team contract for working agreements
- project coordination plan describing how the team agrees to communicate among itself and its stakeholders
- risk register used to monitor and reduce the possibility of problems
- change control form to request and document changes to the scope, schedule, and budget of the project in response to risks, requests, and findings
- execution log to track decisions, actions, changes, risks, issues, etc.
- lessons learned report to document and share best practices and other learnings acquired during the project's life
- project closing form to document end results, costs, metrics, and formally end a project

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 6 – Racial Equity in key PM Toolkit templates

Project Team Roles and responsibilities:

Racial Equity
As you work through this RASCI, you are charged with ensuring that your project’s racial equity vision and problem statement (attached in Appendix 1 of the Project Charter) are reflected in each step of the process. Do this by asking yourselves: How are we reflecting the racial equity vision with each step of this RASCI process? Please explain.
<input type="text"/>
Please make any additions to the racial equity vision and outcomes using track changes. What are your reasons for the additions?
<input type="text"/>
<u>Once you have completed this document, answer the following question:</u> Based on answers to the previous questions, how will this RASCI advance racial equity? Please incorporate your answer into the Racial Equity Vision question in the Racial Equity Toolkit.
<input type="text"/>

Team contract:

Racial Equity
As you work through this Team Contract, consider: What is the team doing to create and ensure supportive working relationships based on equity and honest, open communication based on mutual respect and the needs of team members without bias?

Communication Plan:

Racial Equity
As you work through this Pre-Charter Communication Plan , you are charged with ensuring that your project’s racial equity vision and problem statement (attached in Appendix 1 of the Project Charter) are reflected in each step of the process. Use the work you have done on your HazWaste Racial Equity Stakeholder Analysis to complete this document. Do this by asking yourselves: How are we reflecting the racial equity vision with each step of this Project Coordination Plan process? Please explain.
<input type="text"/>
Please make any additions to the racial equity vision and outcomes using track changes. What are your reasons for the additions?
<input type="text"/>
<u>Once you have completed this document, answer the following question:</u> Based on answers to the previous questions, how does this Project Coordination Plan reflect racial equity in our team's communications efforts? Incorporate your answer into the Racial Equity Vision question in the Racial Equity Toolkit.
<input type="text"/>

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Lessons Learned Process:

As you work through this Lessons Learned Report, ensure that your project's racial equity vision and problem statement (attached in Appendix 1 of the Project Charter) are reflected in each step of the process.

Do this by asking yourselves: How are we reflecting our project's racial equity vision in each step of our Lessons Learned Report? Please explain.

Make necessary additions to the racial equity vision and outcomes using track changes and explain your reasons for the additions.

Once you have completed this document, answer the following question:
Based on answers to the previous questions, how does this Lessons Learned Report advance or preserve the racial equity vision of our project?

Please incorporate your answer into the Racial Equity Vision question in the Racial Equity Toolkit.

Meeting Guidelines:

Racial Equity

As you apply Project Meeting Guidelines to your project, ensure your project's racial equity vision and problem statement (attached in Appendix 1 of the Project Charter) are reflected in each step of the process.

Ask yourselves: How are we reflecting the racial equity vision of our project as we follow the steps of the Project Meeting Guidelines process?

If necessary, make additions based on how you will apply meeting guidelines to the racial equity vision and outcomes using track changes. Include your reasons for those additions.

This is a good time to revisit the work your team did to create its Team Contract and consider your agreements for working together respectfully and equitably.

Project Scorecard:

Project Scorecard

Racial Equity

As you apply this scorecard to a project, you are charged with ensuring that your project's racial equity vision and problem statement (attached in Appendix 1 of the Project Charter) are reflected in each step of the process.

Do this by asking yourselves:

How are we reflecting the racial equity vision with each step of this Project Scorecard process?

Explain:

Make any additions to the racial equity vision and outcomes using track changes.

What are your reasons for additions:

After completing this document, answer the following question and incorporate your answer into the Racial Equity Toolkit:

How has our use of this Project Scorecard ensured that the project's racial equity vision is reflected in our work?

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 7 - Project Management Tools and Templates

Phase	Title	Title
1. Initiation	Project Charter	About Project Managers One-Pager
1. Initiation	Project Initiation Checklist	About Project Managers Presentation
1. Initiation	Project Scorecard	About Project Owners One-Pager
2. Planning	RASCI	About Project Owners Presentation
2. Planning	Project Coordination Plan	Community of Practice
2. Planning	Team Contract	Example Meeting Agenda and Log
2. Planning	Work Breakdown Structure	Healthy Team Dynamics Resources
3. Execution	Risk Management Process	Learning More About Project Management
3. Execution	Risk Register	Project Initiation and SMART Goals
3. Execution	Change Control Process Flowchart	Project Management Process in Haz Waste
3. Execution	Change Request Form	Risk Management Presentation
3. Execution	Project Management Plan	Scope Creep
3. Execution	Meeting Guidelines	SMART Goals
3. Execution	Execution Log	Stand-up Meetings How-to Guide
3. Execution	Weekly Report to Project Owner	Team Contract Discussion Facilitation
4. Closing	Lessons Learned Agenda & Facilitation	Work Breakdown Structure Facilitation
4. Closing	Lessons Learned Report	Work Breakdown Structures & Project Sche
4. Closing	Project Closing Form	Writing Great Reports Tips

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 8 - Equity Lens on Planning Process

Phase	Toolkit	Activity	Deliverable
Initiation	Racial Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Racial Equity Toolkit • Occurs before charting the project • Small group of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial Equity Toolkit • Stakeholder Analysis
	Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project initiation activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Charter • Select consultants • Assemble the project team
Planning	Racial Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd Racial Equity Toolkit • Onboarding session of whole team and consultants • Racial equity toolkit with the project team including consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Racial Equity Toolkit • Racial equity vision • Orientation on Equity Toolkit
	Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work breakdown structure • Other Project Planning activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onboarding project team • Project Management Plan (PMP)

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Appendix 9 - Racial Equity Glossary of Terms

Culture – The shared values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, folklore, and institutions of a group of people who are unified by race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, and/or religion (among others). (*Casa Network, 2009*)

Diversity – The state of being diverse; variety. (*Google, 2017*) Diversity is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs. (*Ferris State University, 2017*)

Ethnicity – A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base. Examples of different ethnic groups are: Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American (black); Chinese, Korean (Asian); Cherokee, Mohawk, Navaho (Native American); Cuban, Mexican Puerto Rican (Latino); Polish, Irish, Swedish (white).

Individual Racism – Pre-judgement, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race.

Institutional Racism – Policies, practices, and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, regardless of intention.

Race – Race is a made up social construct and not an actual biological fact. Race designations have changed over time. Some groups that are considered “white” in the United States today were considered “non-white” in previous eras in U.S. Census data and in mass media and popular culture (for example, Irish, Italian, and Jewish people).

Racial Equity – Is the condition that would be achieved if one’s racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. (Equity is the **outcome**, NOT just access to opportunity.) When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities not just their manifestation.

Racial Equity Lens – A racial equity lens is a tool and practice to transform and improve planning, decision-making, and resource allocation leading to more racially equitable policies and programs. Applying a racial equity lens to internal organizational development work helps to identify, talk about, and manage inherent power dynamics that organizations grapple with every day, especially those that are white dominated, in culture and/or demographics.

At its core, it is a set of principles, reflective questions, and processes that focuses on the individual, institutional, and systemic levels by:

- Deconstructing what is not working around racial equity
- Reconstructing and supporting what is working

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Shifting the way we make decisions and think about this work
- Healing and transforming our structures, our environments, and ourselves

Structural Racism – The interplay of policies, practices and programs of differing institutions which leads to adverse outcomes and conditions for communities of color compared to white communities that occur within the context of racialized historical and cultural conditions. (*City of Seattle, 2017*)

Targeted Universalism - Targeted universalism is a method to design efforts to make changes transformational or transactional. It is a process to make sure that changes are aligned such that large, long-term, durable change is advanced.

It is called ‘targeted universalism’ as it arrives from the policy terms describing other forms of policy making—targeted policies and universal policies. Targeted universalism addresses weaknesses and strengths and is conceptually and operationally different.

Neither universal nor targeted approaches are able to accomplish swift, lasting, and large-scale transformative change. We refer to targeted universalism as Equity 2.0 because the framework puts equity into practice while bringing to fruition the full potential of focusing on equity over equality.

We live in an era of rising inequality, a toxic inequality poisoning our democracy, well-being and our economy. Becoming aware of this inequality and understanding what should and can be done has become more politically salient.

In different ways, universal and targeted strategies can promote and create a false understanding of equity. And strategies to make change can promote a false sense of alignment and only changes in how we talk about inequality—not inequality itself. Targeted universalism can realize the full potential of shifting to equity, structural change, and new narratives.

Step 1. Define Universal Goal

Step 2. Measure how overall population fares relative to the goal

Step 3. Measure performance of population segments relative to the goal

Step 4. Understand how group-based factors impede progress

Step 5. Implement strategies based on needs and circumstances

(*HAAS Institute, UC Berkeley*)

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Chapter 6: Reflective Account

Introduction

This thesis provides a portfolio of research work that focuses on stakeholder management practices aimed at engaging ethnically and culturally diverse local (ECDL) communities in public infrastructure and construction projects (PIC). This thesis first examined the factors that influence how project managers engage ECDL communities. A literature review revealed the often-contentious relationship between project organizations and local community. Additionally, the findings suggest the importance of a more collaborative approach to engaging the local communities and the need to adapt project management practices to the local and cultural context of the project. Secondly, an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study, using semi-structured interviews with 13 project managers from a local government agency, examined the factors that influence engagement of ECDL communities PIC projects. By focusing specifically on understanding the experience and perceptions of project managers, we are able to understand the challenges, barriers, and critical success factors for engaging ECDL communities as projects and programs stakeholders. Thirdly, a case study of how local government project managers apply a social equity lens to stakeholder engagement planning to ensure that historically underrepresented and marginalized stakeholder groups are included in project decision making process. By examining the journey that an organization took to embed equitable stakeholder engagement considerations in the initiation, design, planning, and implementation of projects and programs, we are able to understand the organizational change required to operationalize equitable stakeholder engagement by developing and changing internal policies and project delivery processes.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

This reflective account will discuss the evolution of the research question and how this portfolio of research contributes to knowledge and scholarship and its implications for practice. The reflective account will conclude with a reflection on methodological issues and future research direction.

Background

There are four major factors that have influenced the evolution of my research design and questions over the last four years. First, my own practice as a project manager contributed to my understanding of the role of culture in project management in general. My observation, over the years, was that project management training and standards books as well as certification only provide surface coverage to the role of culture in shaping PMs' practices. This motivated me to focus my research interest on how cultural differences influence the relationship between PMs and their project stakeholders.

The second area that influenced my research was my master's degree research on cultural differences in project teams. I was exposed to numerous findings from social and affective neuroscience and cultural neuroscience on how culture shapes the brain, and in turn, emotions, cognition, and behavior. This work has influenced my choice of topic in the early days of my PhD journey. Specifically, my exposure to cultural neuroscience research on how culture shapes empathy and prosocial behavior had a major impact on my thinking, as I assumed that cultural differences may impact how a project manager experiences empathy toward stakeholders from a different cultural background and therefore may shape their approach to stakeholder engagement. As I began to share this knowledge as part of my training programs to various organizations and my teaching at Oregon State University and Northeastern University,

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

I began to see an interest emerging in culture, equity, and community engagement. Speaking at different project management Institute chapters was also another source of influence.

The third area that influenced my research was the work that my organization began to advance equity in its operations and decision-making. I joined a committee that was tasked to initiate three pilot projects to implement a racial equity toolkit. A Racial Equity Toolkit is a set of questions to assess how decisions benefit and burden communities. Working with the committee exposed me to equity frameworks and language adopted in other local government agencies who are advanced in their equity work.

Finally, another important factor that inspired, in part, my research is my own cultural background and lived experience as an immigrant in the United States. Although I have lived in my new country for over 30 years, I have not personally experienced the systematic racism and other harsh socioeconomic realities that affect people of color, specifically African Americans. My access to a good education in my country of origin gave me an advantage that others in my new country did not have. It helped me navigate the education system and gave me the opportunity to change my social situation. While over time I have become more aware of the harsh realities that many people of color face every day, I have not truly taken responsibility for using my privilege to actively work against systems of oppression.

The 2016 presidential election, for the first time, made me feel personally excluded and painfully aware of the fact that many more of my fellow Americans hold racist and xenophobic views toward people of color like me. President Donald Trump's anti-immigrant campaign rhetoric depicted immigrants coming across the border as dangerous gang members and often as "animals" bringing disease to the country. Throughout his campaign, President Donald

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Trump claimed that Muslims are dangerous and hate the United States. Upon inauguration, the first executive order to be signed was one banning Muslims from several countries from entering the United States. Over time, I became increasingly interested in the history of government racist policies, such as redlining and racialized residential segregation, that devastated communities of color and that led to the harsh socioeconomic realities that still persist today. The more I learned, the more I became interested in examining how my own project management profession might unintentionally help maintain, or even perpetuate, racial inequity. The convergence of these four factors have informed how I approached the design of the research project and research questions.

The next section outlines a synthesis summary of the main findings from the portfolio of studies and contributions to scholarship and practice.

Contribution to Knowledge and Scholarship

A synthesis summary of the main findings

The present study extends prior project stakeholder management research on the relationship between projects and local community (Close & Loosemore, 2014; Cuganesan & Floris, 2020; Derakhshan, 2020; Derakhshan, Mancini, & Turner, 2019; Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2017a, 2017b; Di Maddaloni & Derakhshan, 2019; Teo & Loosemore, 2017). In particular, the study responds to call for research by Di Maddaloni and Derakhshan (2019), to specifically examine how organizations can enhance inclusiveness of local community, by empirically investigating factors that influence engagement of historically marginalized ECDL communities. The study contributes to the literature with the following findings:

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Racial equity as a core element of inclusive stakeholder engagement

Local communities are not a homogenous stakeholder group. Unlike predominantly white communities, ECDL communities is a segment of the population with distinct characteristics and history of marginalization and discrimination. ECDL communities face cultural and socio-economic challenges that limit their participation and results in the underrepresentation of their voice in project decisions. Given the history of marginalization, ECDL communities that live in proximity to projects tend to suffer the burdens and receive none of the benefits of the projects. Approaches to project stakeholder engagement, which ignore the unique cultural and socio-economic realities of ECDL communities, may in fact further exasperate the historical marginalization and underrepresentation of these communities. Therefore, it is important that project managers understand the cultural, historic, and socio-economic dynamics when engaging ECDL communities and ensure that stakeholder engagement practices are tailored to account for the unique characteristics and history of inequities that are part of ECDL communities' lived experience.

Stakeholder engagement is situated in the broader institutional environment

Consistency in how the organization approaches stakeholder engagement of ECDL communities emerged as a foundation for equitable stakeholder engagement and building a positive relationship with the community. For organizations embarking on their efforts to advance equity and equitable stakeholder engagement, a lack of clear institutional guidelines makes these efforts non-strategic, ad-hoc, and unfocused. Additionally, a lack of guidelines may result in parts of the organizations to not supporting equity efforts by project managers due to competing priorities and lack of mandate. While an organizational change process may start as

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

an ad-hoc process at the individual level, over time the organization needs to demonstrate its commitment to equity by adopting policies and a strategic plan that prioritizes equity as an organizational strategic goal. Establishing a common language and shared understanding around equity is crucial to increasing adoption of the organizational change. Through clear policies, strategic plans, vision, and guiding values, the organization establishes an alignment around a common understanding of its values and shared understanding of the organization's expectations around equity goals. The institutionalization of community engagement ensures that projects do not perpetuate the historical marginalization and disempowerment of ECDL communities.

Equitable Stakeholder engagement is both a process and an outcome

The present studies found a different dynamic for the relationship between an organization and the local community than the predominantly antagonistic and contentious one found in previous research. It is possible to build a collaborative relationship with the ECDL communities, if the communities perceive PMs as making a genuine effort to engage them. The critical factor that seems to influence their perception appears to be the extent to which the community believes the project is striving to achieve positive benefits for the community. However, an organization's project delivery process may constrain the project managers' ability to engage ECDL communities effectively. A lack of clearly defined guidelines for how PMs are expected to approach community engagements may hamper their engagement efforts and participation of ECDL communities in projects. One effect of this lack of guidelines is that engagement efforts appear to take place at the individual PM level and not at the organizational level, leading to responsibility for engagement to be fragmented and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

accountability diluted. As a result, significant variations in approaches to stakeholder engagement may lead to inconsistent engagement outcomes.

It is essential for the organization to institutionalize equitable stakeholder engagement into their project delivery process, by establishing clearly defined expectations and guidelines for how project managers approach ECDL community engagement. Operationalizing equitable stakeholder engagement involves applying an equity lens not only to how projects are managed (the process) but also to what projects deliver (the outcome). This is achieved by establishing clearly defined expectations and guidelines for broad, deep, and continual stakeholder engagement. Broad engagement ensures that all impacted stakeholders are identified, and their input is solicited. Deep engagement goes beyond just soliciting input or enabling public deliberation. Deep engagement applies equity lens to all project process decisions not just those processes that directly involve interaction with stakeholders. Finally, continual engagement is achieved by embedding equity considerations throughout the project lifecycle, and not as a one-off effort at the start of the project.

The Centrality of Project Manager's role in equitable project stakeholder engagement

Another key finding that emerged from the current studies is the central role of the PM in advancing equity in project stakeholder engagement. Engaging historically disadvantaged communities requires PMs to have sophisticated skills that increase awareness of and sensitivity to the socio-economic and cultural context of the ECDL communities. Designing engagement strategies that both meet the needs of ECDL communities and advance the interests of their organization is challenging and requires creativity and innovation. Intrinsic motivation and personal commitment to serving the communities appear to be a key

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

determinant of the quality of the ECDL stakeholder engagement. This finding has major implications for hiring, selection, and ongoing development of PMs.

Organizations need to assess if their workforce possesses knowledge about the communities their projects impact. Workforce diversity and training and development are essential components of advancing equity in project management. A diverse project management workforce, which reflects the demographic make-up of the communities they serve, can be a pathway to gaining the knowledge needed to increase stakeholder inclusion. Investment in trainings can ensure that PMs understand how their job and their role are crucial to advancing equity and are practitioners of embedding racial equity in their work.

There is a recognition that integrating equity goals in project is challenging to PMs and, therefore, leadership support is crucial for advancing equity in projects. Leaders can provide the safety needed for PMs to take risks and innovate, as challenges and setbacks are part of culture change journey. Leadership can also support PMs by providing subject matter experts, such as equity, research, and communication teams, who possess valuable expertise that project managers may not have in their projects.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Towards a framework for racially equitable project stakeholder engagement

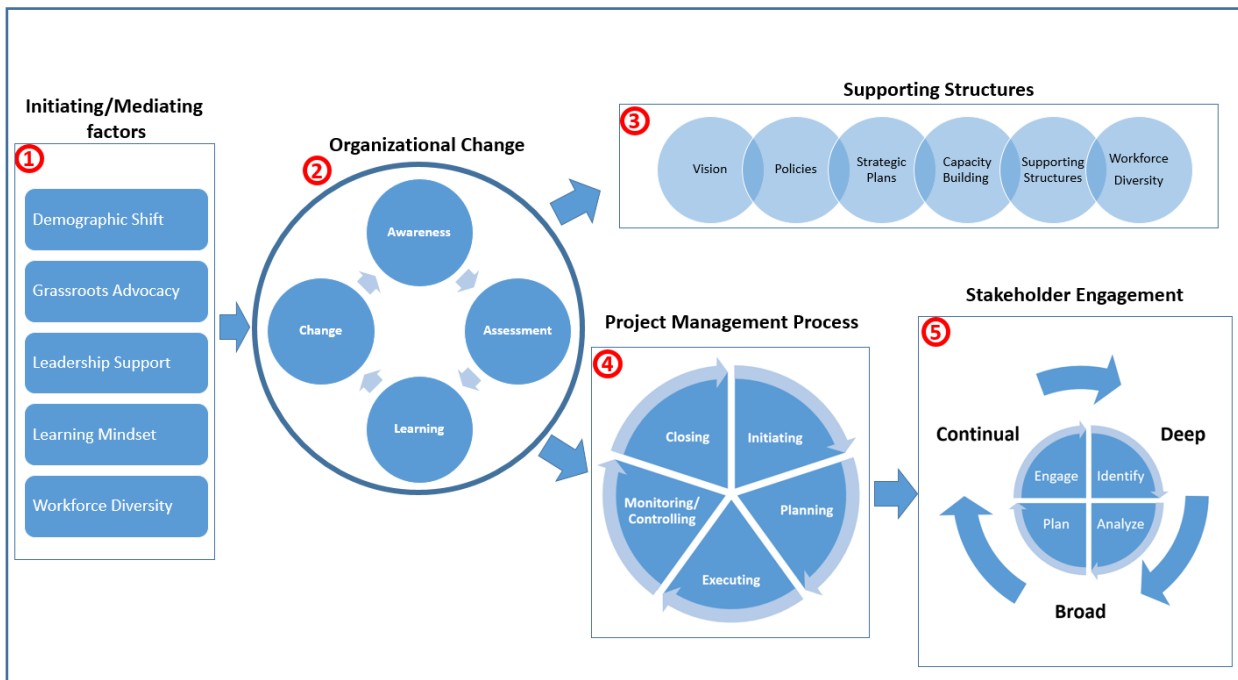
In this section, (a) a working definition for racially equitable project stakeholder engagement and (b) a framework for how it is operationalized for PIC projects are proposed. Building on GARE's definition of equity as the condition by which "race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes for all groups are improved" (Nelson, Spokane, Ross, & Deng, 2015, p. 9), a new definition is formulated for racially equitable project stakeholder engagement. It is defined as the engagement of stakeholders in the planning, execution, and monitoring of projects that ensures the impact on quality-of-life outcomes, including health, housing, transportation, and the environment, is equitably experienced by the people living and working in communities impacted by projects. Racially equitable project stakeholder engagement is achieved when project outcomes meet the needs of community members, including historically marginalized communities, and reduce social disparities, taking into account past history and current conditions.

Two theoretical models reviewed in the previous chapter, the racial equity in planning organizations (REPO) model (Solis, 2020) and the "Broad, Deep, and Continual" (BDC) framework (Lees-Marshment, Huff, & Bendle, 2020), are combined with findings from the present series of studies and the literature review to propose a new framework for operationalizing equitable project stakeholder engagement. Figure 1 provides an overview of the five core components of the proposed framework.

Figure 1.

Equitable project stakeholder engagement framework.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement



The following section describes the framework and its five core components.

(1) Initiating/Mediating factors

According to the REPO framework (Solis, 2020), organizations committed to applying a racial equity lens to their work (1) become aware of how their internal processes may be reproducing racial inequities, (2) they assess their organizational strengths and weaknesses to initiate racial equity efforts, (3) they engage in organizational learning about racial equity. As highlighted in the findings from the case study in Chapter 5, there are several factors that emerge within an organization that drive the adoption of equitable project stakeholder engagement. Chief among these factors is the increase in the diversity of the workforce. This increase may occur as a natural byproduct of the demographic shift in society in general and the communities that the organization serves in particular. However, organizations committed to equity are more intentional and deliberate about increasing workforce diversity through the implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion hiring policies and practices. As the

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

workforce grows more diverse, employees begin to organize and advocate for systemic and structural change to advance equity in the organization, with empowerment and support from the organization's leadership.

When leadership is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, they encourage, empower, and support employees' grassroots efforts and leverage them to push for changes to policies and processes. It is important to point out that progress during these early stages of the change process can be slow and may unfold in an iterative and incremental way. The success of these initial efforts requires the organization and its employees, and especially the leadership, to adopt a learning mindset that embraces the uncertainty and confusion inherent in such a significant transformation of organizational culture.

(2) Organizational Change

As shown in the previous chapters, a lack of clear institutional guidelines makes equity efforts non-strategic, ad-hoc, and unfocused. Additionally, a lack of guidelines may actually result in parts of the organizations not supporting equity efforts by project managers due to other competing organizational priorities. Therefore, to successfully operationalize equitable project stakeholder engagement, the organizational change journey moves through the initial three stages of the REPO model of awareness, assessment, and understanding in order to lay a strong foundation for the fourth element of the model, which is changing "internal rules and norms" (Solis, 2020).

During the fourth stage of the REPO model, employees and their leaders initiate efforts to raise awareness about the gaps between the organization's equity goals and its practices. They assess their policies and operations to identify how their way of doing business may be

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

reproducing inequities. Assessing existing ways of thinking, as a crucial aspect of the organizational change journey, is in line with findings from Di Maddaloni and Derakhshan (2019). Employees and their leaders also identify the strengths and weaknesses, the type of tools, and the skills they need to address these gaps. They also deepen their understanding of equity and social justice by investing in education. Leadership encourages employees to get involved in advancing equity and provides funding for staff time to participate in various pro-equity initiatives. This is also the stage where the organization begins to change its existing policies, processes, procedures to demonstrate its commitment to equity.

(3) Supporting Structures

As research by Poon and Silviu (2019) found, organizational support through strategies, policies, and expertise to project teams accelerates awareness and adoption of sustainability practices. A key step in the organizational change process is for leaders to align the organization around a unifying vision, mission, and values statement that reflects its commitment to equity. This unifying vision, mission, and values statement provides employees with clear direction, focus, and a mandate to advance equity in all the organization's work.

Martinez (2018) found that establishing frameworks and tools is important to supporting equity work. Therefore, adopting guiding principles and creating a shared language and understanding about equity and inclusion is also important to unifying the organization around shared equity goals. Additionally, Goel, Ganesh, and Kaur (2020) confirmed the importance of organizational-level policies as a means to institutionalize sustainability. The organization needs to adopt comprehensive policies and strategic plans that prioritize equity as an organizational strategic goal.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

The education and training of employees are key factors affecting advancing social sustainability in projects (Rostamnezhad, Nasirzadeh, Khanzadi, Jarban, & Ghayoumian, 2020). Given the central role of PMs in advancing sustainability, ongoing training and capacity building are indispensable to advancing equity in Project Management. Conversely, lack of awareness and knowledge is a key barrier to equitable stakeholder engagement (Alotaibi, Edum-Fotwe, & Price, 2019). This is why it is important for PMs to understand how their jobs and their roles are crucial to advancing equity and developing skills to embed equity in their work.

Furthermore, support should be provided to project managers in the form of tools, such as Project Management and Racial Equity Toolkits. These tools help PMs in their implementation of the organization's equity guidelines. In addition to tools, data is critical to evidence-based project decisions that impact stakeholder engagement. Many decisions that are important for equitable stakeholder engagement, such as good stakeholder identification and analysis, rely on robust demographic data that is accurate and timely. Decisions made on incomplete, faulty, or outdated information leads to inefficient execution of projects and, as a result, potentially negative outcomes for the community. Organizations, therefore, need to support project managers by investing in the development of robust demographic data to support evidence-based project decisions.

Finally, subject matter experts (SMEs) in domains such as equity, research, and communication can provide valuable technical assistance to projects and, yet, they are often underutilized by Project Managers because they are often not part of the core project team or responsible for actual project deliverables. Their level of involvement in projects is often left to the sole discretion of the PM. It is important that the roles and responsibilities of SMEs, whose

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

technical assistance is needed, are formalized with guidelines that clearly define the process for how SMEs support project teams to deliver on the project equity goals.

(4) Project Management Process

Researchers emphasized the importance of project managers understanding what it means to not only apply sustainability to the process of managing projects but also to deliver sustainable projects (Silvius, Kampinga, Paniagua, & Mooi, 2017). Therefore, operationalizing equitable stakeholder engagement involves applying an equity lens not only to how projects are managed (the process) but also to what projects deliver (the outcome). This means reimagining the entire project delivery process through the lens of equity, which requires organizations to intentionally institutionalize equitable stakeholder engagement through the embedding of practices, values, and expectations into the project delivery process.

It is important to note that not all organizations have a formal Project Management standard methodology. However, establishing a formal Project Management methodology is essential for advancing equity in project management because it enables a unified, consistent, and predictable approach to stakeholder identification, analysis, and engagement. It also enables organizations to set equity performance goals in order to measure the effectiveness of projects and project managers against these goals. As the findings of the case study in chapter five showed, the organizational level mandate was a catalyst for the initiation of the Project Management Modernization project to formalize the project management methodology and embed equity in project-decision making processes. Therefore, it is important to establish equity policies and strategic plans at the organizational level to create a mandate for project

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

management departments to standardize their practices and apply an equity lens to their processes and change them.

(5) Stakeholder Engagement Process

According to the BDC framework (Lees-Marshment et al., 2020), successful stakeholder engagement requires establishing clearly defined expectations and guidelines for broad, deep, and continual stakeholder engagement. Broad engagement ensures that all impacted stakeholders are identified and their input is solicited. Organizations need to assess the way stakeholders are identified and analyzed at the start of the project and throughout the project lifecycle. Organizations also need to establish clear processes and develop tools to help PMs perform robust and consistent stakeholder identification and analysis. As the findings from the case study showed, Stakeholder Analysis and Equity Guide to Planning tools were integrated into the project initiation and planning phases of the project. These critical phases are crucial in connecting the project to the goals of the organization (Söderberg, 2020) and, therefore, it is important that all impacted stakeholders are identified and their needs considered during the initiation and planning decisions.

Organizations ensure deep engagement by applying an equity lens to all project decisions, not just to those processes that directly involve interaction with stakeholders. Each project management process should include questions to help PMs apply an equity lens to their work. Answers to these questions should provide an understanding about who benefits and who is harmed by the project, who is included in the decision-making process and who is not, and what the project equity objective and deliverables are. This approach enables the PM to

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

think of ways to invite stakeholders to collaborate on advancing equity and establishing long-term relationships with the communities impacted by the project.

Finally, continual engagement is achieved by embedding equity considerations throughout the project lifecycle. As mentioned previously, decisions made in processes not involving stakeholders may have significant equity implications for stakeholders. Yet, most projects engage communities only in the early planning phases, when community engagement is required for compliance with environmental impact assessment rules. Therefore, instead of only focusing on changing the processes of the initiation and planning phases of the project, organizations need to take a holistic look at all project phases to ensure equity considerations are embedded throughout the project lifecycle and not as a one-off effort at the start of the project.

Summary of original contribution to knowledge and scholarship

Responding to call for research by Di Maddaloni and Derakhshan (2019) to examine how organizations can enhance inclusiveness of local community, the present study extends existing literature on project stakeholder engagement by empirically investigating factors that influence engagement of historically marginalized ECDL communities. In particular, this study adds to our understanding of how ECDL communities face cultural and socio-economic challenges that limit their participation and results in the underrepresentation of their voice in project decisions. Approaches to project stakeholder engagement, which ignore the unique cultural and socio-economic realities of ECDL communities, may in fact further exasperate the historical marginalization and underrepresentation of these communities. Therefore, it is important that

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

project managers understand the cultural, historic, and socio-economic dynamics when engaging ECDL communities and ensure that stakeholder engagement practices are equitable by accounting for the unique characteristics and history of inequities that are part of ECDL communities' lived experience. Additionally, the study provides a conceptual framework that helps to understand the organizational change required to operationalize equitable stakeholder engagement by developing and changing internal policies and project delivery processes.

Contribution to Practice

Project management is an important vehicle for how organizations implement their strategic goals. Many public sector organizations are embarking on initiatives to apply an equity lens to their operations and how they execute on their strategic goals. Therefore, findings from the present studies support organizations efforts to align aligning project management practices with their equity goals. The following section will provide a number of recommendations informed by findings drawn from the studies.

Implications for Policy

Federal Government Level

In December 2016, then President Obama signed into law the Program Management Improvement and Accountability Act of 2015 (PMIAA) to establish standards, policies, and guidelines to enhance accountability and best practices in project and program management throughout the federal government (Congress, 2015). It is recommended that this law is amended to include considerations for equitable stakeholder engagement. Additionally, it is recommended that a similar law is established at the state and local government levels.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

State and Local Government Levels

Office of Equity are beginning to be established by state and local governments. It is recommended that these offices establish clear policies and guidelines for how projects funded by taxpayers should incorporate equity considerations in their project delivery processes.

Implications for organizations

The following section outlines a number of recommendations at various levels of the organization shown in the diagram in Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Levels of Recommendations



Organizational Alignment and Leadership

By including equity values in the organization's mission, vision, and values statement, leadership provides alignment around equity across the entire organization. Additionally, the role of leadership is crucial to the success of organizational change to advance equity and aligning the organization's equity goals with its policies, strategies, and practices. Leaders need

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

to continuously demonstrate their commitment to equity by empowering their employees to reflect, assess their work, and make the needed changes to advance equity.

Project Management Processes

By adopting formal project management methodology, organizations benefit from the uniformity and structured approach to project planning and execution. Another benefit is improved governance and reduction in risks. This is important to ensuring that equity goals are translated into benefits to the communities impacted by projects and project impacts are mitigated. The organization's Project Management method should include equity considerations in each project management process and throughout the project lifecycle. Equity goals should also be a criterion for measuring project success. Tools, such as the equity toolkit, should be developed to guide PMs in their implementation of equity guidelines. Additionally, subject matter experts, in domains such as equity, research, and communication, should be responsible for supporting PMs, when these types of experts are not part of the project team.

PM Selection and Development

Organizations advancing equity should include increasing workforce diversity as a critical component of the strategy. An organization's workforce, that reflects the communities it serves, is not just the right thing to do. Research has shown that diversity increases innovation and creativity (Van der Vegt & Janssen, 2003). Workforce diversity is an enabler of advancing equity because it brings new perspectives, knowledge, and skills that the organization can leverage to better understand the communities it serves. This enables the organization to be more responsive to the needs of the communities it serves.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Implications for Project Management professional associations

PM professional Associations, such as PMI and IMPA, have made tremendous contributions to the development of the project management discipline and profession. These professional associations have a powerful role to play in advancing equity in the profession. It is recommended that PM professional associations take a more explicit stance and active role in addressing racial inequities in project management. The codes of ethics for both PMI and IPMA acknowledge the professional responsibility of the project manager for environmental and social sustainability (Silvius & Schipper, 2020). It is recommended that they demonstrate their firm commitment to equity by acknowledging, recognizing, and confronting various forms of racial inequity associated with the project management discipline and profession and to work towards undoing the effects of racial inequity. Additionally, PM professional associations should take a critical look at all their existing standards manuals, certification processes, and ongoing professional development programs and ensure that they take into account racial equity.

Contribution to the development of professional practice

As Project Management practitioner and trainer, I am involved in a number of efforts to promote cultural understanding and equity in project management. Over the last four years, I have contributed to the development of my profession by sharing knowledge about my research with the wider community of practice through the following activities:

- Supporting the racial equity pilot work at my organization
- Providing training workshops through Project Management Institute local chapters
- Teaching Cultural Intelligence courses as part of continuing education program at Oregon State University College of Business.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Teaching for the Master of Science in the Project Management program at Northeastern University
- Providing training to local government agencies, non-profits, as well as the private sector
- Presenting at various professional association conferences, such as those organized by the Project Management Institute

Methodological Issues and Future Research Direction

The Evolution of the Research Question

In my master's degree research, I learned about the effects of culture on empathy and the link between empathy and effect of in-group/out-group bias. I wondered how culture impacts the behavior of the PMs, when they engage the culturally diverse other. The effect of cultural differences on communication, in the context of project work, was well established in project management research. However, how culture impacts behavior of the PM, as it relates to working with culturally diverse local communities, was not researched. If the PM approach to engaging these communities is impacted by cultural differences, I assumed there would be significant impact on communities. This effect becomes especially important, given that historically these communities have been marginalized and underserved. Therefore, a research question emerged which was: How do cultural differences influence project managers' engagement of local communities? The objective is to understand how project managers perceived the influence of cross-cultural differences in their interactions and relationships with culturally diverse local communities and how they adjust their project management practices in response to the effect of cultural differences in their collaboration with ECDL communities.

The Small-Scale Project was useful as a preliminary study to test the feasibility of the larger Applied Research Project. Both projects took on a broader view looking at culture as only

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

one factor and trying to understand other dynamics and so the question focused on understanding how the project managers engage culturally diverse communities. The research question evolved to: what are the factors that influence stakeholder engagement of ECDL communities? By asking a broader question with a broader scope, this allowed for the emergence of new factors such as racial equity, which became a focal point for a subsequent research study.

A key conclusion that emerged from the applied research project was that structural, systemic, and institutional barriers constrain the PM's ability to effectively and equitably engage ECDL communities. Therefore, the focus of the Report of Professional Practice centered on how organizations dismantle systemic institutional and structural barriers to equity in stakeholder management. The research question became: how do organizations operationalize equitable stakeholder engagement?

Reflection on Research Method

Preliminary Study. The preliminary study was very useful in surfacing resistance by a key department to participation in the Applied Research Project. Communities living in proximity to the organization experienced problems from a recent project. Therefore, there was sensitivity around topics related to local communities. Using the preliminary study, I was able to reframe the scope of the research to mitigate these concerns. Instead of focusing on the project themselves I reframed the focus to be on stakeholder engagement practices with no association to any specific projects. This change in focus gave confidence in the project and the department in question was willing to participate. Therefore, when dealing with topics involving ECDL communities, it is recommended to use a preliminary study to test the grounds

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

and to have a deeper understanding of the political sensitivities that may exist within the organizational context.

Being an insider allowed me to reach deep inside the organization and examine the perceptions and lived experiences of project managers about a very sensitive topic that happened to emerge as a very critical issue for the organization at the time of the research. Tension with local communities was rising due to conflict from a recent project. Being an insider allowed me to have a deeper understanding of the issues and find a common ground to move the research project forward despite the tension.

Comparing the Experience of Two Organizations. It was valuable to conduct this research at two different organizations with different levels of maturity and at different points in the evolution of their equity work. Examining different stages of the organizational change journey generated deeper insights into how the challenges and constraints experienced in one organization were approached in another organization.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Groenewald (2004) believed that the researcher can never fully detach themselves from their research. In contrast to other qualitative research methods, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) embraces and encourages researcher's prior knowledge and expertise (Miner-Romanoff, 2012). IPA provided the opportunity for the researcher to leverage over 20 years of project management experience to gain deeper appreciation of the participants' lived experience which helped establish rapport and trust with them. At the same time, IPA provided techniques to mitigate researcher bias (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Limitations

The current series of studies focused on understanding how PMs in one organization engage ECDL communities and how leadership in another organization operationalized equitable stakeholder engagement. The findings were based on analysis of two data sources: interviews and documents. The interviews were with project managers that engage ECDL communities in their projects and two representatives of the leadership team that implemented organizational change to operationalize equity in their project management processes. The other data source was a set of documents related to policy and strategic planning level, project management delivery process, and initiation and planning documents of an actual project to gain an understanding of how the organization changed its policies and practices with equity in mind.

The main limitation of the present studies is the focus on the perspective of the organization and not addressing the perspective and experience of the communities that are impacted by the organization's projects. There is also a lack of focus on how project managers perceive, experience, and implement the policies and practices resulting from the organizational change. Additionally, expanding the research to include more organizations, embarking on similar organizational change, would provide valuable insights on the effectiveness of different organizational change strategies in improving the performance of project managers and outcomes of projects for the communities.

Reflection on Future Research Direction

This research only examined what policies, strategies, and project management practices were implemented by one organization to operational equitable stakeholder

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

engagement. Future research could expand the inquiry to include more organizations in order to gain insights into the diversity and effectiveness of different organizational change strategies. Future research should also examine the barriers and facilitators of the institutionalization of equitable stakeholder engagement, including strategies that organizations use to address resistance to change.

An understanding is needed of which organizational change strategies are more effective than others in increasing equitable stakeholder engagement. It is also important to understand how organizations evaluate and improve the effectiveness of organizational change over time. Future research should also examine the perspective of the communities and how they experience the organization's engagement practices. Future research should also examine the perception and experience of PMs in response to the organizational change. Future research should also examine how project managers translate into practice the changes in policies and practices resulting from the organizational change to advance equitable project stakeholder engagement. This line of inquiry will enhance our understanding of the barriers and facilitators of participation in projects.

It is important for organizations to understand the type of changes that need to be made to existing training programs to address the unique needs of PMs in advancing equity in their work. Given the central role of PMs in advancing equity in projects and the variations in how projects they approach engaging ECDL communities, there is a need to examine how the existing trainings are effective for developing the kind of skills needed for equity in the context of projects. A line of inquiry that should be thoroughly pursued is examining current training

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

models for diversity, equity and inclusion and how they support advancing equity in project management in general and equitable stakeholder engagement in particular.

Impact on Researcher

The events of 2020 laid bare long-standing structural racial inequities in the United States and brought these issues to the forefront of the national consciousness. As of this writing, it's too soon to tell what the full impact of COVID-19 will be for ECDL communities, but all indications are that it will be devastating. ECDL communities are bearing a disproportionate burden of COVID-19 cases, deaths, and hospitalizations. In the face of public outcry, Federal and state governments, and local government leaders are expected to intensify their efforts to confront these disparities by stamping out systemic inequities and accelerating organization-wide culture change.

My work on this research project began with curiosity about how cultural differences influence approach engagement of ECDL communities. The experience enabled me to have a better understanding of how the Project Management profession can be a force of social change. I am now, more than ever before, committed to use my experience, knowledge, and the skills I gained over the last four years, to support the efforts that are under way to increase equities in our society.

As the challenges and opportunities of diversity increase, with the fast pace of social change we are experiencing (Stout-Rostron, 2019), I am looking forward to continuing to participate in the conversation on systemic changes to advance equity. With a sense of urgency and on its first day, the Biden Administration has already signed a new law called "

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government" (Exec. Order No. 13985, 2021) . The law states that:

Because advancing equity requires a systematic approach to embedding fairness in decision-making processes, executive departments and agencies (agencies) must recognize and work to redress inequities in their policies and programs that serve as barriers to equal opportunity.

Specifically, the law mandates that:

Each agency must assess whether, and to what extent, its programs and policies perpetuate systemic barriers to opportunities and benefits for people of color and other underserved groups. Such assessments will better equip agencies to develop policies and programs that deliver resources and benefits equitably to all.

Similar efforts are beginning at the state level as well. In December 2020, Washington state's governor announced a \$365 million equity policy package as part of the 2021-2023 state budget. Among the provisions of the new law is the establishment of an Equity Office. The law states that the office will:

Help agencies develop and implement their own diversity, equity and inclusion plans. To promote systemic and cultural changes, the office will introduce best practices and change management to agencies and design an online performance dashboard that measures agencies' progress toward diversity goals. Any government agency can request the office's help to reach its DEI goals.

Engaging ECDL communities that have experienced decades of disinvestment will be crucial to any effort to address disparities and promote inclusive economic recovery and growth. My vision for the future is an equitable project management in which citizens' race can no longer determine how they experience PIC projects outcomes, and that benefits and harms of PIC projects are shared fairly across all communities. Project managers are uniquely positioned to be the connective tissue that can enable or impede the social change that government hopes to foster. Project management can no longer be viewed as a narrowly

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

defined technical role best relegated to government technical engineers or managerial bureaucrats. Project management practices can no longer be neutral, ignoring the structural inequities, unequal power, and cultural norms. Otherwise, it is inevitable that project management risk becoming an instrument that perpetuates and exacerbates past and current inequities. It is my belief now that project management can be a force of social change that can provide all citizens the opportunity to thrive.

Over the coming years, I plan to continue to engage in the following activities to advance equity in project management and have an impact on my profession:

- Develop a research agenda for equitable project management and use research to amplify the message within the project management community.
- Support efforts by groups in the frontline of racial justice to empower ECDL communities to engage in PIC decision-making
- Influence investment and legislations for PIC projects at all levels of government
- Support strengthening accountability in PIC projects procurement and contracting at all levels of government
- Advocate for PM professional associations to change standards, certification, training to center racial justice with their project management frameworks.

Thesis Conclusion

This research sought to understand the factors that influence engagement of ECDL communities in PIC projects and the strategies that government agencies utilize to operationalize equitable stakeholder engagement to increase participation of historically marginalized groups in project decisions. An initial review of the project management literature indicated a limited understanding, agreement, and research on how inclusive and equitable stakeholder engagement is conceptualized and operationalized within the context of project stakeholder management. Four research studies, including a literature review and a preliminary study, were undertaken to address this gap. A literature review examined how cultural

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

differences influence collaboration between project managers and ECDL communities impacted by PIC projects. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) preliminary study and a main study explored how Project Managers (PMs) engage with ECDL communities when these communities are a project stakeholder in the context of public infrastructure and construction projects and programs in a major metropolitan area in the United States. A case study sought to understand and describe how leaders at a selected local government agency operationalized equitable project stakeholder engagement in their project delivery processes to increase participation of ECDL communities in project decisions. Data from analysis of structured interviews and documents identified the factors that influence engagement of ECDL communities, and the core organizational changes needed to institutionalize equitable stakeholder engagement into the project management and delivery process.

The findings situate stakeholder engagement as a central tool for organizations to break the cycle of historical marginalization where ECDL communities carry all the burdens of projects and receive none of the benefits. However, there are no universal approaches to engagement of ECDL communities. A number of top-down and bottom-up factors influence PMs' approach to engagement, resulting in variations in how PMs approach engagement of ECDL communities. Therefore, organizations need to understand and leverage the crucial role that project managers play in advancing equity by establishing organizational level policies and procedures that support equitable stakeholder engagement. Operationalizing equitable stakeholder engagement involves awareness of existing equity gaps, assessment of policies and practices, learning about equity, and implementing systemic change. Systemic change is implemented through adopting pro-equity policies, increasing workforce diversity, investing in education, and

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

embedding equity in project management practices to ensure that both engagement process and engagement outcome are equitable. As a result of systemic change, organizations will ensure that stakeholder engagement is broad by changing the way they identify and analyze stakeholders, is deep by embedding it into the decision-making process, and is continual and sustainable by applying the equity lens throughout the project lifecycle processes, not just at the beginning.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

References

- Alotaibi, A., Edum-Fotwe, F., & Price, A. D. (2019). Critical barriers to social responsibility implementation within mega-construction projects: The case of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Sustainability*, 11(6), 1755.
- Close, R., & Loosemore, M. (2014). Breaking down the site hoardings: Attitudes and approaches to community consultation during construction. *Construction Management and Economics*, 32(7-8), 816-828.
- Congress, U.S. (2015). Hr 2144–Program Management Mprovement and Accountability Act of 2015.
- Cuganesan, S., & Floris, M. (2020). Investigating perspective taking when infrastructure megaproject teams engage local communities: Navigating tensions and balancing perspectives. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(3), 153-164.
- Derakhshan, R. (2020). Building projects on the local communities' planet: Studying organizations' care-giving approaches. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1-20.
- Derakhshan, R., Mancini, M., & Turner, J. R. (2019). Community's evaluation of organizational legitimacy: Formation and reconsideration. *International Journal of Project Management*, 37(1), 73-86.
- Di Maddaloni, F., & Davis, K. (2017a). The influence of local community stakeholders in megaprojects: Rethinking their inclusiveness to improve project performance. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(8), 1537-1556.
- Di Maddaloni, F., & Davis, K. (2017b). Project manager's perception of the local communities' stakeholder in megaprojects. An empirical investigation in the uk. *International Journal of Project Management*.
- Di Maddaloni, F., & Derakhshan, R. (2019). A leap from negative to positive bond. A step towards project sustainability. *Administrative Sciences*, 9(2), 41.

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

- Exec. Order No. 13985. (2021). Advancing racial equity and support for underserved communities through the federal government.
- Goel, A., Ganesh, L., & Kaur, A. (2020). Project management for social good. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 13(4).
- Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(1), 42-55.
- Lees-Marshment, J., Huff, A. D., & Bendle, N. (2020). A social commons ethos in public policy-making. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 166(4), 761-778.
- Lopez, K. A., & Willis, D. G. (2004). Descriptive versus interpretive phenomenology: Their contributions to nursing knowledge. *Qualitative Health Research*, 14(5), 726-735.
- Martinez, C. (2018). Stakeholder participation in property development. Lund University, Faculty of Engineering.
- Miner-Romanoff, K. (2012). Interpretive and critical phenomenological crime studies: A model design. *Qualitative Report*, 17, 54.
- Nelson, J., Spokane, L., Ross, L., & Deng, N. (2015). Advancing racial equity and transforming government: A resource guide to put ideas into action. Retrieved from Government Alliance on Race and Equity website: <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/advancing-racial-equity-and-transforming-government-a-resource-guide-to-put-ideas-into-action/>
- Poon, C., & Silvius, G. (2019). Factors that stimulate project managers to consider sustainability; exploring the stimulus patterns of canadian project managers. *Journal of Management and Sustainability*, 9, 90.
- Rostamnezhad, M., Nasirzadeh, F., Khanzadi, M., Jarban, M. J., & Ghayoumian, M. (2020). Modeling social sustainability in construction projects by integrating system dynamics and fuzzy-dematel

Applying an equity lens to project stakeholder engagement

method: A case study of highway project. Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management.

Silvius, A. G., Kampinga, M., Paniagua, S., & Mooi, H. (2017). Considering sustainability in project management decision making; an investigation using q-methodology. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(6), 1133-1150.

Silvius, G., & Schipper, R. (2020). Exploring variety in factors that stimulate project managers to address sustainability issues. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(6), 353-367.

Söderberg, E. (2020). Project initiation as the beginning of the end: Mediating temporal tensions in school's health projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(6), 343-352.

Solis, M. (2020). Racial equity in planning organizations. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 1-7.

Stout-Rostron, S. (2019). *Transformational coaching to lead culturally diverse teams*. Routledge.

Teo, M., & Loosemore, M. (2017). Understanding community protest from a project management perspective: A relationship-based approach. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(8), 1444-1458.

Van der Vegt, G. S., & Janssen, O. (2003). Joint impact of interdependence and group diversity on innovation. *Journal of Management*, 29(5), 729-751.