Assimilation, Authenticity & Advancement

Crafting Integrated Identities
In Academic Leadership

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Overview

– Data on Women in US Higher Education

– The Assimilation Imperative

– The Costs of Assimilation

– Strategies in the Quest for Authenticity

Women in US Higher Education

- 55% of all undergraduate students
- 60% of all graduate students across
- 45% of all doctorate degrees awarded

- 64% of all full- and part-time nonprofessional staff,
- 51% of all full- and part-time professional staff,

- 46% of all instructional and research assistant positions,
- 43% of all full- and part-time faculty
  - 39% when looking only at full-time faculty positions.
    - 52% of all full-time lecturers
    - 51% of all full-time instructors
    - 45% of all assistant professors
    - 33% of all associate professors
    - 24%; of all full professors
    - 18% of chief academic officers (Provosts, Vice Presidents)
- 23% of all presidencies
- *Disparities in geographic location, type of institution, academic discipline*

(American Council on Education, 2007 ; *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2005; Dean, 2003)

The Assimilation Imperative

Psychosocial Origins:

- Culturally-derived expectations within organizations
  - Leaders enact acculturated views of leadership (Kanter, 1993)
  - Assimilation for belonging and career advancement
  - Legitimacy (Bornstein, 2010; McLaughlin, 1996; Hollander & Julian, 1978)
- Identity stories
  - Self-identification through group identification (Gardner, 1995)
  - Career & workplace = sources of self-identity (Gabelnick, Herr, Klein, 1998)
  - Leaders convey group identity story
   (Gardner, 1995)

Assimilation in US Academe

– Culturally-based expectations for academics and academic leaders

- Key behaviors & attributes = white-male normed
- Career architectures & rewards = white male normed
- Assimilation :
  - Adopting characteristics, behaviors and "identity story" that fits the organization
  - Denying aspects of one's unique attributes
  - Necessary for advancement

– Costs of assimilation

- Work-life imbalance
- Inconsistent expectations
- Inequitable rewards
- Imposter syndrome
- Diminished self efficacy
- Inauthenticity

Work-life Imbalance

Integrating American family life and a career

– Public / private spheres of a woman's life
  – Cultural expectations of women's family life
  – Historic public-private separation
  – Different valuation of public-private spheres

– Difficulty balancing
  ◦ Women's roles in their **private lives** can conflict with work and detract from their _professional legitimacy_
  ◦ Women's roles in their **professional lives** can conflict with their private lives and detract from their full _personal identities_
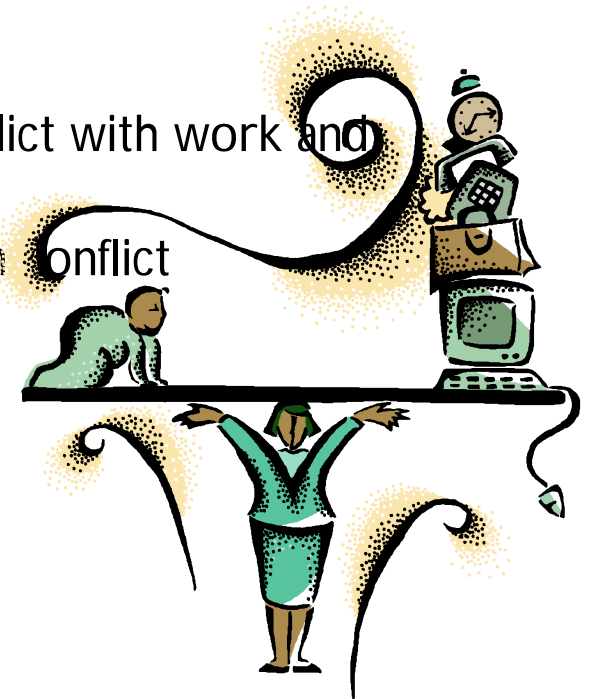
Inconsistent Expectations

Academics must acquire and incorporate the capacities and characteristics expected by their professional color.   *However. . .*

— Race & gender = advantage

— Women and people of color

  — Must conform to characteristics

  — Must demonstrate higher abilities in order to gain same legitimacy

— Paradox of gender expectations

  ◦ Too hard if women are masculine

  ◦ Too soft if women are not masculine

Inequitable Rewards

— Many women K-12 teachers

 ◦ Few women K-12 administrators and leaders

— Many women university faculty

 ◦ Few women on tenure track, tenured, or full professors

— Many women staff

 ◦ Few women senior leaders

— Inequitable rewards:

 ◦ Acknowledgement

 ◦ Support

 ◦ Resources

 ◦ Pay

 ◦ Promotion
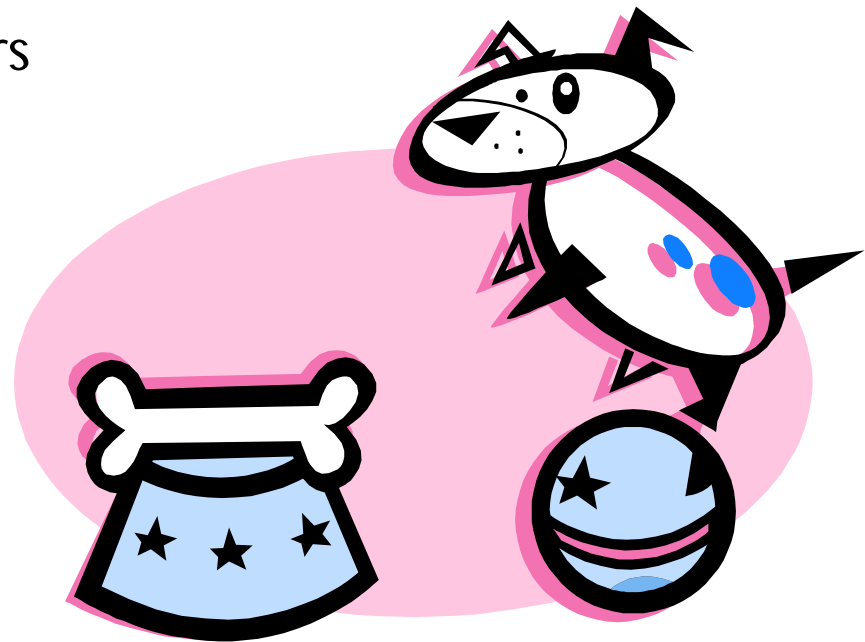
Results of Imbalance, Inconsistency & Inequity

– Imposter syndrome

– Diminished self efficacy

– Inauthenticity

Results of Imbalance, Inconsistency & Inequity

- Imposter syndrome
  - Erroneous beliefs of inadequacy
  - Inability to internalize accomplishments
  - Inaccurate self-perceptions of fraudulency
  - Fear of exposure
  - Preconditioned through sex-role stereotypes
  - Perpetuated in organizational practices

- Diminished self efficacy

- Inauthenticity

Results of Imbalance, Inconsistency & Inequity

– Imposter syndrome

– Diminished self efficacy
  ◦ Disbelief in personal agency
  ◦ Inability to objectively assess and attribute effects of ones' actions
  ◦ Diminished goal-setting behavior, initiation and follow-through
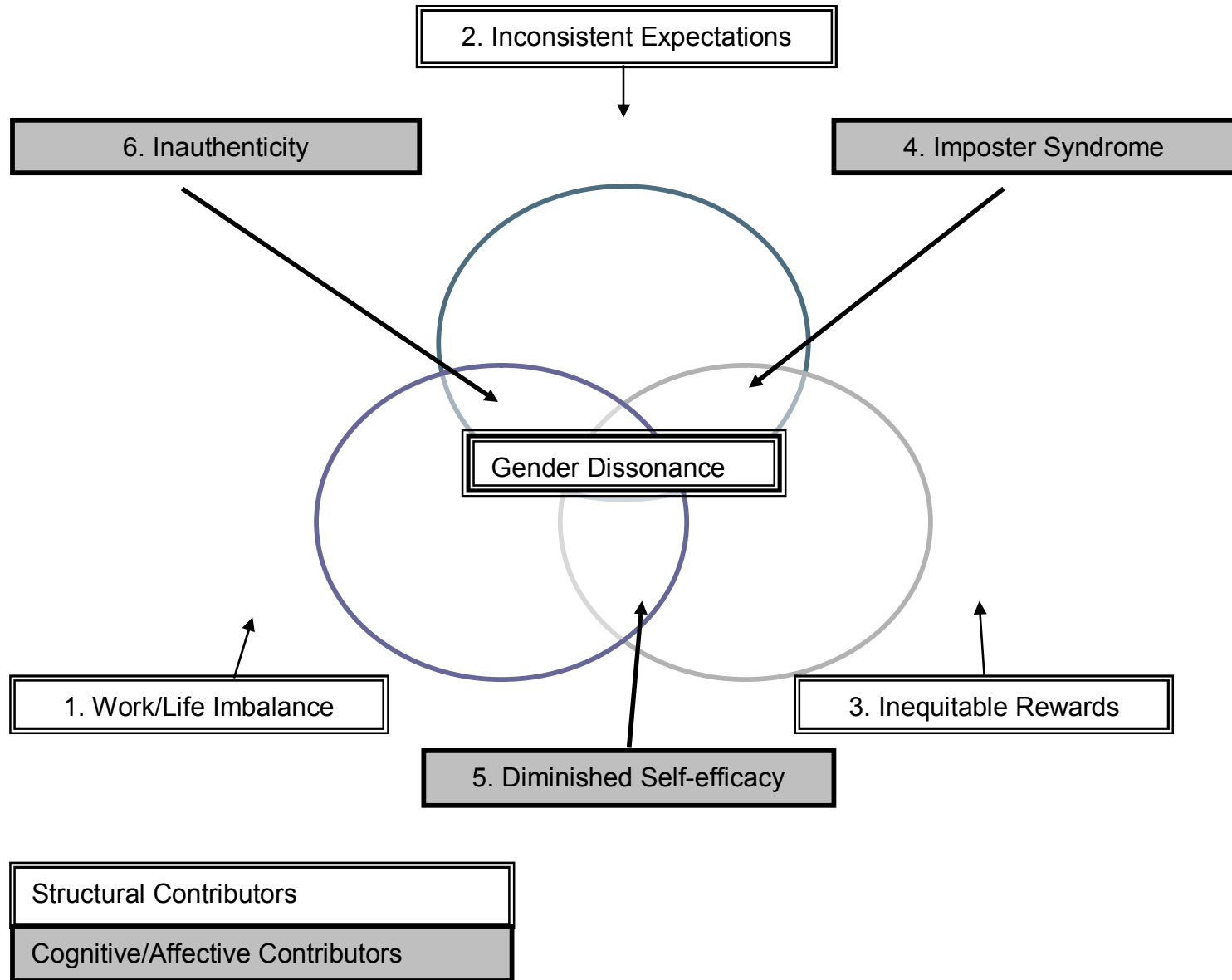
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Results of Imbalance, Inconsistency & Inequity

– Imposter syndrome

– Diminished self efficacy

– Inauthenticity

  ◦ Leadership inauthenticity = adopted style doesn't integrate competencies & preferences

  ◦ Intellectual inathenticity = adoption of cultural majority's view and loss of ones own view

The Price of Assimilation = Gender Dissonance

2. Inconsistent Expectations

6. Inauthenticity

4. Imposter Syndrome

Gender Dissonance

1. Work/Life Imbalance

3. Inequitable Rewards

5. Diminished Self-efficacy

Structural Contributors

Cognitive/Affective Contributors

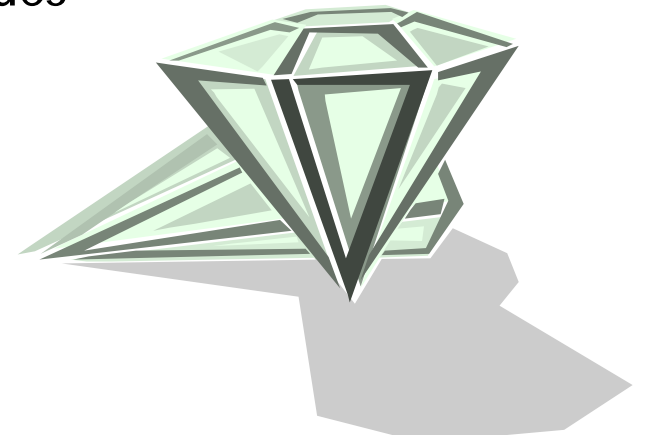# Inauthenticity = Dissonance

– Cognitive dissonance
  ◦ Tension
  ◦ Behavior, thoughts, feelings & opinions conflict with established behavior, knowledge, values and attitudes
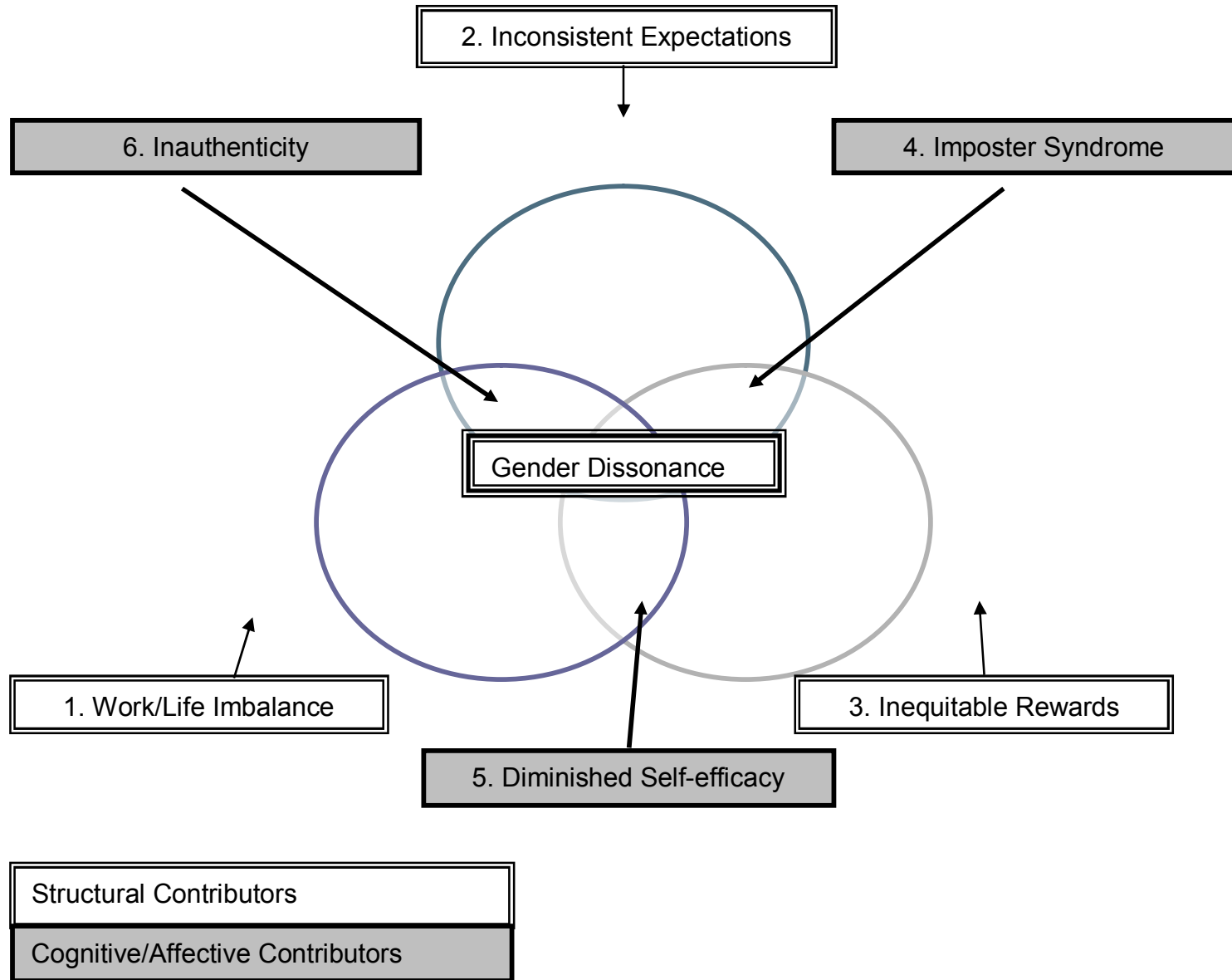
– The self
  ◦ Focal point
  ◦ Multiple facets of identity
    - gender, race, sexuality,
    - religion, political allegiance, social class
    - intellectual abilities, individual interests preferences, skills & competencies

– Gender dissonance
  ◦ Assimilation of male leadership norms weaken facets of identity
  ◦ Creates an incomplete, inauthentic self
  ◦ Applicable to racial dissonance

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Structural Contributors

Cognitive/Affective Contributors

Strategies in the Quest for Authenticity

Individual & Collective Activism

- Maintain vigilant awareness of campus work life and environment and question what we define and accept as normal.

- Reflect on what we and our campuses identify as the traits and behaviors of effective academics and leaders, and question what traits and behaviors we accept and reward.

- Maintain awareness of multiple dimensions of identity and their intersections.

- Embrace the "personal is political" in your work and look for it in the work of others.

- Balance the process of problem identification with inquiry into noteworthy, positive structures and practices.

- Build informal support networks.

- Exercise volition in developing our personal and professional identities and establishing career goals.

Contributors	Strategies
Structural contributors:	**Strategies for change:**
— Work-life imbalance	— Data, discussion, decisions
— Inconsistent expectations	— Change or enforce organizational policies & practices that perpetuate inequities
— Inequitable rewards	

Structural Changes

Contributors	Strategies
Cognitive contributors:	**Strategies for change:**
— Imposter syndrome	— Structural strategies, plus..
— Diminished self-efficacy	— Build support networks
— Inequitable rewards	— Seek professional development opportunties

Cognitive Changes

Contributors	Strategies
Affective contributors:	**Strategies for change:**
— Perceived significance of racial and gender differences	— Deconstruct assimilation/authenticity tension
	— Recognize leader's role as socially constructed
	— Maintain authentic identities and use preferred styles

Affective Changes

New Identity Story

– Historical need for assimilation
– Contemporary need for accommodation
– Identity stories: (Gardner, 1995)
  – Familiar, formulaic
  – New, distinctive
  – Innovative, integrative
– Need an innovative identity story in US higher education
  ◦ Culture is co-created
  ◦ Multiple dimensions of identity
  ◦ Careful consideration of new hires
  ◦ Equitable policies and practices

Symphony of Individuals

For References

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Or:

Dean, D.R., Bracken, S, Allen, J. (2009). Assimilation, Advancement & Authenticity. In D.R. Dean, S. Bracken and J. Allen (Eds.) *Women in academic leadership: Professional strategies, personal choices.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.