

Rhetoric Use by Leaders to Ease Intergroup Conflict

Leaders are entrusted to unify a group under a common purpose. Although employees often share a broad superordinate identity (Americans or employees of the same company), they often identify more strongly with their subgroup identity, (e.g., Asian American, Black American, European American, Latin American, Native American or employees of a specific department in a company). Leadership rhetoric is often useful for redressing intergroup conflict. One specific rhetorical strategy involves strengthening the superordinate identity to which all subgroups belong. This study uses qualitative archival data associated with historical events (such as speeches by leaders) to examine several rhetorical tactics associated with this strategy, including prototypes, exemplars, synecdoche, examples, and a set of examples told as a story. These tactics evoke de-categorization and recategorization of social identities. We expect to see that leaders have used these rhetorical tactics to achieve collaboration of diverse groups.