

## *A Matter of Difference*

Bernardo M. Ferdman and Martin N. Davidson

A series of articles about diversity and inclusion in *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist* (<http://www.sio.org/tip/TIP.html>), published by The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology

### **October 2001**

Davidson, M. N. & Ferdman, B. M. (2001). A matter of difference-Diversity and inclusion: What difference does it make? *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 39 (2), 36-38.

PDF: [http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/TipOct01/pdf%20tip/392\\_036to038.pdf](http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/TipOct01/pdf%20tip/392_036to038.pdf)

HTML: <http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/TipOct01/07davidson.htm>

### **January 2002**

Ferdman, B. M. & Davidson, M. N. (2002). A matter of difference-Diversity and drawing the line: Are some differences too different? (Or: who's in, who's out, and what difference does it make?). *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 39 (3), 43-46.

PDF: [http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/TIPJan02/pdf/393\\_043to046.pdf](http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/TIPJan02/pdf/393_043to046.pdf)

HTML: <http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/TIPJan02/09martin.htm>

### **April 2002**

Ferdman, B. M. & Davidson, M. N. (2002). A matter of difference-Inclusion: What can I and my organization do about it? *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 39 (4), 80-85.

PDF: [http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/TIPApr02/pdf/394\\_080to085.pdf](http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/TIPApr02/pdf/394_080to085.pdf)

HTML: <http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/TIPApr02/11davidson.htm>

### **July 2002**

Davidson, M. N. & Ferdman, B. M. (2002). A matter of difference-Inclusion and power: Reflections on dominance and subordination in organizations. *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 40 (1), 62-67.

PDF: [http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/TIPJuly02/pdf/401\\_062to067.pdf](http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/TIPJuly02/pdf/401_062to067.pdf)

HTML: <http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/TIPJuly02/09davidson.htm>

### **April 2003**

Ferdman, B. M. (2003). A matter of difference-Accounts of inclusion (and exclusion). *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 40 (4), 81-86.

PDF: [http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/Apr03/pdf/404\\_081to086.pdf](http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/Apr03/pdf/404_081to086.pdf)

HTML: <http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/Apr03/09ferdman.htm>

### **July 2003**

Davidson, M. N. & Ferdman, B. M. (2003). A matter of difference-Making the tough calls: Negotiating exclusion in inclusive and diverse organizations. *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 41 (1), 161-166.

PDF: [http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/July03/PDF/411\\_161to166.pdf](http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/July03/PDF/411_161to166.pdf)

HTML: <http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/July03/25davidson.htm>

### **January 2004**

Davidson, M. N. & Ferdman, B. M. (2004). A matter of difference-Here and there: A conversation about identity. *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 41 (3), 47-53.

PDF: [http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/Jan%2004/pdf/413\\_047to053.pdf](http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/Jan%2004/pdf/413_047to053.pdf)

HTML: <http://www.sio.org/tip/backissues/Jan%2004/07ferdman.htm>

### **April 2004**

Ferdman, B. M., & Davidson, M. N. (2004). A matter of difference-Some learning about inclusion: Continuing the dialogue. *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 41 (4), 31-37.

PDF: [http://www.sio.org/tip/April%2004/PDF/414\\_031to037.pdf](http://www.sio.org/tip/April%2004/PDF/414_031to037.pdf)

### **Contact information:**

Bernardo M. Ferdman, Ph.D.  
California School of Organizational Studies  
Alliant International University  
6160 Cornerstone Ct. E., San Diego, CA 92121  
Tel. (858) 623-2777 x362; Fax (858) 642-0283  
E-mail: [bferdman@alliant.edu](mailto:bferdman@alliant.edu)  
Webpage: [www.alliant.edu/faculty/ferdman.htm](http://www.alliant.edu/faculty/ferdman.htm)

Martin N. Davidson, Ph.D.  
Darden Graduate School of Business  
University of Virginia  
P.O. Box 6550, Charlottesville, VA 22906-6550  
Tel.: (434) 924-4483; Fax: (434) 243-5020  
E-mail: [mdav@virginia.edu](mailto:mdav@virginia.edu)  
Webpage: [www.darden.virginia.edu/faculty/Davidson.htm](http://www.darden.virginia.edu/faculty/Davidson.htm)

## A MATTER OF DIFFERENCE



### **Diversity and Inclusion: What Difference Does it Make?**

**Martin N. Davidson**  
University of Virginia



**Bernardo M. Ferdman**  
Alliant International University

To choose not to engage in dialogue about diversity in almost any modern organization is just plain dumb. On the surface, that may seem like a controversial, even offensive, statement. After all, thoughtful individuals have grappled with the implications of valuing diversity in a variety of organizations. For every proponent who argues that diversity is the right and rational thing to do in a corporation, school, or professional organization, there is an equally articulate opponent arguing that “valuing diversity” is too often a proxy for instituting unjust policies (e.g., quotas) that deny qualified people opportunities, and harm the underqualified people afforded opportunities with which they are unprepared to cope (Ferdman, 1997).

This kind of powerful discourse (sometimes conducted in less than civil tones) pervades modern organizations in the United States, and increasingly, in other parts of the world. In Europe, the advent of the European Union, in which numerous countries will operate with unprecedented interdependence, promises to present diversity challenges at least as complex as those we have struggled with in the U.S. In South Africa, the downfall of apartheid and what some see as the inevitable dominance of capitalism makes the negotiation of race of paramount importance. In Latin America, changing economic conditions and gender roles, together with increasing consciousness of native peoples, have made long-standing societal fault lines even more explicit.

Do you notice anything interesting about the exchange described in the first paragraph? Hopefully it has some face validity, but beyond that, it frames the discourse around diversity as a debate, with proponents and opponents. This is not an unusual phenomenon, but that doesn’t make it constructive. Even though many people talk about diversity as a social advancement, as a movement or principle associated with greater equality and fairness, far too often diversity becomes associated with scarce resources and competition over what is valued (Davidson, 1999). Some person or some group is trying to gain something while some other person in some other group is trying to protect something. This is the nexus at which so many attempts to generate and nurture diversity have failed. Yet, in the

midst of this and other challenges, the imperative of dealing with our differences in new and creative ways remains.

*The question is “How do we do it?”* Let’s look at an interesting case as a prelude to answering that question. At a *Fortune* 10 corporation, a top leadership team that increased its racial and gender diversity with the promotion of a relatively young African-American team leader was in turmoil. The senior members of the team, all White men, were particularly disturbed by the leader’s appointment of four new African-American team members to the 15-person team. The two women he appointed, one African American and one White, were also of concern—they seemed far too young. The younger White men on the team who were really threatened by all of this expected to rise to positions of authority through what they perceived as a fair process of advancement. These personnel moves completely upset that expectation, and they were unsure where they would land in the midst of it all.

The African Americans on the team were terrified. They felt as if they had entered the jaws of the whale and though they felt very willing and ready to take on the responsibilities of their positions, the conflict with the White men in the team was aggravating and draining. Moreover, some of these men, whom they had respected and looked up to as professional mentors, were now cool towards them. Finally, they were acutely aware that the team leader was being tested. Headquarters was watching to see if this Black man could run a major division effectively. The African-American members felt a fierce loyalty to one of their own, and any dissent was taken “collectively.”

Over the course of 18 months, this team moved from turmoil to a fairly high level of functioning. Relationships were built across the racial and gender lines and although every person didn’t like every other person on the team, they began to act and talk about the team as unit, as a collective that had to act as one, and that had to defer to its leader, given the culture of the corporation. In their personal lives, few team members crossed racial or gender lines, perhaps a result of their location in the southeast U.S. Nevertheless, this team was working, and this division was the most profitable business unit in the corporation, making record revenues each of 4 consecutive years.

How did they do it? We believe it has to do with directly engaging with difference as a key to creating inclusion.

The subtleties of this and other such turnarounds will be the topic of this ongoing column, **A Matter of Difference**. In the coming 2 years, we will take up various facets of diversity and inclusion as they apply to organizations as a whole and to our organization, SIOP, in particular. We hope to inform you, stimulate you, and sometimes provoke you to think critically about diversity, how it affects us, and what we can do about and with it.

We think the core of the answer to our question, “How do we do it?” rests in a different, inclusive vision of diversity. Consider that the opening paragraph of this column framed the issue of diversity as a debate. This was intentional misdirection. It’s not that the points raised are not valid and

debatable. They are simply not the main point. We believe in moving beyond “either/or” logic and finding ways to link even seemingly contradictory positions (Ferdman, 1992). Our vision of diversity is not about quotas, nor about counting the numbers of one type of person or another. Rather, it’s about building a broad-scaled, inclusive, and just organization in which trust and respect are the default options for all the members of the community. This is an organization that continuously learns how to better use all human capacity for both individual and collective good. To value diversity, to value difference in a community means that policies, structures, and norms of behavior must be aligned in such a way that every member of the community is respected and included. Honest dialogue among members of almost any community reveals that there are usually segments of the community that feel disrespected, misrepresented, or left out of the loop. True inclusion attempts to bring those people into the mainstream of the community organization. And that is often a formidable task.

But truly inclusive organizations don’t just stop there. They also emphasize the importance of helping those who are in the mainstream continue to feel like they are part of the mainstream. Inclusive visions of diversity don’t just focus on redefining who the “winner” is of the resource at hand. Rather, they focus on enlarging the resources so that all can benefit from them. This is the direction of the most sophisticated thinking on diversity today. It’s about the container into which we all fit.

Now, the sharper and more cynical of our readers might give this the sniff test and say we don’t pass. Isn’t this “vision” merely a platitude that sidesteps the toughest issues about diversity—how do we, as an organization, increase representation of people of color and White women? How do we create an intellectual climate in which good research on diversity is actually respected? How do we train ourselves to engage the larger world on the issues that matter most to us?

We say: in time. We may not have answers to these and other questions, but through careful inquiry, we plan to tackle these and other issues head on. Our ability to understand, value, and benefit from difference in the world and in our organization matters profoundly. Let’s use our best understanding of our theory, research and practice to give this issue its due attention.

## References

- Davidson, M. N. (1999). The value of being included: An examination of diversity change initiatives in organizations. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 12, 164–180.
- Ferdman, B. M. (1992). The dynamics of ethnic diversity in organizations. In K. Kelley (Ed.), *Issues, theory and research in industrial/organizational psychology* (pp. 339–384). Amsterdam: North Holland.
- Ferdman, B. M. (1997). Values about fairness in the ethnically diverse workplace. [Special Issue: Managing in a global context: Diversity and cross-cultural challenges]. *Business and the Contemporary World: An International Journal of Business, Economics, and Social Policy*, 9, 191–208.

## A MATTER OF DIFFERENCE

### Drawing the Line: Are Some Differences Too Different? (Or: Who's In, Who's Out, and What Difference Does it Make?)



**Bernardo M. Ferdman**  
Alliant International University



**Martin N. Davidson**  
University of Virginia

The events of September and October, including the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and the subsequent U.S. attacks on Afghanistan, have focused us profoundly on differences. We are inundated with information about the subtleties and nuances of the Arab world and of Islam and Muslims abroad and in the United States. We are paying attention to cultural and religious differences in ways we have not previously. At the same time, we voraciously seek to understand how the hijackers emerged in the United States and blended in relatively unnoticed. Published editorials advocate stricter controls and background checks on foreign visitors to the United States. And we are once again engaged in debates about the appropriateness and utility of ethnic- or other group-based profiling. The events of the day are shifting our consciousness about difference: How different are we from one another, really? Are differences good or bad? How much difference can we embrace and still be the same society? When does a difference represent danger?

Essentially, these are all questions about limits and boundaries. In our last column, we wrote that inclusion in large part is “about the container into which we all fit.” Today, this perspective is being tested in dramatic and new ways in communities around the United States, in the country as a whole, and perhaps throughout the world.

Unfortunately, we are prone, especially under conditions of threat, to become simplistic and rigid in our thinking about difference. Specifically, we resort to dichotomous reasoning: If you are Arab, you may be a terrorist; if you are not Arab, there is no threat (was the bombing in Oklahoma City that long ago?). “Either you’re a true American and support *us* in this war or you are anti-American and are against *us*.” Categorical information about group memberships is often used as a quick way to answer such questions. What we do not typically think about when engaging in this type of reaction are

some of our underlying assumptions, based on answers to questions such as: What or who is “us”? Who defines it? What signifies whether you’re in or out of the boundaries? In the current situation, for example, does putting a flag on your house or business make you one of “us”? (If it does, then why was the shopkeeper who happened to wear a turban murdered just a few feet from the flag he had placed on his shop window?) What do we mean by “American,” and who determines whether someone “truly” fits the category?

This either-or thinking about difference poses a serious challenge to the society and community that strives to value its diversity and be inclusive. Full inclusion requires implementing processes that involve all members of the community in setting and giving meaning to the boundary. Paradoxically, participation in this process requires an *a priori* commitment to the larger community—in a sense assuming a predefined boundary—yet at the same time a willingness on the part of members to relax that definition of the collective—a willingness to be wholly part of something that is yet without a clear boundary or limits. What this means is that none of us alone, and no subgroups alone, can own or set the boundary. That boundary, those limits, must be marked together; and once they are marked, we must be willing to constantly reexamine them, in light of changes in ourselves and in others.

Granted, since September 11th, we have seen our nation make its boundaries more rigid. For example, legislation allows individuals to be detained for longer periods of time without due process, and it will be more difficult for visitors to the United States to get visas. The result is that many Arabs and Americans of Arab descent have had their individual freedoms eroded. But we have also seen many people, including high officials, work to make sure members of the Arab and Islamic communities continue to be included as part of the larger U.S. community. President Bush has rarely made a statement about the attack and the U.S. response without also differentiating between those who practice the Islamic faith peacefully from the very small minority who resort to violence in its name. Many in the Arab and Islamic communities in the United States stepped up their efforts to let others know who they are and what they stand for (including all of the diversity within the Arab and Islamic communities). In San Diego, for example, the Islamic Center and a number of mosques have held open houses and lectures to which the public was invited. What is notable to us about these events—and sets them apart from historical reactions to differences during times of war, such as the Japanese internment camps during World War II—is the collaborative way in which they have taken place. Recognizing and embracing the differences that exist among its people—in a sense, broadening our boundaries—has strengthened unity in the United States. The paradox is that as people in the United States have in many ways closed ranks, we have also recognized and allowed for our differences more than ever before, in a sense expanding our sense of who “we” are and who is included in that larger com-

munity. So the closing of the ranks has actually made us bigger, and making ourselves bigger has helped us close ranks. By being willing to live with this paradox and refusing to make it an "either-or," the country has become stronger. This to us is one of the lessons of inclusion: Noting and embracing differences can be a source of strength and unity, rather than division, if we do it in a way where no subgroup claims exclusive rights to defining the boundary. When we let go of our claim on the whole boundary, and therefore on being the sole arbiter of who is in and who is out, that boundary can become, paradoxically, stronger and clearer.

Our attention to differences these days can, on the one hand, lead to exclusion, to designating certain people and groups as so different that they are "beyond the pale," totally unacceptable and alien. Alternatively, attending to and allowing for differences can also make us stronger by providing us more resources and perspectives. There is strength in the differences, but only if we're willing both to change and be changed, particularly in terms of our hold on the boundaries. We cannot hold on to old notions of who "we" are and still benefit from the strengths that the differences can bring. Yet, paradoxically, to the extent that those "old" notions incorporate basic ideas that appeal to a broad set of people, they are more likely to be kept alive as they are changed than had we held on to them in their prior versions. It is in this way that a concept such as "freedom," a basic ingredient of the fabric holding the United States together, is more likely to be magnified if we can reexamine it and implement it in ways that make sense for the time.

As we attend to differences, we typically focus on the "other" and rarely on ourselves. Our analysis here suggests the importance of focusing not on "them," but rather on us. An exclusive focus on the other, on the outsider, rarely allows for the required type of understanding and development. For example, who is included in "us"? What defines the boundaries of the collective? What makes us who we are? What basic values hold us together? In the case of the United States, it may be values such as democracy, civil liberties, appreciation of dissent and difference, and the like. As the two of us have struggled to make sense of current events, and have also wondered whether sometimes some differences are just "too different," we have become more aware of the importance of the processes used to define and redefine the container within which such judgments are made. Dialogue, mutual adaptation, and engagement are key practices in this regard. So, for example, in the current dilemmas over the appropriate breadth of the container we call the "United States of America," we believe that the price of admission should not be a particular skin color, ancestry, or religion, but rather a willingness to engage in a two-way process of mutual adaptation. This may very well result in a container that is different than it was at other times in the past, but one that, by its ability to adapt, remains truer to its original intent.



As the United States engages in such conversations in the midst of challenging times, it is also timely for those of us in SIOP to examine and re-examine our own boundaries and the assumptions that underlie them. What defines the boundaries of our organization? How permeable are those boundaries? What benefits and costs do we accrue because of that level of permeability? To what extent do our definitions of who is “in” and who is “out” fit current times and reflect all of our members’ perspectives, contributions, and strengths? Are there some members with more or less voice than others in the process of defining the container we call “SIOP”? Is there such a thing as “too different” in the context of SIOP? And how are we to determine that? Please let us know your views and reactions. Send e-mail to [bferdman@alliant.edu](mailto:bferdman@alliant.edu) and [DavidsonM@Darden.virginia.edu](mailto:DavidsonM@Darden.virginia.edu).



## **LOOKING FOR AN EXPERT?**

SIOP's Online Consultant Locator System will help you find an individual or firm with consulting experience and expertise. CLS presents a list of consultants that match your needs and preferences. You will be able to print the list, visit Web pages, or send e-mail messages to individuals or firms you select. Another service to you from SIOP.

[www.siop.org/SIOPlocator](http://www.siop.org/SIOPlocator)

## **SIOP Consultant Locator**



# A MATTER OF DIFFERENCE

## Inclusion: What Can I and My Organization Do About It?



**Martin N. Davidson**  
University of Virginia



**Bernardo M. Ferdman**  
Alliant International University

Two years ago, at Rice University, one of us (Bernardo) facilitated a session at a small conference attended primarily by organizational and social psychologists on prejudice and discrimination in organizations. The title of the session was “Dialogue for Envisioning the Inclusive Workplace,” and the goal was to involve conference participants in describing the components of inclusion. After spending 2 days talking about discrimination, it was important to consider what might *replace* it. Participants were asked first to interview each other in pairs regarding their visions of inclusion and their hopes for organizations regarding the creation and fostering of inclusion, and then to extract key themes in small groups. Many excellent ideas were generated but what was most notable about the session was the great energy and emotion that emerged. This was an intense session; some people cried as they talked about the pain and frustration they experienced in their own careers as academics and their hopes for a better and more inclusive future. People need to feel *and* be included in their professional environments. What needs to happen to make this a reality?

Evidence is growing that inclusion matters to organizational effectiveness (see, e.g., Brickson, 2000; Cox, 2001; Creed & Scully, 2000; Davidson, 1999; Gasorek, 2000; Gilbert & Ivancevich, 2000; Meyerson, 2001; Mor-Barak, 2000; Robinson & Dechant, 1997; Wah, 1999). Inclusion opens the pathway for a variety of different individuals to marshal their personal resources to do what they do best. Based on their recent study, for example, Ely and Thomas (2001) argue for the importance of feeling valued and of being able to express one’s social identity at work as antecedents to building effective group functioning in organizational contexts. This is consistent with other studies, including those on quality, job enrichment, work motivation, and organizational development, that confirm similar relationships between utilizing one’s full range of talents and perspectives and the capability to commit to and to accomplish organizational objectives. We believe simply that the glue between these two is inclusion.

Inclusion can be described in a variety of ways. Mor-Barak and Cherin (1998), for example, see it as “the degree to which individuals feel part of critical organizational processes,” indicated by their access to information and resources, work group involvement, and ability to influence decision making. Pelled, Ledford, and Mohrman (1999) assessed inclusion on the basis of people’s job security, their access to sensitive information, and their influence on decision making. Gasorek (2000), in describing inclusion at Dun & Bradstreet, considers the degree to which (a) employees are valued and their ideas are taken into account and used, (b) people partner successfully within and across departments, (c) current employees feel that they belong and prospective employees are attracted to the organization, (d) people feel connected to each other and to the organization and its goals, and (e) the organization continuously fosters flexibility and choice, and attends to diversity. Similarly, at the Rice conference, participants mentioned a range of aspects of the experience of inclusion, such as feeling validated, accepted, heard, and appreciated; using one’s talents and making a difference (including being part of something that is working and doing a meaningful task); having some work autonomy; receiving feedback; having one’s input solicited and used; involvement in collaboration; openness for dialogue; and wanting to learn from others.

We believe that inclusion happens at two levels—the individual and the organizational. At the individual level, the need to be a part of the social whole has long been recognized as core to human psychological well-being. Affiliation and psychological attachment research has established this in a variety of ways. But while there are commonalities or general themes in terms of what people experience as inclusion—feeling valued, respected, recognized, trusted, and that one is making a difference—not everyone experiences these in the same way. As an introvert, one person may only need one or two social connections in order to satisfy her or his inclusion need. Others may have to interact with a wider range of the community in order to feel a full part of it. There aren’t rigid rules regarding what it takes to make someone feel included. You and I may experience inclusion in different ways and based on different antecedents. Indeed, part of the lesson of diversity is that if you treat me how you would like to be treated, if you follow the golden rule, you might not necessarily make me feel included. Instead, you might be imposing your values and your style on me. Rather, to make me feel included, it is important for you to figure out my needs and to try to address those. And I must do the same. As the Canadian Human Rights Commission (2001) points out in *A Place for All: A Guide to Creating an Inclusive Workplace*, “True equality means respect for people’s different needs” (p. 3).

We know that some people are more skilled at navigating the variables and the variability involved in inclusion. Some individuals behave in ways

that others—across a range of dimensions of diversity—consistently experience as inclusive, and they effectively promote a sense of inclusion in their workgroups and in their organizations. Such competencies can be developed and enhanced, especially in the context of an organizational culture that makes them a condition of success. Many if not most of the competencies essential for fostering inclusion are related to what many psychologists might call “process skills.” Several resources point to some of the components involved in such skills when applied to inclusion (e.g., Chrobot-Mason & Ferdman, 2001). For example, Wheeler (1999), in a simple and clear summary, points out that cultural competence includes “self-awareness and sensitivity to differences; the ability to see issues from another’s perspective, to deal with ambiguity and complexity, to develop people, and to manage conflict; ... [and] good cross-cultural skills” (p. 33). Being able to continuously learn about oneself and one’s impact on others, not only as an individual, but also as a member of a range of social groups, together with the implications of these group memberships for oneself and others is an important skill related to inclusion (Ferdman, in press). Interpersonally and in groups, being able to foster and engage in true dialogue (Isaacs, 1999), and to understand and productively work through conflicts (Stone, Patton, & Heen, 1999) are also critical skills. Meyerson (2001) describes the range of choices available to those who want to remain productive members of their organizations without giving up key pieces of themselves. Doing this for oneself and permitting others to do so are vital pieces of fostering inclusion.

Essentially, the principal point is that developing inclusion is everyone’s responsibility. We each need to do it, and we each have a responsibility to look inwards at our own role in and contribution to the situations in which we find ourselves. Mahatma Gandhi, the great Indian leader, has been quoted as saying that each of us must be the change that we want to see in the world. If we expect inclusion, we must learn to provide it, and in that way, model the necessary behaviors for those around us. Seemingly small, individual behavior can make a very large difference (as can omitting behavior). Something as straightforward as saying hello to our coworkers each day, acknowledging and checking in with people at meetings, or listening carefully to others until we understand them can go a long way toward fostering a sense of inclusion.

A key aspect that we believe connects all these skills is the inclination and the ability to treat each situation as new and different, and not to expect others to be just like us, but rather, to expect and value difference. Although we should certainly learn from prior interactions, we also need the ability to engage in the moment, and in Gurevitch’s (1989) terms, to “make strange” and allow ourselves to “not understand the other.” In doing so, we can permit others to define themselves and their needs on their own terms. And if I allow others to do this, I can then better address their needs rather than mine.

Yet, it is a naïve and possibly even dangerous oversimplification to think that addressing individual inclusion at the individual level is the complete answer to nurturing an inclusive organization or workplace. Doing this also requires systemic, proactive work at the organizational level (Dass & Parker, 1999). But if it is impossible or impractical to try to come up with a global and fixed set of rules regarding inclusion that will apply to everyone in all situations, then what is the organizational solution to building an inclusive environment? Here again, Wheeler (1999) provides a succinct and valuable summary. According to him, "Organizations that truly value inclusion are characterized by effective management of people who are different, ability to admit weakness and mistakes, heterogeneity at all levels, empowerment of people, recognition and utilization of people's skills and abilities, an environment that fosters learning and exchanging of ideas, and flexibility" (pp. 33–34). Similarly, Thomas and Ely (1996), list the preconditions that, in their view, enable organizations to learn from and fully utilize their diversity: (a) leadership must understand that workforce diversity includes diverse perspectives, opinions, insights, and approaches to work; (b) leadership must know that diversity brings with it opportunities and challenges that create a need for unlearning, relearning, and gaining new learnings; (c) everyone must be held to high standards of performance; (d) the work culture must encourage and foster personal development through training and education programs; (e) open communication, constructive conflict on work-related issues, and tolerance for dialogue must be encouraged; (f) employees must feel valued in order to contribute their highest level of performance to the organization; (g) a clear mission statement that provides a focal point for accomplishing business goals and guides decision making must exist; and (h) there must be nonbureaucratic ways for employees to constructively challenge current ways of doing business and reshape past policies and practices to be more inclusive and empowering. It is the processes and systems that are in place that encourage and require expression of individual-level skills, as well as provide the foundation for a suitable organizational culture that gives meaning to the words that so many organizations put on paper but do not always bring to life. The specifics of these processes and systems will vary from organization to organization. Yet the growing literature on diversity initiatives (e.g., Arredondo, 1996; Cox, 2001; Cross, 2000; Ferdman & Brody, 1996; Wheeler, 1995) provides some strategies for organizations interested in starting the process, a process that in reality must be ongoing and continuous.

While certainly organizations can and should do a great deal to foster work climates that are likely to feel inclusive, the actual experience of inclusion must be created in process, in each moment and in each interaction. In many ways, inclusion is a momentary, even evanescent creation, which depends on the particular people and the particular situation involved. At the

same time, the behavior and attitude of the moment may not mean much without a history and a future, without a structure and system around them that give them the appropriate meaning and weight. If I invite someone at work to give me input on a project, whether or not she experiences that as inclusive behavior will depend on many factors, including the tone I used in giving the invitation, my colleague's beliefs regarding my sincerity and how likely I am to use the input, my previous behavior in similar situations, the general nature of relations among people in the organization, and a host of other contextual variables. For this reason, the individual and organizational levels of inclusion are both critical. They are also interactive. To create an inclusive organization, it is not enough to work at the individual level, if the organizational systems do not support inclusion. And the reverse is also true: Organizational systems by themselves are insufficient, without behavior, thought, and feeling to match.

As we suggested above, a key component to all of this is ongoing dialogue, not just as a skill for individuals, but also as a discipline for organizations. At this year's SIOP Conference in Toronto, on Friday, April 12, 2002, we will be holding a special session, *Dialogue on Diversity and Inclusion in Organizations: SIOP and Beyond*, designed to engage participants in a conversation about what full inclusion might look and feel like at SIOP and elsewhere, as well as how we might ensure that each of us, with our differences, is highly valued and fully included. We hope to see many of you there.

## References

- Arredondo, P. (1996). *Successful diversity management initiatives: A blueprint for planning and implementation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brickson, S. (2000). The impact of identity orientation on individual and organizational outcomes in demographically diverse settings. *Academy of Management Review*, 25, 82–101.
- Canadian Human Rights Commission (2001). *A place for all: A guide to creating an inclusive workplace*. N.P.: Minister of Public Works and Government Services. Available from <http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca>.
- Chrobot-Mason, D. & Ferdman, B. M. (2001). Multicultural competencies for I-O psychologists: Why and how? *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 39 (1), 69–74.
- Cox, T., Jr. (2001). *Creating the multicultural organization: A strategy for capturing the power of diversity*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Creed, W. E. D. & Scully, M. A. (2000). Songs of ourselves: Employees' deployment of social identity in workplace encounters. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 9, 391–412.
- Cross, E. Y. (2000). *Managing diversity: The courage to lead* (Appendix 1, pp. 167–178). Westport, CT: Quorum.
- Dass, P. & Parker, B. (1999). Strategies for managing human resource diversity: From resistance to learning. *Academy of Management Executive*, 13(2), 68–79.
- Davidson, M. N. (1999). The value of being included: An examination of diversity change initiatives in organizations. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 12, 164–180.
- Ely, R. J., & Thomas, D. A. (2001). Cultural diversity at work: The effects of diversity perspectives on work group processes and outcomes. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46(2), 229–273.

Ferdman, B. M. (in press). Learning about our and others' selves: Multiple identities and their sources. In R. Goodman, M. Phillips, & N. Boyacigiller (Eds.), *Crossing cultures: Insights from master teachers*. Routledge.

Ferdman, B. M. & Brody, S. E. (1996). Models of diversity training. In D. Landis & R. Bhagat (Eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training*, 2nd Ed. (pp. 282–303). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gasorek, D. (2000, Summer). Inclusion at Dun & Bradstreet: Building a high-performing company. *The Diversity Factor*, 25–29.

Gilbert, J. A. & Ivancevich, J. M. (2000). Valuing diversity: A tale of two organizations. *Academy of Management Executive*, 14(1), 93–105.

Gurevitch, Z. D. (1989). The power of not understanding: The meeting of conflicting identities. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 25, 161–173.

Isaacs, W. N. (1999). *Dialogue and the art of thinking together*. New York: Doubleday.

Meyerson, D. E. (2001). *Tempered radicals: How people use difference to inspire change at work*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Mor-Barak, M. E. (2000). Beyond affirmative action: Toward a model of diversity and organizational inclusion. *Administration in Social Work*, 23(3/4), 47–68.

Mor-Barak, M. E. & Cherin, D. A. (1998). A tool to expand organizational understanding of workforce diversity: Exploring a measure of inclusion–exclusion. *Administration in Social Work*, 22(1), 47–64.

Pelled, L. H., Ledford, G. E., and Mohrman, S. A. (1999). Demographic dissimilarity and workplace inclusion. *Journal of Management Studies*, 36, 1013–1031.

Robinson, G. & Dechant, K. (1997). Building a business case for diversity. *Academy of Management Executive*, 11(3), 21–31.

Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. (1999). *Difficult conversations: How to discuss what matters most*. New York: Penguin.

Thomas, D. A. & Ely, R. J. (1996, September–October). Making differences matter: A new paradigm for managing diversity. *Harvard Business Review*, 79–90.

Wah, L. (1999, July–August). Diversity: A competitive weapon at Allstate. *Management Review*, 24–30.

Wheeler, M. L. (1995). *Diversity: Business rationale and strategies: A research report*. (Report 1130-95-RR), New York: The Conference Board.

Wheeler, M. (1999, Winter). Global diversity: A culture-change perspective. *The Diversity Factor*, 31–34.

# **SLOP Members Save 20%**

**on books ordered through the**

**SLOP Administrative Office**

**520 Ordway Avenue**

**Bowling Green OH 43402**

**[419]353-0032**



## A MATTER OF DIFFERENCE

### Inclusion and Power: Reflections on Dominance and Subordination in Organizations



**Martin N. Davidson**  
University of Virginia



**Bernardo M. Ferdman**  
Alliant International University

All differences are not created equally. Earnest and well-meaning efforts to create inclusion in organizations often come up short for reasons that appear hard to understand. The leaders of the organization implement policies, procedures, and practices similar to those we outlined in our last column (Ferdman & Davidson, 2002) as a way of fostering inclusion in organizations. Yet they feel stymied by the intractability of continuing problems in the work community such as racial or gender inequities, perceptions of unfair exclusion by a variety of organization members, and pervasive feelings of alienation.

At this year's SIOP Conference in Toronto, we convened a special session, *Dialogue on Diversity and Inclusion in Organizations: SIOP and Beyond*, in which a diverse group of SIOP members engaged one another in an exciting and provocative conversation that revealed just this paradox. Three invited panelists—**Ann Marie Ryan, Robert Dipboye, and Michele Gelfand**—joined the two of us in initiating the conversation. Two or three dozen other people then joined us in the 2-hour dialogue that used a unique fishbowl design to allow the feel of conversation in a small group while including a large number of participants. Our objective together was to envision what full inclusion might look and feel like at SIOP and to understand how our vision could generalize to (and from) other organizations. Moreover, we sought to understand how we might ensure that each of us, with our differences, could feel and actually be highly valued and fully included in the organization. A variety of topics and perspectives arose in the session, during which we addressed the progress that has been made on making SIOP more diverse, the extent to which people struggle to feel a sense of being welcomed as a newcomer in our community, and the proactive steps that have been and are being taken to make SIOP an even more inclusive organization.

But another important part of the dialogue centered on the ways that some members more than others have a tougher time fitting in at SIOP. For example, those Conference attendees who are not White, heterosexual, published scholars, full SIOP members, and/or U.S.-based were more likely to report feeling less included. Some even spoke of feeling *invisible* at the Confer-



ence. In our next column, we hope to bring in more specific examples as they relate to SIOP. For now, suffice it to say that this difference in experience has something to do with individuals' primary social identities and how those identities fit into a "power map" featuring dominance and subordination.

### **The Power Map: Dominance and Subordination**

A prerequisite for exploring the idea of power here is to situate our discussion at the group level of analysis. Every person is certainly a unique individual, but we all also share group memberships with others as part of our identity (Ferdman, 1995); these group memberships affect the way we treat and are treated by others. A discussion of power in this context does not address individual talent, merit, achievement, or influence as much as it addresses the societal and organizational position of different groups to which one might belong. All groups do not hold equal status in most societies—some tend to be systematically privileged while others are systematically disadvantaged. Dimensions along which privilege and disadvantage manifest include ease of institutional access (such as job hiring, homeownership, etc.), level of inclusion in mainstream culture, and access to influence in political systems. We use the label *subordinant*<sup>1</sup> for those groups in lower power positions (e.g., people of color relative to non-Hispanic Whites, or women relative to men) and the label *dominant* for those groups in higher power positions (e.g., heterosexuals relative to gays and lesbians, Christians relative to Muslims or Jews in the United States).

So, when a woman occupies an executive-level position in a predominantly male organization, she may wield substantial power as an individual; however, she would still be a member of a subordinant group. As a female in the organization, she is likely to (a) be in the numerical minority, (b) need to adopt behaviors that allow her to fit in socially with male colleagues (e.g., become knowledgeable about topics men tend to care about), and (c) manage the resentments that may arise by virtue of being a powerful woman in a society in which men tend to hold the most powerful positions and in which it is considered counter-normative for women to behave as leaders (cf. Eagly, in press; Eagly & Karau, in press). Her position in the organizational chart does not shield her completely from needing to negotiate these "group-based" dynamics. Similarly, when a man is an hourly wage earner working at the lowest levels of the same organization, he may have very little organizational power as an *individual*. But as a member of his identity-group (male), he benefits in both overt and subtle ways in the organization.

Two critical results of this kind of power distinction are *privilege*, and group-based prejudice and *discrimination*. Peggy McIntosh (1988) has writ-

---

<sup>1</sup>We use the term *subordinant* rather than *subordinate* to distinguish between power group membership/status and simple job level in the organization.

ten eloquently on privilege—the systematic access to resources, benefits, and psychological well-being that results from being identified as a member of a dominant group. Most notably, privilege in this sense is not earned in any tangible way—it is just there for dominants. In contrast, group-based bias or discrimination is the systematic *denial of access* to resources, benefits, and psychological well-being that results from being identified as a member of a subordinate group. Similarly, this discrimination is not *deserved* in any way—it is just persists for subordinates (Davidson & Friedman, 1998). Other terms for this discrimination (depending upon the dimension of difference under consideration) are “-isms”—racism, sexism, heterosexism, and so forth.

The primary implication of this distinction is that even the best of intentions to create an inclusive environment may be stilted if the dynamics of these group power relationships are ignored. A recent study of managers of color in U.S. corporations illustrates this point (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2002). Although there were strong direct effects of (a) advancement opportunity, (b) effectiveness of feedback processes, (c) level of pay increases, and (d) firm commitment to diversity on individual organizational commitment, the strong indirect effects of perceived racism dampened those direct effects. Even if an organization attends to the four domains, ignoring the impact of these managers' perceptions of racism made it all the more difficult to design systems and cultures of inclusiveness that would entice them to stay.

### How Dominants Can Be Inclusive

Through the lens of dominance and subordination, we can enhance our understanding of what it takes to create and participate in an inclusive organization and community (Wishik & Davidson, 2002). As a dominant, prerequisites for supporting inclusion are as follows:

- *Assuming a stance of “inquisitive probability.”* This means acknowledging that one is a member of a dominant group and that this group membership has implications for how one engages those who are in subordinate groups (as well as other dominants). This stance contrasts with an attitude of denial in which dominants reflexively assert a null hypothesis when phenomena related to group differences emerge. For example, when an African-American man asserts that he is not receiving timely performance feedback because he is Black, his White colleague would acknowledge the possible veracity of the statement, *even though*, the White colleague believes the organization is one in which no one gets timely performance feedback. The skill is in the White colleague's ability to allow for the possibility that no one gets much feedback, *and* the African American colleague may get even less than his other White colleagues. In these kinds of situations group differences may, in fact, be irrelevant. The skill for the dominant is to be open to the possibility that they are relevant.

- *Distinguishing impact from intent.* This is the skill of acknowledging that a dominant's behavior toward a subordinate may be completely benevolent in intention but may be perceived by the subordinate as injurious. For example, when a man touches a female colleague's shoulder, he may intend no disrespect—the act could be purely an attempt to comfort a colleague in the midst of a stressful work session. However, he must be able to understand that his actions could be perceived by the woman (or other colleagues) as inappropriate and possibly harassing. With this awareness, he can proactively engage his colleague to reduce perceptions of inappropriateness, manage the perceptions of other colleagues, and make more judicious and appropriate decisions about similar behavior in the future.
- *Increasing accuracy about the meaning of difference to subordinate colleagues.* When dominants make an effort to educate themselves about the experience of subordinates, they increase the overall sense of inclusion in the organization. When the U.S.-based members of SIOP who attended the dialogue session learned that international members sometimes felt excluded in the organization, that knowledge positioned those U.S. members to engage international members with a deeper understanding of the non-U.S. experience at SIOP. The knowledge alone does not guarantee that the dominant colleague will actually engage the subordinate colleague, but if she or he chooses to do so, the conversation could happen in a way that enhances inclusion.
- *Acting to reduce structural barriers to inclusion.* Dominants must use their positions of influence and privilege as dominants to change the structure and systems that exclude subordinates. This can happen in both dramatic and subtle ways. Some dominants are extremely active and vocal about change. But not everyone can assume such a stance. Other dominants can make this change through tempered radicalism, a more gradual path to change (Meyerson, 2001).

### How Subordinates Can Be Inclusive

But dominants are not the only members of the community responsible for fostering inclusion. Subordinates' roles in the inclusion calculus are somewhat different from those of dominants because subordinates often are not included and are seeking to be so. Nevertheless, they have a role to play which manifests in skills such as the following:

- *Assuming a stance of cautious openness.* In most circumstances, dominants will not have a sophisticated sense of what is supportive for subordinates. Therefore, many engagements will be fraught with the possibility of injury—political, interpersonal, psychological, and sometimes even physical. But even in the face of that reality, subordinates cannot afford to distance themselves completely from dominant col-

leagues. Cautious openness is the skill of remaining engaged in dialogue and mutual learning while remaining aware of the damage that can sometimes result from dominants' behavior.

- *Giving effective feedback.* Often, a remnant of the systematic mistreatment of people in subordinated groups is that indirect language and communication patterns are cultivated with dominants as a means of circumventing dominants' injurious behavior. But in an inclusive environment, such indirect communication is a liability, especially when feedback is involved. If dominants are expected to make mistakes as they learn to engage subordinates constructively, they must have data on what behaviors should be reinforced and what behaviors should be eliminated. Only subordinates (or skilled allies of subordinates) can provide that data.
- *Inviting dominants to be guests in subordinates' culture.* Sometimes, subordinates can shift the locus of comfort and power by opening up their group space to dominants committed to learning. For example, it is often said the most segregated time in the U.S. is 11:00 a.m. on Sunday morning—church time. This would be an ideal opportunity for subordinates (at least those who are Christian) to utilize this skill—invite a dominant to church! Most importantly, this skill fosters community (and hence inclusion) by contextualizing dominants' experience in a way similar to the way subordinates' experience is contextualized in dominant environments.
- *Pushing for constructive change.* Subordinates often have the most acute view of the problems and barriers to inclusion. Scholars have identified the phenomenon of marginality and have outlined the kinds of information and insight that result from being marginalized (Johnston, 1976; Weisberger, 1992). Despite the fact that subordinates often experience the responsibility to change as an unwanted burden, they are nonetheless uniquely positioned to initiate such change.

### Concluding Thoughts

Upon reflection of this column, we are struck by the fact that each of us is possessed of multiple identities and, at anytime, a particular aspect of our identity may place us in a subordinate or a dominant position. For example, as heterosexual men of color, we are subordinates in a predominantly White, Anglo context but dominants in that same predominantly heterosexual and male context. To effectively create an inclusive community, each of us must come to terms with our role as dominants and subordinates in our organizations.

## References

- Davidson, M., & Friedman, R. A. (1998). When excuses don't work: The persistent injustice effect among Black managers. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43(1), 154–183.
- Davidson, M. N., & Foster-Johnson, L. (2002). *Keeping color in corporate America: What generates organizational commitment for managers of color*. Unpublished manuscript, Charlottesville, VA.
- Eagly, A. H. (in press). Few women at the top: How role incongruity produces prejudice and the glass ceiling. In D. van Knippenberg & M. A. Hogg (Eds.), *Identity, leadership, and power*. London: Sage Publications.
- Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (in press). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review*.
- Ferdman, B. M. (1995). Cultural identity and diversity in organizations: Bridging the gap between group differences and individual uniqueness. In M. M. Chemers & S. Oskamp (Eds.), *Diversity in organizations: New perspectives for a changing workplace* (pp. 37–61). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ferdman, B. M., & Davidson, M. N. (2002). Inclusion: What can I and my organization do about it? *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 39(4), 80–85.
- Johnston, R. (1976). The concept of the "Marginal Man": A refinement of the term. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 12(2), 145–147.
- McIntosh, P. (1988). *White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies*. Wellesley, MA: Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College.
- Meyerson, D. E. (2001). *Tempered radicals: How people use difference to inspire change at work*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Weisberger, A. (1992). Marginality and its directions. *Sociological Forum*, 7(3), 425–446.
- Wishik, H. R., & Davidson, M. N. (2002). *Learning to lead: Some impacts of social identity on management and leadership development*. Unpublished manuscript, Charlottesville, VA.

Correction: In the April 2002 edition of *TIP*, Vol. 39, No. 4, the order of authorship for this column should have been listed as Bernardo M. Ferdman and Martin N. Davidson.

# A MATTER OF DIFFERENCE

## Accounts of Inclusion (and Exclusion)

Bernardo M. Ferdman  
Alliant International University



In our previous columns (e.g., Ferdman & Davidson, 2002a; Ferdman & Davidson, 2002b), **Martin Davidson** and I have written about the importance of engaging in dialogue to understand the nature and experience of inclusion. We point out that inclusion must be understood in the context of specific people and specific situations. To get a better sense of what inclusion looks and feels like for different people, we strongly advocate asking them. In the last few months, I've had the opportunity to ask that question—what does inclusion “look” and “feel” like?—of a number of groups, not only in the United States, but also in Brazil, Guatemala, Peru, and Puerto Rico. Later in this column, I report on some of the principal themes coming from those workshops and from *Dialogue on Diversity and Inclusion in Organizations: SIOP and Beyond*, the special session that Martin Davidson and I convened at the 2002 SIOP conference, where we asked participants to talk about what full inclusion might look and feel like at SIOP.

I would like to preface these summaries of conversations about inclusion with some reflections on exclusion and discrimination. Indeed, at many of the workshops, asking people to talk about their experiences of inclusion often triggered memories and descriptions of exclusion. It is quite difficult, if not impossible, to talk about one and not the other!

Last December, Senator Trent Lott—slated to become Senate Majority Leader in the next Congress—praised his fellow Senator, Strom Thurmond, in a way that seemed to support racial segregation, but without saying so directly. On the very same day that the furor was building (see e.g., Hulse, 2002; Luker, 2002) over Senator Lott's statements, *The New York Times* (Krueger, 2002) published an account of a research study (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2002) documenting the persistence of anti-Black bias in job hiring. Specifically, the study (conducted in Boston and Chicago) showed that employers were 50% more likely to call job applicants with White-sounding names (e.g., Kristen or Brad) for interviews than applicants with Black-sounding names (e.g., Tamika or Tyrone). While Senator Lott was being publicly pilloried for what appeared to many to be relatively overt support of discrimination, little was being said about the much more pervasive and widespread covert, more passive support for discrimination, not just among U.S. senators, but among all types of people in the country, such as that documented in part by Bertrand and Mullainathan's research. It is far too easy—and distracting as well—to focus on those who do or say something that

overtly supports discrimination, while paying no mind to the many more of us who systematically support and maintain discrimination and/or exclusion every day. We do this not necessarily by doing anything obviously negative but simply by going about our “normal” business. If we are truly to create and maximize inclusion across lines of difference that previously served as bases for invidious discrimination, I believe that we must be more attentive to these subtle, covert, and/or passive forms of exclusion and discrimination.

A few examples come to mind. One of these is the implicit and explicit propagation of theories and concepts of racial superiority as part of the standard I-O psychology curriculum and discourse. It is probably rare to find colleagues who explicitly teach their students that members of one race are naturally and genetically superior to those of another (though I have been told, recently, of some who do!). At the same time, it is relatively common in I-O psychology courses, conferences, and other venues to hear blanket statements about race differences in intelligence, with little or no consideration of the impact or implications of such statements or the sources or validity of the supporting data. Even more covert yet no less insidious is how we use (and abuse) the relatively unexamined concept of “merit.” In an incisive, award-winning article that deserves much wider dissemination among I-O psychologists and students, Haney and Hurtado (1994) thoroughly describe and analyze how the concept of “merit” has been used to prevent addressing systematic racial disparities in the U.S. and their structural causes and how “the concept of merit is employed to mediate between the belief in fair treatment and the reality of unfair outcomes by individualizing the effect of structural barriers to racial justice” (p. 225). They go further to show how “the use of standardized testing in the allocation of employment opportunities and rewards represents a psychological technology by which meritocratic assumptions are translated uncritically into employment decisions” and discuss “the role that this technology plays in preserving racial injustice” (p. 225). Haney and Hurtado argue as follows:

When selection and promotion systems that are based on standardized tests result in a disproportionately White labor force, and employers resist the requirement that such tests be validated or shown to be job-related, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the disparate outcomes simply confirm many employers’ implicit notions about the distribution of merit and relative deservingness of various groups. Otherwise, such disproportions would raise *prima facie* questions about the job-relatedness (and, therefore, the utility and wisdom) of the instruments themselves. To fully grasp this implicit assumption, imagine the reverse—that standardized instruments for the measurement of merit consistently resulted in opportunities and rewards being disproportionately allocated to minority group members at the expense of their White counterparts. Such an outcome surely would be regarded as anomalous—an occasion



for the most careful scrutiny of the instruments themselves, not to mention a reexamination of the wisdom of continuing to employ them in the absence of positively convincing demonstrations of their job relatedness (precisely what employers have resisted in typical employment testing cases). Indeed, absent implicit assumptions about relative group merit, rational employers who could not be certain that their employment screening and promotion instruments were job-related would not otherwise persist in using them. (p. 229, italics in original)

I do not have the space here to reproduce fully Haney and Hurtado's penetrating arguments, nor do I wish to enter into the debate over standardized testing; my goal is to urge I-O psychologists and others to explore critically the concepts, systems, and practices that we typically take for granted yet which can have profound effects on our ability to achieve true inclusion.

Another example of subtle or covert exclusion is when students and junior faculty are told, in the guise of support and useful advice, not to write about or do research on diversity or diversity-related topics because that would hurt their prospects for academic employment or for tenure. A related example is that of luminaries in our field who are not in the least embarrassed when they say that they do not know much (and in some cases do not care to know) about diversity or international issues; this, when at least one-third of the U.S. population is comprised of people of color, and when future progress in I-O psychology demands much closer attention to the cross-cultural and international applicability of our traditional constructs and theories. Worse yet is when the same individuals remain quite comfortable not doing anything about their lack of knowledge. Although I do not believe that individual reactions such as this are necessarily, in and of themselves, exclusionary, they contribute to the perpetuation of ethnocentrism and depend on its privilege; when repeated over many people, they also function as a significant barrier that prevents our discipline from moving toward greater inclusion. [Interestingly, a recent international survey (RoperASW, 2002) to assess geographic literacy in the United States and around the world among young adults 18 to 24 years old found that almost one-third of U.S. respondents believed that the U.S. had a population of 1 to 2 billion people, and only one-fourth of respondents identified the correct range—150 to 350 million people—for the U.S. population. Although one cannot be certain, I imagine that such exaggerated beliefs about the position of the U.S. in the world can contribute to a perspective consistent with ignoring the rest of the world.]

I believe that multicultural and international issues are not only important to address but that it is time to make them core elements of I-O psychology (see also Chrobot-Mason & Ferdman, 2001). This will ensure not only that our theory, research, and practice are better aligned with inclusion rather than with the perpetuation of discrimination but also that we will not become irrelevant to a changing society and a changing world.

A cogent supporting argument for this, as well as some suggestions for initial steps, are provided in the American Psychological Association's (2002) *Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists*, adopted in 2002 as APA policy by the APA Council of Representatives. It is quite possible that I-O psychologists may react to these new guidelines as we often have to other such APA documents, acting as if they are an imposition to our field. I believe, however, that if we—individually and collectively—do not heed the message that they contain, we run the risk of lining up with policies and practices better suited to Strom Thurmond's old view of a "better America" than with a vision appropriate to our 21st-century demographic and social realities.

The general themes that emerged at SIOP's 2002 *Dialogue on Diversity and Inclusion* can provide some clues about where we are and where we still need to go as an organization to address some of the challenges posed above. These themes were:

- Several barriers to inclusion exist. There are many who don't necessarily feel included. This is even true, sometimes, of long-time prominent members of SIOP.
- Some people who look like they are part of the "in" group to others may not experience it that way. Other people have a great feeling, knowing and/or being introduced to others, feeling that they are coming to conferences to see their friends.
- The organization is experienced differently by different people. To those who are "in" it may feel very inclusive—but those same behaviors and cues that indicate inclusion to those who are "in" are the signs and expressions of exclusion to others. Friendliness and informality are experienced by many, and yet can be seen as barriers by new members or those who are different in some way. Some report feeling invisible.
- There are important dimensions of difference in SIOP in addition to race and gender—including nationality, methodology, membership/affiliation type, sexual orientation, and so forth—that result in differential experiences and degrees of inclusion.
- There are both formal and informal aspects of inclusion and exclusion at SIOP. Formal aspects include membership procedures and criteria, processes for getting on the conference program, and so forth. Informal aspects include people's behavior at conferences, for example, using only 1st names at large sessions and assuming that everyone knows each other.
- One participant talked about feeling excluded as a practitioner and the difficulty in finding meaningful takeaways at the conference. Some of the more subtle aspects—for example, sitting in rows, PowerPoint presentations, few opportunities for interaction—can create barriers. Inclusion requires more proactive behavior. As this participant put it: *When I think of inclusion, I think of embracing people.*

- What would people like in this regard?
  - A sense of being embraced when people approach me and say, “Welcome, we’re glad that you are here.” Being recognized in having a conversation with people (people you see year after year). Sessions that are not so stiff, and also informally including people in conversations.
  - Sessions structured to include questions/conversation.
  - “Less intimidating sessions” in which newer or less experienced investigators could present.
  - To be accepted and valued as a person, beyond what my vita indicates.
  - More diversity in methodology.
  - Have teaching be treated as valuable.
  - As one person put it: “Being exclusive and inclusive are not mutually exclusive.” Another had experiences at another conference that were also desirable at SIOP: “The ability to approach people. People learn and then remember my name from one year to the next. Don’t stare through you when you say hello. Remember me even if I didn’t publish in *JAP*.”
- Everyone has a responsibility with regard to creating and fostering inclusion, beyond what the organization does. Everyone has some power to make a difference. For example, the way we say hello to others, the way that we carry ourselves, what we choose to wear, and how we deal with these symbols in others, affects our overall experience in the organization and that of others.

At other workshops that I conducted in various countries in recent months, participants reported a number of elements in their experiences of inclusion. These included:

- Participating in and feeling part of a group or context with a variety/diversity of members/other participants.
- Some dimensions or goals were held in common with others in the situation, while different points of view and styles of thinking and expression are easily manifested.
- A learning stance is adopted (by the person as well as others in the situation).
- Feeling accepted, recognized, and respected as a person.
- Being respected *because* of differences with other people in the situation, who expressed genuine curiosity and interest and avoided stereotypes; being looked at, talked to; others focused on making the person feel good.
- Doing what the person wanted while continuing to be accepted; a sense of unconditional acceptance.
- Ability to be spontaneous and to express genuine thoughts and feelings.
- Space and invitations to speak; being listened to, heard, and allowed to participate, even across lines of authority and/or experience.
- A sense of joy; a sense of psychological and physical energy; the feeling of not having to argue or fight.

I also asked participants to talk about the consequences or outcomes of inclusion that they had experienced. Among those outcomes were the following:

- Improved productivity; fewer errors; a better-quality product.
- Greater self-confidence; more commitment to the organization; more satisfaction in one's work.
- More knowledge transfer.
- More group cohesion and more positive group climate; a better work environment.
- More customer satisfaction.
- Being able to better include others.
- Better able to accomplish organizational goals and purposes.

These lists begin to map the characteristics and products of inclusion. There is certainly more work to be done to fully describe and document inclusion and its antecedents and consequences. But it is clear that such experiences and their associated outcomes are certainly desirable and preferred over the perpetuation of exclusion and discrimination.

## References

- American Psychological Association (2002). *Guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, practice, and organizational change for psychologists*. [Available at <http://www.apa.org/pi/multiculturalguidelines>].
- Bertrand, M. & Mullainathan, S. (2002). *Are Emily and Brendan more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Chicago.
- Chrobot-Mason, D. & Ferdman, B. M. (2001). Multicultural competencies for I-O psychologists: Why and how? *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 39(1), 69–74.
- Ferdman, B. M. & Davidson, M. N. (2002a). A matter of difference—Diversity and drawing the line: Are some differences too different? (Or: who's in, who's out, and what difference does it make?). *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 39(3), 43–46.
- Ferdman, B. M. & Davidson, M. N. (2002b). A matter of difference—Inclusion: What can I and my organization do about it? *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 39(4), 80–85.
- Haney, C., & Hurtado, A. (1994). The jurisprudence of race and meritocracy: Standardized testing and “race-neutral” racism in the workplace. *Law and Human Behavior*, 18, 223–248.
- Hulse, C. (2002, December 12). Lott apologizes again on words about ‘48 race. *The New York Times*, p. A-1.
- Krueger, A. B. (2002, December 12). Sticks and stones can break bones, but the wrong name can make a job hard to find. *The New York Times*, p. C-2.
- Luker, R. E. (2002, December 12). Trent Lott, ‘segregationist of the heart,’ should resign. *San Diego Union-Tribune*, p. B-13.
- Roper ASW (2002, November). *National Geographic—Roper 2002 Global Geographic Literacy Survey*. N. P.: National Geographic Education Foundation [available at <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/geosurvey/download/RoperSurvey.pdf>].

## A MATTER OF DIFFERENCE

### Making the Tough Calls: Negotiating Exclusion in Inclusive and Diverse Organizations

**Martin N. Davidson**  
University of Virginia

**Bernardo M. Ferdman**  
Alliant International University



Diverse and inclusive organizations are supposed to enrich members' task effectiveness, interpersonal relationships, and personal efficacy so that members can achieve their best. In our previous columns, we have tried to communicate the shape and texture of inclusion—to present our vision of what inclusive environments might look like and how they can be cultivated (Davidson & Ferdman, 2001, 2002; Ferdman, 2003; Ferdman & Davidson, 2002a, 2002b).

But the vision of an inclusive organization is severely compromised if it doesn't also address the paradox of inclusion: What happens when someone really doesn't fit in the inclusive environment? This is one of the most challenging questions facing leaders and managers who genuinely want to make their organizations more inclusive. The vision for inclusion may be compelling, but people want to know how to get there and how to "live" there effectively when they arrive.

As we explore this turn on the path toward inclusion, we need to acknowledge our underlying assumptions. First, we approach this from the perspective of the leader-manager in a hierarchical organization. The path toward inclusion could be somewhat different for the organization member who does not have formal authority over others. Second, we assume that people in organizations care deeply about results. Inclusion and diversity discourse often focuses on process (and we shall revisit process here). But organizations also want to understand the link between inclusion and effective business results. There are times when it seems that the two are incompatible. But are they really?

#### The Dilemma

*"As we debated the best strategies for selling the product in this region, my top advisor, known for his candor and insight, stated bluntly: 'Our customers simply won't tolerate having a Muslim, especially one who is orthodox, as a lead consultant. We have to deal with this....'"*

In an earlier column, we discussed the fact that boundaries exist that define who is inside and who is outside of an inclusive organization (Ferd-

man & Davidson, 2002a). Such boundaries are rarely drawn without conflict and debate over where the line should rest.

The leader describing this scenario faces a crisis of inclusion.<sup>1</sup> The assumption about Muslims in the scenario challenges the boundaries of inclusion by identifying a group of people who presumably don't belong. When so confronted, the leader has two fundamental choices: (a) challenge the stated assumption and keep pushing toward greater inclusion, or (b) acknowledge the validity of the statement and exclude the person or group member in question. Our goal in previous columns has been to build the rationale and offer some suggestions for how to undertake the former. But we also have to understand what it means to choose the latter (whether in a case like the one with which we started this section, or in other, more subtle but no less challenging situations).

Social psychologist Ellen Langer, when introducing her freshman course at Harvard many years ago, pointed out that there were three kinds of people: those who read the *New Yorker*, those who don't read the *New Yorker*, and those who don't read the *New Yorker* anymore. Even though the last two look the same to others, she noted, they are not really the same, and their difference is quite important to a social psychologist. By analogy, leaders who acknowledge the validity of the exclusionary statement may do so for different reasons. On one hand, the leader may simply ignore the importance of inclusion and carelessly or unconsciously accept the assumption as valid. In our observation, some leaders want to limit greater inclusion, especially in environments they believe are already too inclusive. Sometimes these are the more conservative voices that never wanted the boundaries to stretch in the first place. Others may have been included when boundaries were previously stretched, but now may feel that the stretch has gone far enough. These leaders miss the critical opportunities that a truly inclusive organization can promote (Davidson & Ferdman, 2001, 2002; Ferdman, 2003; Ferdman & Davidson, 2002a, 2002b).

On the other hand, the leader may find herself torn by genuinely wanting to instill an ethos of inclusion but firmly believing that the best interest of the organization is to acknowledge the validity of the statement. How can she deal with the exclusionary nature of this dilemma?

Because most people strive to be fair and to do the right thing, many who value and are committed to inclusion reflexively include any person or group that seems to be excluded. Traditionally, this has been the only stance that people and organizations committed to justice could take—to err on the side of overinclusion—to compensate for the excessive underinclusion (and active exclusion) of the past. But one result of this dynamic is that, some-

---

<sup>1</sup> Let's assume that the advisor speaks from a grounded assessment of what is true of the business setting and not from some unfounded personal prejudice.

times, we do not develop clear criteria to help us understand who really fits in the organization. In other words, we are not able to discern the appropriate boundaries of inclusion. So we end up confused when faced with the kinds of dilemmas presented by the scenario. Even in the most inclusive environments, everyone cannot fit. Our hope is that if we work at it, we can build something of which anyone and everyone can be a part. But this is just not realistic.

Thus, the leader of the inclusive organization is left with a strangely paradoxical challenge: to know when (and how) to exclude!

### Resolution

Ironically, the answer to the dilemma of making the tough calls about exclusion—"exclusion calls" as we refer to them—effectively rests with exercising skill in building an inclusive organization. The leader who wants to nurture inclusion must also create a context in which that inclusion has meaning. Within that context he or she must exercise a set of skills to support inclusion.

In the "Langerian" distinction above, the unskilled leader would decide promptly and without reflection that, "because this is a valid market concern, no Muslims will be placed in the lead consultant role." In contrast, the skilled leader engages in a clear and thoughtful process that would include a number of elements:

***Building the container.*** The inclusive leader uses the broader context to her or his best advantage. One of the most effective tools for dealing with difference, especially when inclusion dilemmas arise, is to create perspective—to be able to "see the big picture." This perspective acts as a container inside of which interactions and dynamics can occur. In most organizations, the container is a commitment to the goals and sustainability of the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Leaders challenge the organization's members to sustain that container by working through disagreements and dilemmas about core values and their operationalization (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

Consider the analogy of a healthy family under duress. Members may be in conflict over a variety of issues, but there is often the experience of "getting through" the difficulties and coming to a resolution in which the members feel even closer to one another as a result of their differences. This outcome occurs because there is a foundation—a container—of trust, love, and respect between members that is not compromised by episodic differences. Indeed, stressors handled well can actually strengthen that foundation!

Holvino and Sheridan (2003) write about the importance of building interdependence as a key practice in working skillfully across differences. To the extent that the organizational container incorporates and promotes interdependence among members and groups, it should be more likely that leaders will be able to make better "exclusion calls" when necessary and more



importantly, less likely that they will be faced with unnecessary and invalid claims that certain groups or people need to be excluded.

**Context of organizational values.** The strength of the organization's values about inclusion also affects the leader's capacity to deal effectively with exclusion. The organization may draw the line differently at what is appropriate in various situations. For example, if the organization sees itself as a role model in being inclusive, the values of the organization might encourage the leader in our earlier example to push back on the client who won't accept a Muslim consultant. Yet, in another situation, the leader may suggest that, given the nature of the business and the clients, it would not be suitable to use a consultant who is a bit shaky in English despite speaking four other languages proficiently.

Leaders in inclusive organizations can and should reinforce the value of inclusion and ask themselves and their people to thoughtfully and consistently apply that value together with other core values of the organization. The challenge for the leader faced with calls for exclusion is, as Miller and Katz (2002) suggest, to work to establish new baselines for inclusion that go beyond conventional wisdom. Ultimately, whatever decision is made in a particular case, a key test will be whether the process and the outcome support the organization's values and reinforce inclusion, or undermine them and support systematic exclusion.

**Analyzing the task.** The effective leader must carefully consider the nature of the tasks at hand in determining whether exclusion is a necessary option. When Phil Jackson, the former coach of the Chicago Bulls basketball team in the 1990s, was asked about his apparent tolerance for the behavior of an eccentric player on the team, Dennis Rodman, Jackson was often clear in observing that Rodman, though prone to wearing dresses, was still the best rebounder in the league. The task Jackson needed personnel for was to rebound. Rodman rarely wavered in his flawless execution of the task.

The story is important because it reveals an important competency for the inclusive leader. Understanding the nature of the task is a prerequisite for knowing who could or could not execute the task. More importantly, the leader must not be duped into thinking that irrelevant surface differences or historical patterns of exclusion of members of given groups from particular tasks affect a person's ability to accomplish the task. By the same token, this clarity of task will also serve the inclusive leader in determining when someone is not the right person to accomplish the task.

**Candid communication.** In general, the best outcomes under stress or in conflict situations result when people have an opportunity to communicate clearly how each sees the situation, what feelings are evoked, and what the impact is on each (e.g., Stone, Patton, & Heen, 1999). In attempts to nurture inclusion, organization members often hold their tongues when they should speak candidly. Sometimes this takes the form of "political correctness,"

sometimes simple indifference. Members of the organization become so attached to the illusion of compatibility that they withhold—sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously—their real sentiments. This undermines the capacity to have a culture of open communication, one of the core aspects of an inclusive culture (Davidson & Ferdman, 2001). Ironically, the tendency to react to overinclusion by not confronting the “inclusion conflicts” actually undermines the inclusion that one is so committed to building.

In some instances, this communication skill may even extend to engaging the potentially excluded parties. The principle is that the more cogent and diverse voices the leader can engage and the more she or he engages the relevant diversity, the more likely the right call will emerge.

***Questioning assumptions.*** Are we willing to question old (and typically unquestioned) assumptions about who can do what when, or what skills or profile is needed to get certain tasks done? If we do so, we are more likely to make wise choices. To make tough calls about exclusion skillfully, leaders must not agree to a course of action just because “that’s how it has always been done,” because a survey points in a certain direction, or because “the majority rules.” The leader faced with the scenario we began with, before choosing to deal with the situation by choosing exclusion, must explore and question a range of assumptions, including those about the implications of customer intolerance, the organization’s role and responsibility regarding social change, and the appropriateness of discomfort and conflict in business situations.

***Acknowledging the role of time.*** Inclusive leaders should consider the role of time in the dynamics of determining when particular degrees of inclusion or exclusion are appropriate. History and intergroup dynamics can consciously and unconsciously affect how we assess whether inclusion or exclusion is warranted. For example, there is often a history between the relevant groups, either antagonistic or supportive, that can and should be discerned by the leader, both inside the organization and in its external environment. In carrying out this assessment, it is often helpful to seek counsel from a broad range of perspectives.

***Revisiting and learning from decisions.*** Whether the ultimate decision is to exclude or include, a commitment to re-examine the decision and the process by which it was reached is critical for the inclusive leader. Such an analysis together with constant inquisitiveness about how to stretch the boundaries of inclusion at a later point distinguishes a more thoughtful, skilled approach from a “knee-jerk” one. Simply accepting exclusionary practices because “that’s how it has always been done” is the wrong approach, in our view. Making difficult calls after a period of broad-based input and consideration is more skillful. This is important because invariably, we will make mistakes.

Consider the case of Gabriel García Márquez, the Nobel-Prize winning Colombian novelist. As a “lay” publisher, we might reflexively assume that a critical skill for a writer is knowing how to spell properly. We might believe

that it is quite reasonable to exclude a poor speller from a position as a copywriter for a newspaper or advertising agency. Yet, in his recent autobiography, García Márquez (2002) reveals that he has always been a notoriously atrocious speller and has depended completely on proofreaders to correct the spelling in his manuscripts!

Effective leaders of inclusion must be constantly vigilant in this regard.

## Conclusion

We believe the sum of the leader's efforts in these areas creates wisdom in engaging inclusion. In other words, knee-jerk reactions are less likely to be helpful than thoughtful, engaged processes. There is no rule book or formula to tell a leader exactly what to do to create an inclusive environment. In this respect, leading inclusively is as much art as it is science. Yet, decisions about inclusion and exclusion must be made. We offer these options and suggestions as a way to tackle this challenge.

But there is another benefit to wise inclusive leadership. In an era of careflessness and political correctness, wise inclusive leadership frees the leader to remain passionate about what she or he believes without fearing that the passion will squelch other members' commitment and engagement. It sets a tone for candor and creates a vehicle for repair in the face of mistakes that ultimately enhances the effectiveness and the well-being of the organization.

## References

- Davidson, M. N., & Ferdman, B. M. (2001). Diversity and inclusion: What difference does it make? *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 39(2), 36–38.
- Davidson, M. N., & Ferdman, B. M. (2002). Inclusion and power: Reflections on dominance and subordination in organizations. *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 40(1), 62–67.
- Ferdman, B. M. (2003). Accounts of inclusion (and exclusion). *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 40(4), 81–86.
- Ferdman, B. M., & Davidson, M. N. (2002a). Drawing the line: Are some differences too different? (Or: Who's in, who's out, and what difference does it make?) *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 39(3), 43–46.
- Ferdman, B. M., & Davidson, M. N. (2002b). Inclusion: What can I and my organization do about it? *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, 39(4), 80–85.
- García Márquez, G. (2002). *Vivir para contarla*. Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma.
- Heifetz, R. A. & Linsky, M. (2002). *Leadership on the line: Staying alive through the dangers of leading*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Holvino, E., & Sheridan, B. (2003). *Working across differences: Diversity practices for organizational change* (CGO Insights Briefing Note No. 17). Boston: Center for Gender in Organizations, Simmons School of Management.
- Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1997). *Commitment in the workplace: Theory, research, and application*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Miller, F. A. & Katz, J. H. (2002). *The inclusion breakthrough: Unleashing the real power of diversity*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. (1999). *Difficult conversations: How to discuss what matters most*. New York: Penguin.

# A MATTER OF DIFFERENCE

## Here and There: A Conversation about Identity

**Martin N. Davidson**  
University of Virginia

**Bernardo M. Ferdman**  
Alliant International University



There comes a point at which the only medium of communication is that which occurs in relationship. It no longer makes sense to speak to a disembodied audience because the message requires connection. For our penultimate column, we sought to move to uncommon territory in the dialogue on diversity and inclusion. All too often, the roles that we play (willingly or not) are disturbingly predetermined. The woman, the person of color, or the gay person bears the brunt of prejudice and discrimination, gains a certain set of insights about the experience of being marginal, and is sometimes able to educate those who perpetuate the discrimination. The man, the White person, and/or the straight person unconsciously inflict or perpetuate prejudice and discrimination, feel guilty at the emerging awareness of the impact of their behavior, and do penance by doing whatever the respective marginalized person with whom they have managed to have a conversation on the subject tells them to do.

This approach to ubiquitous but stereotyped roles is not satisfying to us. We believe there is a more textured and complex view, one that can better reflect the fluidity, multiplicity, vibrancy, and multilayered nature of our identities and of our interactions within and outside of our identity groups. A principal goal for our columns has been to develop and articulate that more multifaceted view, together with its implications for creating more inclusive organizations.

In this column, we set out to have a conversation about our identities as men of color and how the boundaries of those identities are remarkably fluid and emergent. Specifically, we wanted to delve into what happens to our sense of identity and membership when we are outside of the United States. It is an exchange and exploration of the sort that is not all that common in our experience, particularly at work, but we believe it is the kind of dialogue that must be an integral part of truly inclusive organizations. Please listen, and if you wish, join us...

**BF:** We had planned to ask each other questions regarding some of our experiences and perspectives, particularly regarding inclusion and international experiences....

**MD:** I am especially interested in the flexibility of identity as we move to different national contexts.

**BF:** That's a great theme. Perhaps I could expand the theme a bit to include both flexibility and stability?

**MD:** Sounds good to me. In particular, I was struck by how when I was in China, I was no longer able to be "Black." I was walking down a street in Shanghai on my first foray into the city on foot. As I passed several groups of Chinese workers (I was near one of the many construction projects underway all over the city), I was acutely aware of being watched. And in an epiphany, it hit me that my ethnic and racial script no longer applied.

**BF:** Can you say more about (a) what an ethnic script is, (b) what made the script salient in China, and (c) how it was different from the script in the U.S.?

**MD:** I think about the script as a kind of "roadmap for race." It's a kind of cognitive and behavioral script that creates a set of expectancies on how I am supposed to react vis-à-vis race. In the U.S., I think the script is about how I experience non-Black people's reactions to my being Black. I feel that they have many negative images of Black people because that is sufficiently salient in the U.S. for all the reasons we know. For me, this reality leads to my predispositions toward being ready to educate non-Black people about race because they will usually be ignorant. It leads toward my predisposition to being vigilant about instances in which I or others like me will probably be offended by the behaviors of non-Black people. Finally, it leads to an expectation that once race becomes salient in an interaction, that as a Black person, I will command center stage. The conversation is not about ethnicity or cultural diversity. Rather it becomes about Black and White and since I'm Black, I'm central to that conversation.

It's interesting that as I describe this to you a couple of patterns seem evident about this script. First, it seems like a map about dealing with prejudice/ignorance/racism, and not just about dealing with race. Second, I use the term "non-Black," but I think for me, I'm really talking about White Euro-Americans. I am used to experiencing my race as a place in which I will be constantly misunderstood and, as a result, deprived of resources that I deserve...I would call it a script of "subordination" to echo some of my thinking from one of our previous columns.

**BF:** When you say that regarding the images, I think of Claude Steele's notion of stereotype threat. But could you give me a more vivid sense of the experience for you? What is actually going through your mind?

**MD:** Well, as I am walking down that Shanghai street, I realize the script no longer applies. I knew I was being watched and that I was an oddity, but I did not feel that I was being reviled, feared, or ridiculed. I just felt truly weird! And it was refreshing! I was aware that as I was in a new land, and it felt like "all bets were off" and it was almost as though I had to redefine my ethnicity in this new context.

**BF:** And what cued you into your being an “oddity?” How did the Chinese people around you communicate that, or what cues did you use to reach that impression?

**MD:** Now, I know images and stereotypes of Blacks have spread all over the world to some extent. I know that when I turned on the Chinese TV, I could get NBA basketball games from the U.S. and most of the people on the basketball court were Black. I know that when I went to an ATM in a Chinese bank and the helpful guard who was trying to tell me the machine didn’t work used a sports “timeout” hand motion to communicate with me, assuming, I suppose, that as a Black, I would get sports gestures.

I was really fascinated by how the context changed me. I saw myself differently.

**BF:** Do you have any other examples of how that works?

**MD:** Again, the Chinese people stared, so that cued me into being an oddity, and I was pretty tall, relative to most of the people I encountered (though I learned that many Chinese people are quite tall, bucking my stereotype of Asians being uniformly short).

**BF:** So they were looking up at you—that’s an interesting image, relative to your earlier point about subordination (which we often think of as being in the “down” position).

**MD:** Yes, that makes sense—I was talking about the experience or perception in the U.S.

**BF:** But in China, was there something going on in people’s behavior, or was it your mental maps that led to your interpretations?

**MD:** Indeed! What I realized is that for good or ill, I have a certain privilege as a Black person in the U.S. and that most people in the U.S. must have me on their radar screen in some capacity.

**BF:** You realized this in China?

**MD:** Whether it is as the object of disdain or respect, I matter. Yes, and it was in China that I saw this...

**BF:** OK, let me see if I understand.... In China, you felt that you were an unknown, “strange” person. People looked at you as an “oddity,” someone they didn’t know and didn’t understand. In contrast, in the U.S., people “know” something about you, even if it is stereotyped (i.e., they think they know something, even if wrong) and they HAVE to deal with you and your “type” whether they want to or not. In China, there are one billion-plus people who are going on about their lives without taking you into account in the least. Am I getting some of it?

**MD:** Exactly! And I don’t know if I could have realized it here in the U.S. because my experience of mattering is so ubiquitous.

**BF:** Can you say more about this “experience of mattering,” especially as it relates to inclusion? When I think of the African-American experience of mattering, much of it, at least the shared portion, is full of painful and oppres-

sive episodes. In China, you didn't "matter" the same way, but did that make you feel more or less included, or more or less free? (Whatever "free" means?)

**MD:** Interesting question. I would say that it was the Chinese experience of a kind of freedom from expectation or freedom from projection that was new and liberating. You're right. Here, for me and for many Blacks, the "mattering" or centrality is associated with pain. Even though centrality is associated with pain, there is also a kind of upside with being the center of attention. Shelby Steele wrote about this centrality several years ago, albeit from a politically conservative viewpoint I don't share.

**BF:** Can you describe the feeling/experience a bit more, and then say something about how it affected your behavior (particularly professionally, since you were there on a work trip)?

**MD:** I would say that the new insight about lack of centrality was associated with a sense of surprise, relief, and fear or trepidation.

Surprise—I simply could not fathom that there was a dimension to my sense of racial identity that I did not have a handle on! It was like a blind spot that became apparent just as I introspected on my experience of walking down the street...

Relief—there was a brief moment of relief (as an introvert) that in a profound way, I didn't have to be the center of attention. The other piece of the experience was that after people gawked a bit, they then lost interest. So I didn't feel so exposed.

**BF:** That sounds paradoxical (given the sense of being a "stranger" in China).

**MD:** Yes, indeed. Finally fear/trepidation—so if I am not the center of attention, if I cannot will people to pay attention to me by virtue of my race, then who am I?

**BF:** I see!

**MD:** How do I engage or become a part of the whole. It's like my ticket to inclusion had been my race.

**BF:** It kind of exposes the sick nature of our race relations (and attempts at superficial inclusion) in the U.S.

**MD:** Right. You can't do diversity without dealing with the Blacks! But all of that was potentially blown away in China, because I would have to find another way in.

**BF:** Yet, at the same time, in China you are even more "different" than in the U.S., no? Just not on the same racial terms (though there is still probably a racial dimension).

It sounds like part of what you experienced may be the way that, even with all of our diversity dialogue and work, you are still somewhat "flattened" here in the U.S. By that I mean not permitted to be fully complete, because you are bound by the racial schemas and expectations that prevail here.



**MD:** Yes, flattened is the right word. I never engaged the Chinese in dialogue about diversity, but it is conceivable to me that I was more American to them than I was Black.

So I have a question for you. In your travel in South America, do you have any similar kind of identity-shifting experience? Or even a dissimilar one?

**BF:** I was reflecting earlier on my recent experience in Galicia, Spain (not quite South America)....

It is a somewhat international group with which I have been working. In addition to Galician folks, there are Brazilians, Australians, Spanish folks from Madrid, and so forth...and it's an American company...(or at least a company with a U.S. headquarters).

In the work, there is a constant shifting of languages (among English, Spanish, Portuguese, Gallego), sometimes even in the same sentence. There's also a mixing of HR approaches, leadership philosophies, work cultures (though all embedded in the corporate culture and imperatives driven by HQ).

In terms of my own identity in that context, I found myself shifting (in part with the languages, with my behavior, with social graces) among American, Latin American, Latino. I also was dealing with the identities of consultant, academic, organizational psychologist, expert (in my field)/novice (in the company and its particular production process), and so forth. What was more obscured (and not mentioned to the folks there, really) is my Jewish identity. Also interesting, perhaps, is that even though I live in San Diego and I am certainly open about that, I don't think I was ever perceived (nor did I usually think of myself) as a "typical American."

**MD:** Why not?

**BF:** In fact, one person there mentioned how comfortable some of his subordinates seemed around me in that they opened up and acted "normal"—that is, talking as they usually would and not shutting down. The implicit contrast was with American visitors (either from HQ or other consultants). The ability to communicate in Spanish, and to engage in some of the social graces, I think supported the sense that I didn't fit into a stereotyped "American" mold.

**MD:** Got it. What is that mold?

**BF:** It's a stereotype of someone who has the world revolve around him, for whom others have to speak English, who doesn't really understand the multiplicity that is Europe (or the world, for that matter).

But knowing all that, I never felt totally at home either and if I let myself go in that direction, I was more likely to run into problems. In other words, to be effective, I had/have to maintain some of that externality (both as a consultant and culturally).

Does this connect to inclusion, shifting identities, or what? I'm not sure if we're going in the direction we want to....

**MD:** I think we have a lot of good stuff here....

I wanted to ask you to clarify the previous statement about maintaining externality. What do you mean?

**BF:** I meant that in the sense that if I allowed myself to get too embedded in their company and to have them assume that I could understand things (whether cultural in the organizational sense or the national/regional sense) without explanation, then I would lose a lot of my power as a consultant. Part of my power (and utility) derives from being able to ask questions and to be “stupid,” from bringing a new and different perspective, and helping them to see things differently.

P.S. I should mention that I was also in constant contact with my own “home” office...explaining what was happening and getting input from my own American consulting colleague.

**MD:** Out of curiosity, so what happened around your Jewish identity in all of this? You said that was not so emergent?

**BF:** I am used to being openly and not so openly Jewish. I don’t necessarily mention it directly. In that context I had other connections to Spain that I consciously didn’t mention to people, even when I found myself wanting to a couple of times.

When it was Friday or Saturday, I didn’t ask anyone about synagogues or the like (though I don’t really do that while traveling in the U.S. either), and I know that there aren’t any in the region I was visiting. My uncle was a high-ranking Israeli diplomat in Spain recently, and I didn’t mention that to anyone during my consulting visit.

It’s probably easier to describe the degree to which my Jewish identity is in the foreground (i.e., open) or not in the U.S. context. I identify in a summary way as a Latino Jew, or as a Latin American Jew (or as a Jewish Latino or Jewish Latin American). In the U.S., in Latino (non-Jewish) circles, internally I am often MORE conscious of being Jewish, but depending on the circumstances don’t necessarily highlight it (yet don’t hide it either).

It was very interesting getting involved recently with the San Diego Latino-Jewish Coalition. I went to a meeting earlier this year, designed to get the two groups to know each other better. When we divided into two groups, the organizers from the American Jewish Committee (American Jews), asked me to go with the Latino group. It was a strange experience, not so much being with the Latino group, as being asked to go there by the American Jews.

**MD:** You got categorized. The American Jews “told” you were a Latino—a choice was thrust upon you, it sounds like.

**BF:** You’re right at one level—because there were only two groups. But the AJC folks never stopped thinking about me as Jewish. In some ways, I think they liked the idea of having an “insider” who understood the goals, perhaps, placed with the “other” group. They were fascinated with the idea of me (and the Mexican Jewish woman there) as bridges and connectors. Once I was with the Latinos, I felt both connected and different at the same time.

The wonderful part was that the others in the Latino group didn't have any issue with my being there.

A big part of the problem is our either/or categories and our inability to create processes and structures that transcend them. It occurs to me that being able to do that requires more people to experience some of that complexity and multiplicity (to go to China as it were)!

**MD:** I'm just struck by how, as we explore this fluidity of identity and what can elicit it, we are still defined (and define ourselves) as a way of figuring out how to be. Your examples touch on the same things my China story touch on. We are so complex and multifaceted and there are such structures, customs, wills that exert force to make us something that is understandable, something that fits. And I wonder what would happen if we could somehow cultivate the capacity to live with the true ambiguity of our identities. What impact would that have on our capacity to be inclusive?

**BF:** That's what I was trying to get at in some way.

**Concluding note:** We had our conversation as an online "chat" (i.e., in writing), as a way to best track our thoughts and to provide a mechanism for quiet introspection/reflection combined with dialogue and interaction. This was born, in part, from Bernardo observing rich dialogues and learning about diversity among his students as they participate in online forums during his graduate diversity course. What you've read here is an edited and abridged version of the longer conversation that we had. Even in the longer version, we felt that we wanted/needed to go a lot deeper and spend a lot more time, and we look forward to doing that soon, even if not for our readers, then for ourselves. We find it fascinating—and challenging—that even though we've been working and talking with each other in depth about related topics for so long, that we could gain so much additional perspective on each other and on issues of mutual interest by structuring our dialogue in this way.

# A MATTER OF DIFFERENCE

## Some Learning About Inclusion: Continuing the Dialogue

**Bernardo M. Ferdman**  
Alliant International University

**Martin N. Davidson**  
University of Virginia

### Part I (Bernardo)



This is our eighth column in the series that we started 3 years ago. It seems that the time has gone by very quickly, yet looking back over the articles, we have covered a lot of ground. At the same time, it feels as if in some ways we have only touched the surface of the complex and challenging issues of diversity and inclusion in organizations. For this last column, we want to build on the previous one, in which we began a dialogue that we shared with our readers and also to provide a way to connect the pieces of all the articles. To do this, we decided to keep our two voices united but distinct, in a sense, so that we could continue to be differentiated as individuals while we discuss key aspects of what we have learned from collaborating on our column and try to point the way to the future. Rather than a back-and-forth conversation, however, we decided to write longer, connected pieces similar to our earlier articles but maintaining our individual voices. Essentially, we would like to embody in the flavor and structure of this column a key aspect of what we have learned about inclusion, which is that for it to be present, for example in our collaboration, it requires working together on a common task while maintaining our identity and ability to express ourselves as distinct individuals (even to the point of sometimes defining that common task differently). The challenge in our work together, and we believe the challenge of diversity and inclusion in organizations, has been finding an effective way to create and maintain structures and processes that allow for and foster—all at the same time—differentiation, connectedness, relationship, and interdependence, essentially allowing us to create a unified whole that is also based on fleshed out, recognizable parts—a whole with its own integrity and that can stand on its own yet that at the same time maintains and even enhances the integrity of its component parts.

I believe that this ability to take in individuals without having those individuals lose themselves is a fundamental requirement of effectiveness in any social system or group. (Of course, as Smith and Berg, 1987, so cogently point out in describing the paradoxes of belonging to groups, the other side of this is that the group can only be formed and take on an identity as such to

the extent that its component individuals give themselves to the group.) This need to preserve the integrity of the parts or individuality of the members is particularly true to the extent that the value to the group or organization of its members is their unique contribution (i.e., they are not simply another “cog in the machine”). Although this has certainly been a major focus of the discourse on diversity, I think there is something new to add when considering this dynamic in the context of a multicultural, diverse society. To get there, I need to take a slight detour.

I have just completed reading a forceful and very thought-provoking book by Gervase R. Bushe (2001) entitled *Clear Leadership: How Outstanding Leaders Make Themselves Understood, Cut Through the Mush, and Help Everyone Get Real at Work*. In articulating his vision of leadership and its associated skills, Bushe presents a compelling case for the importance of self-awareness, descriptiveness, curiosity, and appreciation as fundamental building blocks of interpersonal competence and organizational learning. To the extent that people in organizations can master these skills, according to Bushe, we will be able to reduce or eliminate what he calls *interpersonal mush*. He describes interpersonal mush as occurring “when people’s understanding of each other is based on fantasies and stories they have made up about each other” (p. 5). The goal of successful leadership, in his view, is to replace this with *interpersonal clarity* so that people can work together more effectively, particularly in empowered organizations, such that there is an “environment where [people] are willing to tell the truth about their experience and learn from it” (p. 5). A key aspect of effectively clearing away the mush involves managing the “paradox of individuality versus belonging,” expressed as the tension between *separation anxiety*, the fear of being alone, and *intimacy anxiety*, the fear of being engulfed. As we deal with the feelings and behavior provoked by these anxieties, we often vary along a continuum of *fusion*—thinking and feeling solely in reaction to others—at one extreme and *disconnection*—“extreme individuality without any connection to others” (p. 57)—at the other extreme. When I am fused, the boundaries between me and others are blurred at best and non-existent at worst. When I am disconnected, my boundaries are so rigid that I behave as if the experience of others is irrelevant to me, to the extent that I am not even aware of what others are experiencing. For Bushe, the necessary middle ground of these irreconcilable pulls is *differentiation*, which is “finding a place where belonging and individuality are not mutually exclusive, where I am both separate from you and connected to you at the same time” (p. 62), such that I can know what I am experiencing and want to know what others are experiencing, without confusing the two. It is about having choiceful, healthy boundaries, being willing to learn, and being “clear about the difference between what is inside [me] and what is outside of [me] and between [my] past and [my] present” (p. 69). Bushe highlights the importance to clear leadership of engaging in *organizational learning conversations*. For him, *learning* is “the

outcome of an inquiry that produces knowledge and leads to change" (p. 40). What makes it organizational is that it happens in the context of "the relationships that make up the organization" (p. 41), thus making it a social phenomenon, one that results in changes in patterns of relating and interacting.

So how does all this relate to diversity and inclusion? Reading Bushe's book, I became quite excited as I began to see some of the connections. Particularly, it occurred to me that a key challenge of building inclusion in a diverse organization involves reducing or eliminating what I would now call *intergroup mush*. Paralleling the notion of interpersonal mush laid out by Bushe, intergroup mush occurs when people understand and behave with each other primarily on the basis of the fantasies, stories, prejudices, stereotypes, and other internalized representations that they have of their own and each other's social identities. We know, from extensive research on intergroup relations, that people often interact with others in terms of one or more of the perceived group memberships of the other. There are also times when people actively seek to ignore or minimize others' group memberships. At the same time, I can lose sight of one or more of my own identities, for example because I am primarily focused on a different identity or the situation, or other people in it. Thus, intergroup mush can be present not only when I treat someone on the basis of an overgeneralization derived from one of his or her group identities but also when I ignore or am blind to the full range of social identities that both I and the other person hold.

For example, in engaging and working with Martin, I can highlight in my mind and heart his identity as a professor and a man, two identities that we share. This would lead me to assume a certain degree of similarity and commonality on which to build our collaboration. Or I could highlight his identity as an African American, which contrasts with mine as a Latino and a Jew. The reality is that we are both more complex than that, each including a much lengthier list of social identities. To the extent that I interact with Martin primarily on the basis of either a highlighted similarity or a highlighted difference, I contribute to the intergroup mush. Both he and I are members of a range of social categories, which together combine in unique ways to make each of us who we are (Ferdman, 1995). When I lose sight of this complexity, either in me or him, as well as when we collude to do this together, we are contributing to intergroup mush.

As I see it, the challenge of developing *intergroup clarity* is to find ways to recognize both our similarities and differences, not only at the interpersonal but also at the intergroup level. We really *are* different from each other, and not only because of our different group memberships, but also because those groups have different histories, experiences, and realities. From this perspective, increasing inclusion would require developing the skills to allow ourselves and others to see more of the complete and complex picture of our intergroup realities, as these are expressed in our everyday collaborations. It is about allowing for both similarities and differences at both the individual *and* the group levels at the same time that we are joined together in a com-

mon endeavor. To further parallel Bushe, it is about avoiding fusion, in which I act as if we are the same, as well as avoiding disconnection, in which I believe and act as if we are completely different. By maintaining a sense of both individuality (my own and that of my counterparts) together with intergroup distinctiveness, I can be more attuned to the impact of similarities and differences in our work and call upon them as needed. To the extent that this sensitivity and this skill become part of the everyday way of working in an organization, I would argue that we can describe it as a more inclusive organization. In such an organization, differentiation is not only allowed but celebrated such that we can be aware of and express as they become relevant the pieces of ourselves that connect to different group memberships or identities, all this without losing our connection to our coworkers or to our common tasks or similarities.

## **Part II (Martin)**

The mental dilemma that Bernardo's vision of intergroup clarity raises is the need for people (and organizations) to cultivate a *cognitive* capacity to entertain what for so many seems like contradiction. I agree with Bernardo that increasing inclusion means allowing for group and individual similarities and differences to be acknowledged while simultaneously working toward a common purpose. The challenge is that for so many, emphasizing the individual and emphasizing the group are two mutually exclusive ways of thinking. The part of me that is the individual is complex, personal, familiar, and idiosyncratic. The part of me that is a group member is simple, rough around the edges, associated with stereotypes and even prejudice and bigotry.

The combination of acknowledging both individual and group identity as a means of enhancing inclusion requires the capacity to engage paradox. Heather Wishik and I (Wishik & Davidson, 2004) write about this capacity to embrace paradox as a critical competency for effective management across cultural difference. Our research finds that exemplary managers demonstrate the ability to hold seemingly contradicting concepts simultaneously. The leaders we studied started with two or more apparently inconsistent or clashing phenomena, and eventually found new relationships, different contexts, or unforeseen meanings and consequences which enabled these phenomena to be understood as possibility-laden paradoxes where the clashing elements were simultaneously true. Working through to such a cognitive process provided leaders with new options for strategic action.

In the consulting I do, I see the need for engaging paradox all the time. I recently worked with a set of managers who were seeking to create understanding and develop competence in dealing with difference. An African American manager, in discussing the challenge of talking about race differences in the organization, described the phenomenon of how job candidates are labeled. He noted that Whites who are being recruited are simply "candi-



dates,” but people of color being recruited are usually discussed as “qualified minority” candidates, as though their minority identity would necessarily bring into question their qualification. A White man, a close friend and colleague of the speaker, objected to the statement noting that he discusses qualification with all candidates, not just people of color. The discussion became more heated, as each person questioned the accuracy of the other’s perception.

The episode was noteworthy because it illustrated the rejection of the kinds of paradoxes that are an essential part of an inclusive work community. First, the two managers had seemingly opposing views that were, in fact, both true. The White manager was a human resource professional and had, in fact, used the word “qualified” in all sorts of recruiting contexts. It was clear that many of his White colleagues had done so as well. The African American manager was joined by *all* of the other African American managers in the room in his perception that “qualified” was a ubiquitous modifier when discussing minority candidates in particular. Even though the disputants felt that only one of them could be right, both were. I don’t know in retrospect, if either disputant understood that both were correct. As the discussion concluded, I suspect the African American participant believed he was vindicated and the White participant believed he was wrong.

But the expectation of such a simple win-lose outcome does a disservice to the challenge of paradox in inclusive organizations. Fostering inclusion means fostering multiple realities. And being able to thrive in an inclusive organization means being able to tolerate and embrace the ambiguity that accompanies the paradoxes that multiple realities pose. It is ironic that we have so often used and contrasted the words “tolerate” and “embrace” when talking about diversity and differences. This notion of dealing with paradox adds texture to what it means to truly embrace difference.

Perhaps an even more powerful implication of this skill of embracing paradox is that its importance is not limited only to negotiating cultural or racial or gender difference. It is a competency that provides greater degrees of freedom for any organization member to engage differing perspectives and perceptions.

### **Part III (Bernardo)**

I wholeheartedly agree that living and working with paradox is at the crux of the competencies needed to effectively embrace differences and create inclusion. In 1992, I wrote about this in relation to ethnic diversity in particular. In that chapter (Ferdman, 1992), I pointed out the seeming contradictions between recommendations based on research on the social psychology of intergroup relations and conclusions following from cross-cultural and intercultural studies. The former emphasized the pernicious effects—including prejudice and stereotyping—of highlighting social categories and pointed to the importance of putting more emphasis on the individual and less on the group. The latter emphasized the real differences between groups and the

need to be conscious of group memberships so as to be better able to account for culturally based variations in individual behavior. The challenge for those wanting to work effectively across differences is being able to take both of these seemingly contradictory paths at once: Treating others as individuals rather than simply as representatives of a category, while at the same time understanding that because those others belong to a group other than my own they may not share my values, attitudes, and beliefs, nor do they interpret behavior as I do.

In the years since writing that chapter, and particularly as we have collaborated on these columns, I have become more acutely aware of the multiple layers of complexity that are overlaid on that already intricate picture. As Martin points out and as we have mentioned in prior columns, to create and increase inclusion, individuals must have appropriate competencies and demonstrate corresponding behaviors. Inclusion cannot exist without individuals who seek it and behave accordingly. At the same time, those individuals choose, display, and interpret their behavior and that of others in the context of organizational, intergroup, and socio-historical dynamics that are also very much part of the puzzle of inclusion. For example, in the situation Martin describes, even though the White and the African-American managers were both “correct” in their views, to better understand each other and their perspectives and to find effective points of contact, they (and we) might also consider aspects such as the privilege and power of their respective groups (in the organization and in the society at large, both now and in the past), the stereotypes and images each carries of the other (images that are socially, not just individually, formed and shared), and the norms and history concerning diversity and intergroup relations within their workgroup and organization. At the same time, the two managers each belong to multiple other groups that are also part of the picture.

Creating intergroup clarity involves a complex mix of individual competencies, organizational initiatives, and social change. None is sufficient without the others; at the same time, each one drives and can be a precursor for the others. This means that we can begin at any of those levels yet should not expect any one of them alone to complete the task. It also means that effectively increasing inclusion requires leadership, coordination, and above all, interdependence. The challenge for those of us who would like to increase inclusion for ourselves and others is having sufficient courage to muddle through, while continually increasing not only the clarity of our conviction but also our collective learning about what works and what does not, as well as our ability to partner with those who are both similar and different to us.

#### **Part IV (Martin)**

The conclusion of our column prompts me to reflect more deeply on the critical challenges to building inclusive organizations. We have touched on so

many important aspects in the past 3 years: the basic rationale for inclusion, the challenges of power dynamics, the capacity to engage conflict, and the role of courage in manifesting a vision of inclusion. I'm left awed and excited by the prospect of creating inclusive environments.

I'm also reminded of the cautionary note I gleaned from my first psychology professor. She opened class by stating: "There are people who read the *New Yorker*, people who don't read the *New Yorker*, and people who don't read the *New Yorker* anymore. The last two groups look the same, but they are not!" I think about this whenever I work with people to create inclusion because there is a tendency to think that we can get there by just treating people with respect, care, and compassion and that somehow this simple resolve will do the trick. If anything has come from the territory Bernardo and I have explored, I hope it is that building inclusion is hard work, grounded in a commitment to be aware of the difficulties and to take them on with a sense of hope and a toolkit of skills and perspectives that help to bridge the inevitable gaps in a community. That is the vision of inclusion that I want to realize, and I look forward to building alliances with any readers who may wish to join me in the adventure. Take care.

## Part V (Bernardo)

I join with Martin in feeling awe and excitement at the challenge and possibilities inherent in the project of enhancing inclusion in organizations. It is a project that requires concerted and consistent vision and action on the part of individuals, groups, organizations, and society as a whole; yet, it is one that I believe is quite worthwhile, with beneficial outcomes for all. The journey to inclusion most likely will never end, but it can start right now. I too welcome partners for the trip.

## References

- Bushe, G. R. (2001). *Clear leadership: How outstanding leaders make themselves understood, cut through the mush, and help everyone get real at work*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing.
- Ferdman, B. M. (1992). The dynamics of ethnic diversity in organizations: Toward integrative models. In K. Kelley (Ed.), *Issues, theory and research in industrial/organizational psychology* (pp. 339–384). Amsterdam: North Holland.
- Ferdman, B. M. (1995). Cultural identity and diversity in organizations: Bridging the gap between group differences and individual uniqueness. In M. M. Chemers, S. Oskamp, & M. A. Costanzo (Eds.), *Diversity in organizations: New perspectives for a changing workplace* (pp. 37–61). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Smith, K. K. & Berg, D. N. (1987). *Paradoxes of group life: Understanding conflict, paralysis, and movement in group dynamics*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Wishik, H. R., & Davidson, M. N. (2004). *Three core approaches to global leadership and its complexities*. Darden Graduate School of Business. Unpublished manuscript, Charlottesville, VA.