Culture & Inclusion Literature Review

By Siri Uotila
Research Fellow, Women and Public Policy Program

A NOTE ON THIS DOCUMENT

This literature review is an overview of the academic literature relating to diversity and inclusion in organizations. It does not claim to be comprehensive as the existing body of academic work in this somewhat undefined space is vast. Rather, this document aims to focus on individual and organizational levers to promote gender equality. As such, it largely emphasizes recent scholarship from the last 10 years. Earlier, seminal works are included selectively where their influence continues to be felt and where they remain relevant to current conceptions of diversity and inclusion.

The central themes of the diversity and inclusion literature are summarized on the first 16 pages. An appendix containing detailed summaries of 15 of the articles and studies referenced in this literature review follows. The summaries are organized by themes that relate to the components of inclusion covered in the literature review. A full list of references starts on page 38.

INTRODUCTION

“After more than two decades of diversity research, four decades of antidiscrimination legislation, and extraordinary media attention to diversity, discrimination and exclusion in organizations persist.”

Bell (2007)

Although diversity and inclusion are very much real in societies, organizations, and individual lives, diversity and, especially, inclusion remain somewhat elusive concepts in the academic literature. Specifically, with regards to inclusion, a common definition and conceptual understanding has not yet emerged, and the literature on inclusion is considered to be “still in its infancy -- while inclusion has started to gain popularity among diversity scholars, most of the research has lacked adequate theoretical grounding and there is limited empirical testing of ideas” (Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Ehrhart, and Singh, 2011).

Shore et al. (2011), who have authored the most comprehensive literature review on inclusion thus far, go on to present two key conclusions about the state of the inclusion literature: “First, practices that are associated with insider status, including sharing information, participation in decision making, and having voice, are reflected in measures of inclusion. While these practices are assumed to enhance employee perceptions of inclusion, more explicit theorizing about the psychological mechanisms that underlie this link is needed. Second, there is a clear theme that inclusion has positive consequences for individuals and organizations, but as yet, little is known about how or why this occurs. This last point suggests that, fundamentally, the inclusion construct and its underlying theoretical basis need greater development.” These insights will be explored in detail in the following sections.
What is diversity and inclusion?

*Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance.*

Sherbin and Rashid (2017)

Numerous different definitions have been proposed for both diversity and inclusion, many of which are summarized below. Perhaps the most concise and illustrative contrast between diversity and inclusion comes from Sherbin and Rashid (2017): “In the context of the workplace, diversity equals representation. Without inclusion, however, the crucial connections that attract diverse talent, encourage their participation, foster innovation, and lead to business growth won’t happen. Without inclusion, there’s often a diversity backlash. It’s easy to measure diversity: it’s a simple matter of headcount. But quantifying feelings of inclusion can be dicey.” In a similar vein, Pless and Maak (2004) argue that “in order to unleash the potential of workforce diversity, a culture of inclusion needs to be established; a culture that fosters enhanced workforce integration and brings to life latent diversity potentials; a culture that is built on clarified normative grounds and honors the differences as well as the similarities of the individual self and others. Every self is a human being but as a unique person she is always also different from others. Diversity is about balancing this natural tension in different organizational and cultural settings.”

Conceptually, inclusion is possible without diversity; in fact, it is a common scenario in extremely homogeneous organizations, especially small ones that have an employee base of like-minded individuals (such as early-stage start-ups). Likewise, diversity is possible without inclusion; this, too, is common in today’s organizations that struggle to make every employee feel included. But diversity is a necessity for modern organizations in today’s increasingly global and variously diverse marketplace, and the full benefits of diversity cannot be harnessed without inclusion. In fact, diverse but non-inclusive organizations can suffer from demographic diversity-related problems such as high levels of conflict and turnover (Nishii, 2013). Thus, it is fair to say that organizations should aim to build both a high-diversity environment as well as a strong inclusion culture to attain maximum performance.

What is diversity?

Despite two decades of diversity research (Bell, 2007), a single, unifying definition for diversity has not emerged. Some of the most highly-cited and oft-used definitions appear below.¹ Diversity is:

- “Differences between individuals on any personal attributes that determine how people perceive one another” (Gonzalez and DeNisi, 2009).
- “Real or perceived differences among people that affect their interactions and relationships” (Bell, 2007).
- “Differences in perspectives resulting in potential behavioral differences among cultural groups as well as identity differences among group members in relation to other groups” (Larkey, 1996).
- “A characteristic of groups that refers to demographic differences among members” (McGrath, Berdahl, and Arrow, 1995).

Central to the concept of diversity, then, is the idea of *difference*, specifically at the individual level. At the same time, that difference only becomes salient in the context of interactions with *others*, which points to organizational implications.

Hewlett, Marshall, Sherbin, and Gonsalves (2013) consider diversity along two separate dimensions. *Inherent diversity* comprises the “classical” dimensions of diversity, such as gender, race, age, and education, and requires organizations to take explicit steps to balance and integrate variation within them. *Organizational diversity*, however, is the result of a culture that values cultural differences and leverages them in a way that promotes innovation and business success.

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age, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, disability, and nationality. These inherent characteristics of employees help organizations to “match the market”, better understand their customers and users, and discern unmet needs of consumers and clients who are like them. It is the second dimension, acquired diversity, that really allows organizations and teams to transform ideas into innovation. Acquired diversity “skills” such as cultural fluency, generational savvy, gender smarts, social media skills, cross-functional knowledge, global mindset, and language skills can help leaders behave in more inclusive ways. When team members were surveyed about their leaders’ qualities, leaders who had at least three acquired diversity traits (“high inclusion” leaders) were significantly more likely than leaders without any acquired diversity traits (“low inclusion” leaders) to be perceived as inclusive (for example, 63% of team members said their high inclusion leader ensures that everyone speaks up and gets heard, vs. 29% for low inclusion leaders; 82% said their high inclusion leader empowers team members to make decisions vs. 40% for low inclusion leaders).

Most existing research on gender diversity in organizations posits that diversity is fraught with difficulties, such as bias or discrimination, or that diversity is a double-edged sword with significant challenges to go along with potential benefits (Shore, Chung-Herrera, Dean, Ehrhart, Jung, Randel, and Singh, 2009). For example, demographic diversity in groups is associated with negative group outcomes as heterogeneous groups tend to experience higher levels of conflict (Nishii, 2013). The primary explanation for diversity’s association with group conflict is that visible differences, such as gender, lead to categorization processes that trigger intergroup biases (Nishii, 2013). Individuals define themselves and others through social categories and generally display a preference for others who are similar to them in attitudes, beliefs, and personality (an in-group bias). Given that such traits can often be difficult to discern, people instead gauge similarity from visible traits, such as gender (Gonzalez and DeNisi, 2009). Demographically similar coworkers thus prefer working together – a core theme in any discussion of diversity.

On the flipside, there is also plenty of evidence to suggest that diversity is good for business. Woolley, Chabris, Pentland, Hashmi, and Malone (2010) offer some of the most comprehensive corroboration for the link between team diversity and performance. In two experiments with 699 people, working in groups of two to five, they find that instead of individual intelligence, a general collective intelligence factor best explains a group’s performance on a wide variety of tasks. This collective intelligence factor is significantly correlated with the average social sensitivity of group members (women score better on the social sensitivity measure than men), the equality in the distribution of speaking turns, and the proportion of females in the group. Furthermore, Hoogendoorn, Oosterbeek, and Van Praag (2013) find that business teams with an equal gender mix perform better than male-dominated teams in terms of sales and profits. In a randomized controlled trial of 550 undergraduate students in the Netherlands, teams with a balanced mix of women and men have higher sales and profits than teams with lower percentages of women. (As an aside, the authors also explore mechanisms suggested in the literature to explain the positive effect of gender diversity on performance – including complementarities, learning, monitoring, and conflicts – but find no support for any of them.)

On the non-experimental side, McKay, Avery, Liao, and Morris (2011) find that in a large national retail organization in the United States, diversity climate is positively and significantly related to customer satisfaction measured a year later. Moreover, research has shown a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and company profitability. Chrobot-Mason and Aramovich (2013) examine the relationship between employee perceptions of diversity climate and turnover intent in public employees and find that when employees perceive equal access to opportunities and fair treatment, their intent to turnover decreases. Nishii (2013) finds that “in all types of diverse groups, relationship conflict has been shown to be negatively associated with unit-level satisfaction and positively associated with unit-level turnover.” This is important for companies because the U.S. Department of Labor estimates the costs of turnover to be as high as 200-250% of annual pay (Nishii, 2013).
While there is a sizeable body of literature on diversity, unexplored areas remain. For example, there is a lack of scholarship around effective leadership of mixed-gender groups and contextual characteristics that reduce diversity-based bias and stereotyping in organizations (Shore et al., 2009). While the purpose of this literature review is not to focus on the concept of diversity (on which much more could certainly be said and about which we already have a good sense from What Works: Gender Equality by Design), the aim of this short contextualization is to show that just as with inclusion, the academic study of diversity is an ongoing pursuit.

What is inclusion?

To create inclusion, alternative ways of perceiving reality must be available.

Pless & Maak (2004), quoting from Gilbert and Ivancevich (2000, p. 101)

Given that the concept of inclusion is much more recent than the concept of diversity, it is not surprising that the academic community has not yet coalesced around a common definition or even a shared set of conceptualizations of diversity. As such, some of the most highly-cited and oft-used definitions appear below.² Inclusion is (italics have been added):

- “The extent to which individuals can access information and resources, are involved in work groups, and have the ability to influence decision-making processes” (Mor Barak, Cherin, and Berkman, 1998).
- “The extent to which diverse individuals are allowed to participate and are enabled to contribute fully” (Miller, 1998: 151).
- “The degree to which an employee is accepted and treated as an insider by others in a work system” (Pelled, Ledford, and Mahrman, 1999: 1014).
- “The removal of obstacles to the full participation and contribution of employees in organizations” (Roberson, 2006: 217).
- “Words and deeds by leaders that invite and appreciate others’ contributions” (Nembhard and Edmondson, 2006).
- “The extent to which employees believe their organizations engage in efforts to involve all employees in the mission and operation of the organization with respect to their individual talents” (Avery, McKay, Wilson, and Volpone, 2008: 6).
- “When individuals feel a sense of belonging, and inclusive behaviors such as eliciting and valuing contributions from all employees are part of the daily life in the organization” (Lirio, Lee, Williams, Haugen, and Kossek, 2008: 443).
- “The degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness” (Shore et al., 2011).

While these definitions are slightly different, there is a strong common theme of a level playing field in terms of participation and contribution: that everyone gets to participate and contribute equally, that there are no “insiders” and “outsiders”, and that employees are actively involved in the work and decision-making processes of the organization. Additionally, a recurring theme in these definitions is an interplay between belonging (“accepted,” “insider,” “sense of belonging,” “esteemed member”) and

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² These definitions appear in Shore et al. (2011), pp. 1267-68.
uniqueness (“ability to influence,” “individual talents”) (Shore et al., 2011). While we as humans have a fundamental need for belongingness and acceptance, we also have a need to retain our uniqueness and to be recognized for our special, individual contributions (Brewer, 1991). There is, then, an “optimal level of inclusion” for each individual that allows them to balance these two competing psychological needs (Shore et al., 2011).

In their comprehensive inclusion literature review, Shore et al. (2011) offer the following overview of the theoretical and practical development of the concept of inclusion:

“Mor Barak developed a theoretical model of inclusion in which she posed that diversity and organizational culture would contribute to perceptions of inclusion-exclusion, which would then lead to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, individual well-being, and task effectiveness. A few studies have tested elements of Mor Barak’s model. Mor Barak, Cherin, and Berkman (1998) showed that among a group of electronics employees, men and Caucasians were more likely than other groups to feel included. Findler, Wind, and Mor Barak (2005) found that support for a link between inclusion and diversity was somewhat mixed, with gender showing the only consistent link to information networks and decision making (such that women reported lower levels of inclusion than men did). However, inclusion did not lead to commitment and satisfaction. In an expansion of the original model to include turnover intentions, Mor Barak, Levin, Nissly, and Lane (2006) found that exclusion from decision-making was a predictor of intention to leave among child welfare workers. -- Lastly, Acquavita, Pittman, Gibbons, and Castellanos-Brown (2009) showed in a study of social workers that inclusion-exclusion was associated with job satisfaction. Following Mor Barak’s lead, other empirical studies have been conducted on inclusion practices. Pelled and colleagues (1999) focused on three practices as indicators of inclusion: decision-making influence, access to sensitive work information, and job security. Their results indicated that dissimilarity in race and gender were negatively associated and dissimilarity in tenure and education were positively associated with these three indicators of inclusion. Roberson (2006) developed scales that distinguished between diversity and inclusion practices and reported that the latter consisted of collaborative work arrangements and conflict resolution procedures that were created to involve diverse employees in decision-making processes. Using a qualitative methodology, Janssens and Zanoni (2007) concluded that inclusive work contexts tend to involve practices encouraging the same treatment of employees while simultaneously acknowledging individual differences.”

The last study cited above merits further clarification. In their qualitative investigation of inclusion of ethnic minorities in operative jobs in Belgium, Janssens and Zanoni (2008) point out that definitions of inclusion often have a work-related component – relating to an individual’s integration into work systems – as well as a relational dimension – relating to “acceptance and [being] treated as an insider by others”. Their data indicate that organizational practices ensuring the same treatment for everyone through an explicit and transparent standard tend to promote inclusion by creating equal chances for all employees who adhere to that standard. Such standards can be divided into two groups: those that derive from the organization’s productive needs (e.g. a standard of “hard work” or a comprehensive onboarding process) and those that derive from the needs of individual employees (e.g. a developmental perspective toward employees or flexibility in work schedules). Thus, inclusive work contexts tend to combine...
certain common standards for everyone with opportunities to tailor specific processes to the unique needs of individual employees.

**What is an inclusive organization?**

While an element of communality and of organizations is inherent in the definitions of inclusion itself, there exists a separate set of articles and scholarship on *inclusive organizations*. Below are some key definitions of inclusive organizations.

- “[An inclusive organization is] characterized by a collective commitment to integrating diverse cultural identities as a source of insight and skill” (Ely and Thomas, 2001).
- “An organizational environment that allows people with multiple backgrounds, mindsets and ways of thinking to work effectively together and to perform to their highest potential in order to achieve organizational objectives based on sound principles” (Pless and Maak, 2004).
- “An inclusive workplace is one that values differences within its workforce and uses the full potential of all employees” (Ryan and Kossek, 2008).
- “A culture of inclusion exists when people of all social identity groups [have] the opportunity to be present, to have their voices heard and appreciated, and to engage in core activities on behalf of the collective” (Wasserman, Gallegos, and Ferdman, 2008: 176).
- “[An organization] in which the diversity of knowledge and perspectives that members of different groups bring to the organization has shaped its strategy, its work, its management and operating systems, and its core values and norms for success. -- There is equality, justice, and full participation at both the group and individual levels, so that members of different groups not only have equal access to opportunities, decision making, and positions of power, but they are actively sought out because of and with their differences. In a multicultural, inclusive organization, differences of all types become integrated into the fabric of the business, such that they become a necessary part of doing its everyday work” (Holvino, Ferdman, and Merrill-Sands, 2004: 249).

With these definitions, a new dimension of inclusion emerges. Inclusive organizations don’t just contain a diverse workforce who is included (per the definitions in the previous section) into the organization; inclusive organizations purposefully build the positive benefits of diversity into their organizational fabric (“its strategy, its work, its management and operating systems, and its core values and norms for success” above in Holvino, Ferdman, and Merrill-Sands, 2004). This is not done purely for moral reasons, but specifically to advance the organization’s mission and goals. The inclusive organization is an active player in “using” the full potential of its employees to “achieve organizational objectives” while integrating “differences of all types -- into the business”. In other words, organizations must do very specific things in order to qualify as inclusive organizations. The following section explores these different things, which we group into five components of inclusion: process, outcome, behavior, power, and wholeness.

To summarize, definitions of *diversity* center around differences in individuals. Definitions of *inclusion* focus on equal, unfettered participation and contribution on the one hand, and a balancing of belonging and uniqueness/individuality on the other. And definitions of *inclusive organizations* incorporate an intentional and active stance from the organization to leverage the existing differences in its workforce to further organizational goals.
“As we enter the year 2000, the glass ceiling remains. What will it take to finally shatter it? Not a revolution. Not this time. In 1962, 1977, and even 1985, the women’s movement used radical rhetoric and legal action to drive out overt discrimination, but most of the barriers that persist today are insidious – a revolution couldn’t find them to blast away. Rather, gender discrimination now is so deeply embedded in organizational life as to be virtually indiscernible. Even the women who feel its impact are often hard-pressed to know what hit them.”

Meyerson and Fletcher (2000)

Organizations are at the forefront of the next set of advances in gender equality. As Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) suggest, the major remaining barriers to women’s full equality and inclusion are organizational rather than, for example, legal or social, in nature. Gonzalez and DeNisi (2009) put it well: “Workplaces provide the space in which diverse people from different groups come into contact with one another and develop or hone their beliefs about other social groups and their own. As such, organizations become responsible for the quality of intergroup relations in society.” Basford, Offermann, and Behrend (2014) similarly emphasize the role of organizations in reducing societal discrimination.

Building on the concepts of diversity, inclusion, and inclusive organizations that were explored in the Introduction, this section of the literature review delves deeper into the different building blocks of inclusion that are present (or absent) in organizations. We conceptualize five components that drive organizational inclusion and shape individuals’ perceptions of diversity as well as their personal experiences of inclusion: process, outcome, behavior, power, and wholeness. Each of these components is explored below.

Components of inclusion: Process

Organizational processes, practices, and procedures play a key role in shaping employees’ perceptions of diversity and inclusion. This is often referred to as diversity climate. As with the definitions of diversity, inclusion, and inclusive organizations, there is no perfect agreement on what constitutes a diversity (or inclusion) climate. Gonzalez and DeNisi (2009) define diversity climate as “the aggregate member perceptions about the organization’s diversity-related formal structure characteristics and informal values. Climate -- is comprised of the perceptions organizational members share, such as global reactions and ideas resulting from the organization’s efforts to promote diversity.” Roberson (2006), in a similar vein, defines diversity climate as “the value placed by employees on efforts to promote diversity in an organization and their attitudes toward the beneficiaries of these efforts.” Pugh, Dietz, Brief, and Wiley (2008) report a third similar definition of an organization’s diversity climate as “employees’ shared perceptions of the policies and practices that communicate the extent to which fostering diversity and eliminating discrimination is a priority in the organization.” Finally, Mor Barak, Cherin, and Berkman (1998) conceptualize diversity climate as having an individual component and an organizational component, mirroring Shore et al.’s (2011) conceptualization of inclusion. The personal dimension relates to employees’ views and feelings toward people who are different from them, while the organizational dimension relates to management’s policies and procedures toward women and minorities. The common theme in all these definitions is the importance and influence of organizational processes on perceptions and experiences of inclusion.
This brings us to inclusion climate. Shore et al. (2011) define a climate of inclusion as “one in which policies, procedures, and actions of organizational agents are consistent with fair treatment of all social groups, with particular attention to groups that have had fewer opportunities historically and that are stigmatized in the societies in which they live.” Along the same lines, Nishii (2013) notes that “in inclusive climates, fairly implemented employment practices that do not bias against women, a lack of stigmas associated with expressing feminine identity, and a propensity to value the perspectives of men and women equally signal to employees that being a woman is not associated with having a disproportionately small share of social value.” Fairly implemented employment practices and diversity-specific practices that help to eliminate bias contribute to a climate of inclusion by assuring employees of a fair and equitable distribution of resources. When employment practices are not unbiased, members of the favored group(s) can easily become the normative in-group and command more respect, deference, and power than the out-group (Nishii, 2013). Perceptions matter, particularly when it comes to organizational processes such as recruitment, hiring, retention, compensation, and promotion, which have a fairness component.

Fairness is an important ingredient of a culture of inclusion and it influences, among other things, employee engagement and turnover intentions (Chrobot-Mason and Aramovich, 2013). Shore et al. (2011) go so far as to make fair treatment a cornerstone of their definition of a climate of inclusion as “one in which policies, procedures, and actions of organizational agents are consistent with fair treatment of all social groups, with particular attention to groups that have had fewer opportunities historically and that are stigmatized in the societies in which they live.” Fairness is even tied to organizational performance: Gonzalez and DeNisi (2009) show that organizations can promote performance by managing shared perceptions of justice.

Justice, particularly procedural justice, is thus another important facet of organizational inclusion. As described in Shore et al. (2011), “the group value model of procedural justice may provide additional guidance to future research on inclusive leadership (Lind and Tyler, 1988). The model proposes that leaders’ procedurally fair treatment conveys to individual members that they have a respected position in the group. When fair procedures are used consistently in the group, then members can take pride in group membership.” Moorman, Blakely, and Niehoff (1998) provide further evidence for this thesis when they find that procedural justice affects organizational citizenship behavior by influencing perceived organizational support, which motivates employees to reciprocate with organizational citizenship behaviors. Ehrhart (2004) also finds that unit-level organizational citizenship behaviors are associated with procedural justice climate, including perceptions of fairness (as well as servant leadership).

Gender biases are “created and maintained by multiple, complementary processes acting simultaneously, such that the elimination of any single process will not be sufficient to eliminate the phenomenon” (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004). Biases are particularly prevalent in situations where work is organized and conducted interpersonally rather than bureaucratically (e.g. start-ups without structured processes, job interviews, decision-making in group meetings, evaluation of performance based on individual judgment). Implicit discrimination is likely to flourish in such situations and may even contribute to the gendering of jobs by biasing the processes through which managers steer women (or men) toward certain jobs over others: “While the biasing impact of gender beliefs may be small in any one instance, the consequences accumulate over individuals’ lives and result in substantially different outcomes for men and women” (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004).

Organizations have historically taken one of three main approaches to advancing women in the workplace (Meyerson and Fletcher, 2000). The assimilation approach encourages women to act, think, and be like men in order to succeed. The accommodation approach, on the other hand, emphasizes women’s unique needs and situations (e.g. childbearing) and provides women with supplementary resources (e.g. flex time, mothers’ rooms, maternity leave) to help navigate those situations. Finally, the celebration approach emphasizes the differences women bring to the workplace and seeks to leverage
them by, for example, placing women in “suitable” roles, such as HR, and training men in the “feminine” skills of listening and collaboration – but without a genuine organizational learning component, as in Ely and Thomas’ (2001) model, thereby not allowing this approach to truly benefit from diversity. While all three approaches have historically played a role in advancing women in the workplace, they have reached the limits of their usefulness because they do not address the root cause of gender inequality in organizations: the fact that “most organizations have been created by and for men and are based on male experiences” (Meyerson and Fletcher, 2000). Organizational practices mirror societal norms, thus gender biases are built into organizational structures and everyday practices.

To tackle this next frontier of deeply-embedded gender biases, Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) advocate a strategy of “small wins” that begins by “naming the problem with no name”. Becker and Swim (2011) discuss a corresponding concept, “seeing the unseen”. Organizations should start by recognizing that there is a broader cultural problem, and then move to diagnosis and identification of specific practices that are undermining organizational effectiveness (usually with gendered consequences). These practices should be changed through small initiatives and experiments that replace gendered systems with more effective processes that work for everyone (Meyerson and Fletcher, 2000). The focus on changing practices and systems is important because increased awareness and perspective-taking alone are not enough to reduce sexist beliefs and subtle discrimination (Becker and Swim, 2011).

Finally, the literature points to some tangible actions organizations can take in order to foster greater inclusion through fair organizational processes, policies, and practices. One such intervention is establishing clear career paths. For women (as well as underrepresented minorities), the map to career success can be murky. Sherbin and Rashid (2017) find that many women feel “pushed off the ladder”: 29% say their career isn’t satisfying, and 23% feel stalled in their career. Women are frustrated by being passed over for high-profile assignments and have a general sense of missing out on opportunities. Increasing the transparency of paths to success and formalizing those paths through organizational processes can help to level the playing field. Another intervention is to provide opportunities for networking, visibility, and sponsorship. A sponsor is “a senior-level leader who elevates their protégé’s visibility within the corridors of power, advocates for key assignments and promotions for them, and puts their own reputation on the line for the protégé’s advancement” (Sherbin and Rashid, 2017). For employees who feel marginalized, sponsorship can be crucial in (re-)invigorating ambition and promoting engagement and a sense of inclusion. Moreover, having a sponsor increases the likelihood of being satisfied with one’s rate of career advancement. Conversely, Sherbin and Rashid (2017) find that lack of sponsorship increases an employee’s likelihood of quitting within a year. Lastly, Stout and Dasgupta (2011) find that the use of gender-exclusive language ostracizes women and reduces their motivation in professional environments. While women and men both identify gender-exclusive language (e.g. he) to be sexist, women respond with a lower sense of belonging, less motivation, and less expected identification with a hypothetical job compared to others exposed to gender-inclusive (e.g. he or she) or gender-neutral (e.g. one) language. Organizations should therefore use gender-inclusive or gender-neutral language wherever possible.

**Components of inclusion: Outcome**

The outcome component of inclusion refers to the diversity and inclusion in an organization that emerges as result of the inputs discussed as the first component of inclusion, i.e. the specific processes, policies, and procedures that organizations employ around people management. The existing diversity in an organization is, in itself, a powerful determinant of employees’ perceptions of diversity as well as their experiences of inclusion in the organization. Nishii (2013) explains that forming relational ties that cut across genders allows people to categorize each other in more complex and personalized ways, making it more likely that they become able to accept each another’s differences.
In a seminal study, Ely and Thomas (2001) find that the perspectives people have on diversity (which forms part of an organization’s diversity climate) within a working group influence not only how they express and manage tensions related to diversity, but also whether underrepresented people feel respected and valued by their colleagues, and how people interpret the meaning of their racial identity at work. The one diversity perspective that promoted better functioning – the integration-and-learning perspective – views individuals’ diverse insights, skills, and experiences as valuable resources that the work group can use to advance its work. When diversity is viewed as an asset to the core work of a team or an organization in this way, it becomes an opportunity for organizational learning and performance improvement (very much akin to the view of an inclusive organization advanced by the various definitions on page 6). By contrast, viewing diversity simply as something that must be promoted for moral reasons (the discrimination-and-fairness perspective) or as something that provides the organization with a specific advantage in accessing matching diverse markets (the access-and-legitimacy perspective) does not help organizations achieve sustainable performance gains related to diversity. In other words, tying diversity and inclusion closely to the organization’s core mission, goals, and practices is key to “doing diversity right.”

Kossek and Zonia (1993) assess diversity climates as employee perceptions of the relationship between organizational excellence and the recruitment and retention of women and minorities; their qualifications and performance; and their access to resources and rewards in comparison to others. The results underscore that workforce composition (i.e. diversity) and equality are key components of employees’ perceptions of the diversity climate. Further, Pugh, Dietz, Brief, and Wiley (2008) find that another salient element of the organizational context that shapes the formation of climate perceptions is the racial composition of the organization’s physical surroundings. The study, specific to racial diversity and examining a sample of 142 retail banks in the United States, suggests that when an organization is located in a non-racially diverse community, workforce diversity has an impact on employees’ diversity climate perceptions. For organizations located in more racially diverse communities, workforce diversity does not have the same signaling effect. The authors conclude that simply increasing the number of minority employees will not in itself improve the diversity climate of an organization located in an already diverse community. It appears that perceptions of diversity can be somewhat reference-dependent, with individuals’ expectations of diversity being influenced by the physical surroundings (as well as possibly other factors yet to be researched).

In order to improve diversity outcomes, Mor Barak (2014) proposes four principles as a basis for action: adopting an “ethical learned approach to diversity, always aiming to ‘do the right thing’”; respecting employees’ unique characteristics; introducing creative solutions and always striving for innovation and excellence; and utilizing diversity to promote business goals and organizational profitability. On a practical level, organizations should create a vision statement as well as an operational definition of diversity and inclusion. These should be supplemented by a clear action plan, objectives, and timelines for addressing disparities in the organization (Sue, 2010). Furthermore, oversight team(s) that are genuinely “empowered to assess, develop and monitor the organization’s development with respect to the goals” of diversity and inclusion should be put in place, reporting directly to the President or CEO (Sue, 2010). These teams, in addition to individuals, departments, and divisions, must then be held responsible and accountable for achieving diversity-related goals (Sue, 2010).
Components of inclusion: Behavior

“Behavior is driven by perceptions of reality” (Mor Barak, Cherin, and Berkman, 1998). The behaviors present in an organization not only reflect that organization’s diversity and inclusion climate, but also shape it further by signaling what behaviors and attitudes are accepted and expected from employees. Behavior, therefore, is one of the key components of inclusion.

Nishii (2013) points out that creating truly inclusive organizations requires a “change in interaction patterns”, further emphasizing the need to focus on interpersonal interventions and “unseen” sources of bias in the workplace, which represent the next frontier of women’s advancement in organizations. Norms are one such intervention that can help to shape the more intangible organizational processes around inclusion. Imposing a norm about political correctness on work teams reduces the uncertainty that both women and men experience in interacting with the opposite gender (Goncalo, Chatman, Duguid, and Kennedy, 2015). Although a general societal norm to avoid sexist behavior exists, it can be difficult to identify the exact behaviors and statements that constitute sexism. An externally imposed political correctness norm makes the stigma of sexism explicit to the whole group and thereby reduces people’s confusion and uncertainty about how to behave in mixed-gender groups. In a laboratory study, this also resulted in more innovation as women and men were more likely to share their ideas and perspectives.

In addition to norms, leaders play a critical role in promoting inclusion in organizations and work groups. Leaders’ influence is felt at all levels of the organization. Nishii and Mayer (2009) find that in environments with high leader-member exchange (LMX), i.e. a high quality of relationship between a leader and followers, demographic diversity has a negative association with turnover; in environments with lower-quality leader-member relationships, turnover is positively associated with diversity. Leaders thus influence the effect of group diversity on turnover through inclusive leadership. In particular, developing high-quality relationships with all members of the group is very important: group turnover increases when leaders develop high-quality relationships with most but all of their team members.

Despite the myriad benefits of inclusion, leaders are likely to encounter at least some resistance in changing organizational culture and moving towards greater inclusion. Wasserman, Gallegos, and Ferdman (2008) introduce the concept of “dancing with resistance” to illustrate how leaders can promote inclusion in the context of professional relationships in which “skills matter and in which practice improves performance”. Resistance to diversity and inclusion initiatives cannot be overcome with additional information, as it is often rooted in deeper and more primal emotions such as fear of losing control or feeling incompetent. Instead, leaders should shape a unified organizational narrative that conveys the inclusion of all. However, leaders should be aware that their own identity may influence their effectiveness in promoting diversity and inclusion. Hekman, Johnson, Foo, and Yang (2017) report that leaders who are women and people of color are penalized for exhibiting diversity-valuing behavior: their peers and superiors perceive them as less competent compared to leaders who do not actively support diversity. White male leaders, on the other hand, are evaluated more highly for actively promoting diversity.

When it comes to specific behaviors, the related concepts of incivility, microinequities, microaggressions, microinsults, microinvalidations, microassaults, and subtle discrimination present a significant barrier to women’s full inclusion in organizations. They are also a textbook example of an often invisible and intangible – although very real – problem that needs to be “seen” in order to be addressed (Becker and Swim, 2011). In male-dominated environments, gender-based behavioral microinequities are culturally so “normal” that they are often not noticed by the majority (Rowe, 1990). For the purposes of this literature review, the above terms are used somewhat interchangeably; however, they do have specific definitions that are presented on the following page.
• **Incivility** is “low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others” (Cortina, 2008).

• **Microinequities** are “the subtle putdowns, snubs, dismissive gestures, or sarcastic tones that can undercut employee performance and encourage employee turnover” (Cherng and Tate, 2007); they are “tiny, damaging characteristics of an environment, as these characteristics affect a person not indigenous to that environment. They are distinguished by the fact that for all practical purposes one cannot do anything about them; one cannot take them to court or file a grievance” (Rowe, 1990). Tangible examples include dismissing the idea of one employee only to embrace it when paraphrased by another; using different modes of greeting employees (e.g. a formal handshake for one and a fist bump for another); interrupting colleagues or completing sentences for them; and checking one’s phone or otherwise multitasking when speaking to a colleague.

• **Microaggressions** are “the constant and continuing everyday reality of slights, insults, invalidations, and indignities visited upon marginalized groups by well-intentioned [people they interact with]” (Sue, 2010; Sue, Capodilupo, Turino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, and Esquilin, 2007). Basford, Offermann, and Behrend (2014) define microaggressions as “intentional or unintentional actions or behaviors that exclude, demean, insult, oppress, or otherwise express hostility or indifference toward women.”
  - **Microinsults** involve “actions . . . that convey insensitivity, are rude, or directly demean a person’s [gender] identity or heritage” (Basford, Offermann, and Behrend, 2014).
  - **Microinvalidations** encompass “actions that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiences of [women]” (Basford, Offermann, and Behrend, 2014).
  - **Microassaults** include expressions similar to old-fashioned [sexism] that are “most often deliberate on the part of the microaggressor, whose intent is to hurt, oppress, or discriminate” (Basford, Offermann, and Behrend, 2014); they are “brief but explicit derogatory comments and behaviors meant to hurt the intended victim” (Alidina, 2017).

While the public expression of sexist and racist beliefs has undergone a radical decline in American society overall (Cortina, 2008), incivility is shockingly common in the United States: 96% of employees studied report experiencing workplace incivility and 99% report witnessing it (Porath and Pearson, 2015). While incivility can and does occur between people of all backgrounds, Rotundo, Nguyen, and Sackett (2001) and Basford, Offermann, and Behrend (2014) find that women generally perceive higher levels of gender discrimination, including subtle microaggressions, than men. However, they seem to attribute it more to the organization, since higher gender discrimination is associated with lower organizational commitment but not lower job satisfaction (Basford, Offermann, and Behrend, 2014). Other research (Alidina, 2017) shows that lower-status employees, particularly women and ethnic minorities, are more likely to be interrupted, talked over, or have their ideas attributed to others in meetings by higher-status individuals. This leads these employees to be less likely to contribute to conversations, voice dissent, and feel like their work and opinions are valued by their team and the organization.

Microaggressions are often unconscious and go unnoticed by those who perpetrate them. They have profound effects on their targets, however. Research examining the impact of gender microaggressions from the point of view of the target (Protestant clergy in Hong Kong) shows that women who perceive high levels of discrimination report lower organizational commitment than men who experience similar amounts of discrimination (Foley, Hang-yue, and Wong, 2005). Other negative consequences of microaggressions include worse work performance, job satisfaction, employee engagement, and mental health (Alidina, 2017) as well as decreased work effort, decreased efficiency as
time is lost to worrying about uncivil behavior, declining commitment to the organization, and, ultimately, leaving the organization (Porath and Pearson, 2015). Microinequities exert their influence both by walling out the ‘different’ person (victims of microinequities feel helplessness, uncertainty, anger, and overvigilance), and by making the person of difference less effective (dealing with microinequities – their own or others’ – takes effort, time and energy, which detracts from being productive at work) (Rowe, 1990).

Unconscious and subtle (as opposed to overt) bias in the workplace is particularly pernicious for three reasons (King and Jones, 2016). First, while the reason for overt discrimination is blatant(ly) bias, the reason for subtle discrimination is harder to discern. In ambiguous situations, people often internalize negative feedback (Jones, Peddie, Gilrane, King, and Gray, 2016), which causes rumination that can be significantly depleting to cognitive and emotional resources (King and Jones, 2016). Secondly, subtle discrimination typically occurs with a much higher frequency than overt instances of discrimination. These constant small incivilities “wear you down” and can have large cumulative effects over time (Cortina, 2008). Thirdly, subtle discrimination is damaging because there is little or no legal recourse (Cherng and Tate, 2007). Besides, microinequities perpetuate gender inequalities through their effects on interpersonal relationships at work: it is harder for women than for men to find mentors to assist with processing microinequities, and the few existing senior women are disproportionately called on to spend extra time as same-sex mentors for more junior women (Rowe, 1990).

Besides victims, organizations suffer as a result of microinequities because employees’ creativity and output can be reduced; talented and capable employees may be overlooked for projects and promotions; and disgruntled employees may leave (Rowe, 1990). There is an explicit connection between incivility and inclusion, and the frequency of microaggressions has a direct bearing on an organization’s inclusiveness (Alidina, 2017). In particular, how an organization responds to instances of microaggressions can shed light on its level of inclusion beyond official policy.

In order to improve inclusion, tackle incivility, and seek to overcome the harmful effects of individual biases and microaggressions in the workplace, organizations should first and foremost demonstrate commitment to creating an open and bias-free workplace. Leaders, in particular, must drive this effort through both actions and words as microaggressions are more detrimental when delivered in superior-subordinate contexts than in peer-to-peer contexts (Sue, 2010). Organizations should also institute a systematic and long-term commitment to educate the entire workforce concerning diversity issues. Trainings should include everyone in the organization from top to bottom and can take the form of company newsletters, staff meetings, management trainings, cartoons/posters, and others (Sue, 2010; Rowe, 1990). Training managers through enhancing their level of understanding about incivility and equipping them with the skills and competencies to tackle incivility is particularly important because managers are typically at the front lines of organizational incivility (Rowe, 1990). In addition to victims, organizations should implement interventions to train and assist observers of (or witnesses to) microaggressions. Such bystander interventions are particularly well researched in the context of sexual harassment and sexual assault. A spectrum approach that helps bystanders to identify the full range of intervention opportunities that are available to them along the entire continuum of sexual violence (or, by extension, incivility) is recommended to educators (McMahon and Banyard, 2012).

Finally, Sherbin and Rashid (2017) identify six key behavioral traits of inclusive leaders: ensuring that team members speak up and are heard; making it safe to propose novel ideas; empowering team members to make decisions; taking advice and implementing feedback; giving actionable feedback to employees; and sharing credit for team success. Among employees who report that their team leader has at least three of these six traits, 87% say they feel welcome and included in their team; 87% say they feel free to express their views and opinions; and 74% say they feel that their ideas are heard and recognized. For respondents who reported that their team leader has none of these traits, the corresponding percentages were 51%, 46%, and 37%, respectively.
Components of inclusion: Power

Power as a component of inclusion refers to the opportunity that all members of an organization have to influence decision-making, have their voice heard (whether or not their opinion ultimately prevails), and contribute their ideas, perspectives, and talents to the organization. For an organization to be truly inclusive, all of its members must have equal power and opportunity to participate in the organization’s work.

In deconstructing the specific components of a climate of inclusion, Nishii (2013) focuses on three aspects: fairly implemented employment practices (covered under Process), integration of differences (covered under Outcome and Behavior), and inclusion in decision-making, which relates to the power. Inclusion in decision-making captures the extent to which employees’ diverse perspectives are actively sought and integrated, even when expressed ideas may upset the status quo: “In inclusive climates, the questioning of dominant assumptions is not seen as a threat, but rather as a value-enhancing proposition, and thus barriers that could perpetuate organizational silence are actively eliminated.” In such climates, group members have more opportunities to learn and develop a more “differentiated and personalized understanding of the unique characteristics of out-group members.” As such, inclusive climates can aid in the reduction of stereotypes and bias (Nishii, 2013).

Nishii’s (2013) concept of inclusion in decision-making is closely related to psychological safety, which is defined as “a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking -- The term is meant to suggest neither a careless sense of permissiveness, nor an unrelentingly positive affect but, rather, a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject, or punish someone for speaking up. This confidence stems from mutual respect and trust among team members” (Edmondson, 1999). The presence of psychological safety increases team members’ willingness to express contrary and potentially risky ideas, thereby enabling team members to take proactive learning-oriented actions that promote performance. Taken together, Nishii (2013) and Edmondson’s (1999) work suggests that structural and interpersonal factors work together in an integrative fashion (as opposed to separately) to create a climate of inclusion, which serves as the starting point for learning and increased team performance and effectiveness. The key to operationalizing this climate of inclusion is giving power to all employees to contribute equally to the work of the organization.

In order to foster inclusion successfully, organizations need to engage all of their members and not just those who have historically or traditionally been excluded. Nishii (2013) explains: “As Green and Kalev (2008) argued, diversity management practices may help to reduce bias in key personnel decision-making moments, but they are unlikely to alter the day-to-day relational sources of discrimination that impact people’s experiences of inclusion. Rather, what is required for enhancing inclusion is more consistent with prescriptions made by Allport (1954) long ago: that people (a) are of approximately equal status; (b) have opportunities to get to know each other in more personal ways, establish cross-cutting ties, and rely less on stereotypes; and (c) work together across roles, levels, and demographic boundaries to solve shared problems through participative decision making.” More recent support for these recommendations is offered by Nembhard and Edmonson (2006), who find that inclusion minimizes status differences. In their study of healthcare teams with individuals of varied status, leader inclusiveness is positively associated with psychological safety, which is positively related to group member engagement. Thus, inclusive leader behaviors help to overcome the inhibiting effects of status on psychological safety, which Edmondson (1999) has shown to enable experimental and learning behaviors.

Creating an inclusive culture in organizations is instrumental for not only unlocking the benefits of diversity, but for making sure that demographic diversity does not result in backlash or reduced organizational performance. In fact, Pless and Maak (2004) argue that “diversity management will not unleash any potential benefits unless diversity is culturally valued.” Sabharwal (2014) agrees, reporting
that managing diversity is not enough to improve workplace performance. In her study of public managers in Texas government agencies, she discovers that a systematic approach that promotes inclusion by promoting the self-esteem of employees and taking their perspectives into account in designing the workplace is essential to developing a better-performing organization. Employee-friendly policies (Process) and recognition of differences (Outcome) is not sufficient, but organizations must actively include their employees in decision-making in order to generate improved performance (Power). Shore et al. (2011) provide further support for this argument: “Mor Barak (2000: 52) stated that employee perception of inclusion-exclusion is conceptualized as a continuum of the degree to which individuals feel a part of critical organizational processes. These processes include access to information and resources, connectedness to supervisors and coworkers, and ability to participate in and influence the decision-making process.”

Organizations should leverage the power component of inclusion by including everyone’s voice in decision-making. Organizations should nourish a culture of open communication where employees have an equal right to speak up (Pless and Maak, 2004). This includes soliciting employees’ feedback before making organizational changes and decisions (Sabharwal 2014). Different perspectives should be integrated into decision-making and problem-solving processes through respectful listening, valuing contrary opinions (even if they are not agreed to), and arguing positions fairly (Pelled, Ledford, and Mohrman, 1999). Moreover, employees should be given information that enables them to make decisions about their job (Sabharwal 2014), which may include e.g. access to sensitive information (Pelled, Ledford, and Mohrman, 1999). This demonstrates to employees that they are trusted and valued “insiders”. Pelled, Ledford, and Mohrman (1999) also find that job security is one of the key drivers of inclusion. Lastly, organizations should provide avenues for underrepresented employees’ voices to be heard in the workplace. This can happen through employee resource groups, focus groups, mentoring groups, or other employee organizations (Sue, 2010), but the key is ensuring that groups that might be at higher risk of workplace exclusion have the appropriate, solid support structures.

Components of inclusion: Wholeness

Wholeness as a component of inclusion refers to the ability of employees to bring their “whole selves” to work without punishment. But even further than that, wholeness refers to the optimal situation where organizations facilitate the engagement of whole selves through a genuinely inclusive climate that explicitly values employees’ holistic lives and identities (Nishii, 2013). This “integration of differences reflects collective expectations and norms regarding the openness with which employees can enact and engage core aspects of their self-concept and/or multiple identities without suffering unwanted consequences.” In a climate of inclusion, those expectations and norms are strong. Moreover, research shows that diversity climate perceptions significantly affect the extent to which employees feel that they can be themselves at work (Chrobot-Mason and Aramovich, 2013). Feeding into an inclusion loop, when employees feel free to express their individual ideas and perspectives, they also feel empowered to make decisions about their work, feel encouraged to develop creative solutions, and are more likely to identify with their organization (Chrobot-Mason and Aramovich, 2013).

The adoption of work-life policies is one means that organizations use to promote wholeness and create an inclusive workplace (Ryan and Kossek, 2008) – or, alternatively, to signal their lack of interest in promoting fuller inclusion. Work-life policies are presumed to directly impact inclusion since they specifically signal that multiple identities and roles are accepted, that variation in balancing work and non-work commitments is supported, and that involvement of all employees (including, for example, remote and part-time employees) is encouraged. This can be particularly important for employees who have multiple identities (e.g. as a father and a manager) and who benefit from higher well-being and motivation with increased compatibility between their work and non-work identities (Rothbard and
Ramarajan, 2009). Work-life policies that afford control of their own time and fate and provide practice, over time, in integrating multiple identities through routines can have significantly positive effects (Rothbard and Ramarajan, 2009).

Research done specifically on high-technology workers (Hammer, Kossek, Bodner, and Crain, 2013) shows that managers’ behaviors around balancing work and family have a significant relationship not only with employees’ work-family conflict, job satisfaction and turnover intentions, but also with control over work hours, perceived stress, and reported family time adequacy, among others. The Family Supportive Supervisor Behavior Short-Form (FSSB-SF) measures these work-family behaviors on a short, four-item survey (“Your supervisor makes you feel comfortable talking to him/her about your conflicts between work and non-work”; “Your supervisor works effectively with employees to creatively solve conflicts between work and non-work”; “Your supervisor demonstrates effective behaviors in how to juggle work and non-work issues”; “Your supervisor organizes the work in your department or unit to jointly benefit employees and the company”). Training developed specifically to enhance managers’ FSSB scores results in increased employee job satisfaction, physical health, and decreased turnover intentions for employees with high levels of work-family conflict.

Given that work-life policies can result in negative outcomes or backlash for those employees who avail themselves of them (Ryan and Kossek, 2008), organizations need to carefully consider how they are implemented. In order to support a culture of inclusion, work-life policies should be universal (open to all employees); negotiable (leaving room for consideration of individual needs); communicated clearly and effectively throughout the organization; and modeled and actively supported by supervisors (including by paying attention to perceptions and justice considerations on the team). Furthermore, organizations should show sensitivity to employees’ workloads and foster (and recognize the need for) an appropriate and individualized balance between work and personal life (Pless and Maak, 2004).

Flexibility is one practical strategy to promote wholeness among the workforce. The STAR intervention, which aims to increase employees’ control over their schedules, increase supervisors’ support for family and personal life, and create a cultural orientation toward results rather than long hours, significantly increases both job-related and general wellbeing among IT workers, especially women, who benefit more broadly from the STAR intervention than men. The intervention uses initial trainings; institutes a policy of allowing work from home without supervisor approval; and uses additional tailored approaches generated by participating teams (Moen, Kelly, Fan, Lee, Almeida, Kossek, and Buxton, 2016). Encouraging authenticity is another strategy for promoting wholeness. According to Sherbin and Rashid (2017), 37% of African-Americans and Hispanics and 45% of Asians say they “need to compromise their authenticity” to conform to their company’s standards of demeanor or style. Moreover, women in science, engineering, and technology report that acting “like a man” can provide an advantage in becoming a leader in these fields. However, this energy expended on repressing parts of their persona in the workplace is wasted and detracts from a focus on core job tasks. Encouraging employees to bring their full, authentic selves to work should therefore be an organizational priority.
APPENDIX

This appendix provides detailed summaries of 15 of the articles and studies referenced in this literature review. The summaries have been organized by theme and are catalogued below. While these 15 articles represent some of the core academic work done in the diversity and inclusion space, there are many other articles that would have merited a place on the list. Therefore, we envision this document as a living and evolving inventory of key reference articles and works.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ............................................................................................................................................. 18

DIVERSITY CLIMATE & INCLUSION CLIMATE .................................................................................................................... 22

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DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION


Abstract: “A great deal of research has focused on work group diversity, but management scholars have only recently focused on inclusion. As a result, the inclusion literature is still under development, with limited agreement on the conceptual underpinnings of this construct. In this article, the authors first use Brewer’s optimal distinctiveness theory to develop a definition of employee inclusion in the work group as involving the satisfaction of the needs of both belongingness and uniqueness. Building on their definition, the authors then present a framework of inclusion. Their framework is subsequently used as a basis for reviewing the inclusion and diversity literature. Potential contextual factors and outcomes associated with inclusion are suggested in order to guide future research.”

Sample: 178 other works referenced/cited.

Methodology: Literature review. Please note that this is the most comprehensive literature review on the topic of inclusion that was unearthed over the course of writing this document.

Results:
• The authors propose a 2x2 framework (see following page) for inclusion, both as a conceptual guide but also as a guide for future research. The two dimensions highlighted in this framework are uniqueness and belongingness, leading to four quadrants: exclusion, assimilation, differentiation and inclusion.
• The authors highlight three contextual factors that contribute to inclusion: inclusive climate, inclusive leadership and inclusive practices.
• While the authors note that there is a “somewhat small body of existing work on outcomes resulting from inclusion”, they nonetheless offer the following list of potential outcomes resulting from inclusion (and encourage further research into each). Inclusion can positively influence:
  o Removal of perceived status differences such that group members feel free to be themselves and to express their opinions; group member engagement.
  o Job satisfaction and turnover intentions.
  o Enhanced job performance and higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior (especially when examined through interpersonal models of justice, such as social exchange theory).
  o Lowered relationship and task conflict in gender-diverse groups.
  o Various physical and mental health benefits, including reduced stress.
  o Greater creativity.
  o More career opportunities for diverse people.
• The authors make the following case for the contribution their framework makes to the study of inclusion: “[There has been a] lack of consideration of the joint roles of belongingness and uniqueness across many studies. Although the relevant diversity literature to date has tended to focus on exclusion (involving low levels of both belongingness and uniqueness), this does not suggest that a stronger emphasis on either belongingness or uniqueness will advance diversity research and practice. A singular focus on belongingness (e.g. assimilation) holds the danger of encouraging individuals to suppress the backgrounds, experiences, and opinions that make them who they are (Hewlin, 2009). In a similar vein, solely highlighting the value of individuals’ uniqueness (e.g. differentiation) can lead to interpersonal interactions involving segregation and...
an overreliance on stereotypes (Ely & Thomas, 2001). We propose that jointly considering both belongingness and uniqueness through inclusion promises to advance research and practice in the area of diversity.”

Figure 1
Inclusion Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Belongingness</th>
<th>High Belongingness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Value in Uniqueness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Value in Uniqueness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Exclusion: Individual is not treated as an organizational insider with unique value in the work group but there are other employees or groups who are insiders.
- Assimilation: Individual is treated as an insider in the work group when they conform to organizational/department culture norms and downplay uniqueness.
- Differentiation: Individual is not treated as an organizational insider in the work group but their unique characteristics are seen as valuable and required for group/organization success.
- Inclusion: Individual is treated as an insider and also allowed/encouraged to retain uniqueness within the work group.

Figure 2
Antecedents and Outcomes of Inclusion

- Contextual Antecedents
  - Inclusiveness Climate
  - Inclusive Leadership
  - Inclusionary Practices

- Outcomes
  - High quality relationships with group members and supervisors
  - Job satisfaction
  - Absenteeism
  - Job performance

Notes:
- Authors note that “although [the inclusion] concept has garnered increased attention in recent years, as yet, inclusion remains a new concept without consensus on the nature of this construct or its theoretical underpinnings. This lack of consensus hampers the utility of inclusion, both theoretically and practically.”
- Authors define inclusion “as the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness.”


Abstract: “Given the emergence of a new rhetoric in the field of diversity, which replaces the term diversity with the term inclusion, this study comparatively investigates the meanings of diversity and inclusion in organizations. The findings of Study 1, which used a qualitative methodology to explore the construct definitions and to derive a measure of attributes to support diversity and inclusion, revealed conceptually distinct definitions. The reliability and factor structure of the scale was evaluated in Study 2 and cross-validated in Study 3. The results supported a five-factor model of diversity and inclusion and suggest a distinction between the concepts, although the terms may not describe separate types of work environments but different approaches to diversity management.”

Sample: Human resource or diversity officers of 51 large, publicly traded organizations (58 companies were originally solicited to participate). Participating organizations had, on average, 75,367 employees and represented a variety of industries. Respondents for companies were 72% female and ranged in age from 38 to 62 years.

Methodology: Participants were surveyed using a four-question instrument (1. How would you define diversity? 2. How would you define inclusion? 3. What are the attributes of a diverse organization? 4. What are the attributes of an inclusive organization?). The author then conducted an inductive grounded
theory development process to develop a survey, which was mailed to 1,020 conference attendees of a national diversity conference held to provide organizational executives with the opportunity to share practical business experiences regarding diversity. A total of 186 surveys were returned for a response rate of 18.2%. Respondents to this second survey represented organizations with, on average, 13,522 employees across multiple industries. Respondents to the second survey were 54% female and had an average age of 48 years. The author conducted an exploratory factor analysis on the results of the second survey, as well as confirmatory factor analyses.

**Results:**

- Survey respondents differentiate conceptually between the terms *diversity* and *inclusion*. Definitions of diversity focus primarily on differences and the demographic composition of groups or organizations; definitions of inclusion focus on organizational objectives designed to increase the participation of all employees and to leverage the effects of diversity (these findings are consistent with popular and scholarly diversity literature).
- Survey results highlight a number of attributes for diversity and inclusion ranging from practices to increase the representation of different demographic groups (affirmative action policies, representation of different demographic groups, respect for differences, and diversity education and training) to broader human resource initiatives intended to facilitate employee participation and engagement (360-degree communication and information sharing, participatory work systems and employee involvement, equitable systems for recognition, acknowledgment, and reward).


**Abstract:** “This paper develops theory about the conditions under which cultural diversity enhances or detracts from work group functioning. From qualitative research in three culturally diverse organizations, we identified three different perspectives on workforce diversity: the integration-and-learning perspective, the access-and-legitimacy perspective, and the discrimination-and-fairness perspective. The perspective on diversity a work group held influenced how people expressed and managed tensions related to diversity, whether those who had been traditionally underrepresented in the organization felt respected and valued by their colleagues, and how people interpreted the meaning of their racial identity at work. These, in turn, had implications for how well the work group and its members functioned. All three perspectives on diversity had been successful in motivating managers to diversify their staffs, but only the integration-and-learning perspective provided the rationale and guidance needed to achieve sustained benefits from diversity. By identifying the conditions that intervene between the demographic composition of a work group and its functioning, our research helps to explain mixed results on the relationship between cultural diversity and work group outcomes.”

**Sample:** Three professional services firms: a consulting firm (37 employees interviewed, approximately 30% of the firm), a law firm (12 employees), and a financial services firm (29 employees studied, approximately 24% of the firm). The law and financial services firms had a reputation for being high-functioning while the consulting firm was experiencing conflict and performance challenges.

**Methodology:** Qualitative study. Authors collected data primarily through interviews with participants and through observations of two to six staff meetings in each organization. They also sought to evaluate the work group or organizational goals, the quality of services produced, the participants’ ability to
reach desired markets, and the efficacy of their work group's practices. The authors’ analysis is focused primarily on race, although gender was one of the salient cultural differences in all organizations.

Results:

- A work group's perspective toward diversity is associated with different levels of individual and group functioning. Whether and how cultural diversity is linked to the group's work and work processes is critical in determining the utility of diversity.
- Authors identify three diversity perspectives that have different implications for how well people function in their work groups and how likely they are to reap the benefits of diversity:
  1. Integration-and-learning perspective: “The insights, skills and experiences employees have developed as members of various cultural identity groups are potentially valuable resources that the work group can use to rethink its primary tasks and redefine its markets, products, strategies, and business practices in ways that will advance its mission. This perspective links diversity to work processes – the way people do and experience the work – in a manner that makes diversity a resource for learning and adaptive change.” Cultural diversity is viewed as a potentially valuable resource for the organization to rethink and reconfigure its primary tasks and processes, based on the idea that cultural differences give rise to different life experiences, knowledge, and insights, which can inform alternative views about work and how to accomplish it (and, on the margins, the organization can also gain access into previously inaccessible niche markets). Diversity becomes a valuable opportunity for organizational learning. This is the only perspective associated with sustainable performance gains that could be attributed to diversity.
  2. Access-and-legitimacy perspective: It behooves the organization to match the diversity in parts of its own workforce as a way of gaining access to and legitimacy with markets and constituent groups that are similarly diverse. However, the organization does not incorporate the cultural competencies of its diverse workforce into its core functions. This perspective fosters perceptions of white-staffed functions as higher status than functions staffed by non-whites; career tracks also became racially segregated in some cases. The resulting interracial tensions appear to inhibit learning. Nonetheless, access-and-legitimacy is a popular “business case for diversity.”
  3. Discrimination-and-fairness perspective: A culturally diverse workforce is a moral imperative to ensure justice and the fair treatment of all members of society. Diversification efforts focus on providing equal opportunities in hiring and promotion, on suppressing prejudicial attitudes, and on eliminating discrimination. Thus, a diverse work group is in itself evidence of just and fair treatment of employees. This perspective does not contain an instrumental link between diversity and a group's work. In the observed organizations under the discrimination-and-fairness perspective, racial identity becomes a source of apprehension for white people and source of powerlessness for many non-whites, and groups’ ability to learn from each other is compromised.
- Work groups' perspectives on diversity could develop and change over time, but at any given time, there is a prevailing perspective at the group level that shapes group members’ experiences.
DIVERSITY CLIMATE & INCLUSION CLIMATE


Abstract: “I introduce the construct of climate for inclusion, which involves eliminating relational sources of bias by ensuring that identity group status is unrelated to access to resources, creating expectations and opportunities for heterogeneous individuals to establish personalized cross-cutting ties, and integrating ideas across boundaries in joint problem solving. I show that within inclusive climates, interpersonal bias is reduced in such a way that gender diversity is associated with lower levels of conflict. In turn, the negative effect that group conflict typically has on unit-level satisfaction disappears. This has important implications, as unit-level satisfaction is negatively associated with turnover in groups.”

Sample: 1,324 employees working in 100 departments of a regional site of a large biomedical company (presumably in the United States – author doesn’t specify). Study participants were 57% female and 43% male.

Methodology: From a deductive review of literature, the author developed a diagnostic for assessing three dimensions of climate for inclusion: fairness of employment practices, integration of differences, and inclusion in decision making. An original 47-item survey (rated on a five-point scale) was administered to 633 university employees to verify validity, yielding a 31-item survey, which was cross-validated on a sample of 701 working adults. A final, condensed 15-item survey was administered to the study sample. The author employed a structural equation model, controlling for other forms of group diversity that have been shown to relate to group conflict as well as (work) group size and average unit tenure. Key variables were gender diversity, climate for inclusion, relationship conflict, task conflict, unit-level satisfaction, unit-level turnover, and justice climate.

Results:

• In units with a low climate for inclusion, gender diversity is associated with higher relationship conflict while relationship conflict is negatively associated with satisfaction. In other words, in the absence of inclusion and presence of gender diversity, we observe more conflict and less
satisfaction. By contrast, in units with high levels of climate for inclusion, gender diversity is negatively associated with relationship conflict.

- The more inclusive the work climate, the less relationship and task conflict is observed among employees, regardless of levels of gender diversity.

- “Inclusive climates attenuate the negative association between relationship conflict and group satisfaction. Typically, relationship conflicts cause people to feel personally attacked and defensive, causing dissatisfaction among organization members who feel uncomfortable working among hostile coworkers. In inclusive climates, however, relationship conflict does not appear to damage unit morale; in fact, [there is] a slight positive relationship between relationship conflict and unit satisfaction in inclusive climates. -- It may be that the relationship conflicts that do arise are interpreted not as personal attacks, but as valued signals that group members may not understand each other as well as they had thought. Given that expressions of interpersonal difference are considered critical for the development of collective cultural competence and improved work processes in inclusive climates, group members who become involved in relationship conflicts may be more willing to spend the time and energy necessary to ensure that learning, rather than antagonism, results from the conflicts. Ultimately, if coworkers are able to successfully resolve and learn from relationship conflicts, unit morale is likely to be preserved.”

Notes:

- Diversity climate generally focuses on the fairness of personnel practices and the treatment of minority employees; inclusion (climate) focuses more broadly on the engagement of whole selves and learning from divergent perspectives.

- The author focuses on three aspects of a climate for inclusion:
  1. **Fairly implemented employment practices** and diversity-specific practices that help to eliminate bias: “When employees perceive the distribution of resources to correlate with identity group membership, members of the group(s) perceived as favored tend to be considered a normative in-group and [tend] to command more respect, deference, and power [than the out-group].” These dynamics inform interpersonal relationships.
  2. **Integration of differences** relates to the interpersonal integration of diverse employees at work: “It reflects collective expectations and norms regarding the openness with which employees can enact and engage core aspects of their self-concept and/or multiple identities without suffering unwanted consequences.”
  3. **Inclusion in decision making** captures the extent to which employees’ diverse perspectives are actively sought and integrated, even when expressed ideas may upset the status quo: “In inclusive climates, the questioning of dominant assumptions is not seen as a threat, but rather as a value-enhancing proposition, and thus barriers that could perpetuate organizational silence are actively eliminated.” In such climates, group members have more opportunities to learn and develop a more “differentiated and personalized understanding of the unique characteristics of out-group members.” As such, inclusive climates can aid in the reduction of stereotypes and bias.

Abstract: “This article reports results from an organizational evaluation examining gender and racial/ethnic differences in the diversity perceptions of 2,686 employees of an electronics company located in a multicultural community. Based on social identity and intergroup theories, the authors explore employees' views of the organizational dimension as well as the personal dimension. A factor analysis of the 16-item diversity perceptions scale uncovered four factors along the two hypothesized dimensions: Fairness and Inclusion factors comprising the organizational dimension and Diversity Value and Personal Comfort factors comprising the personal dimension. The analysis revealed that Caucasian men perceived the organization as more fair and inclusive than did Caucasian women or racial/ethnic minority men and women; Caucasian women and racial/ethnic minority men and women saw more value in diversity programs, possibly because they have encountered more discrimination. The article discusses implications for practice and future research.”

Sample: 6,500 employees from a large electronics company located in a multiethnic metropolitan area in Western United States. Final sample was 2,686 employees (41% response rate), of whom 37% were women (vs. 33% in the company).

Methodology: A diversity perceptions survey containing 23 items and 2 demographic questions (for gender and race/ethnicity) on a 6-point Likert-type scale. Additionally, a sample of 22 employees was interviewed individually.

Results:

- Authors find significant gender and racial/ethnic differences in employees’ perceptions of diversity, both at the personal and organizational level.
  - Men perceive the organizational level as more fair and inclusive than women.
  - Women perceive the personal level more favorably (i.e. they see more value in diversity programs, possibly because they have encountered more discrimination).
- The majority of Caucasian/White men feel the company is fair in its employment practices; Caucasian/White women and minorities report different experiences.
- Women and minorities report particular challenges with the company’s informal processes, which they perceive are more important than the company’s formal processes in e.g. accessing new job opportunities. By contrast, men (who are in the majority at the company) place more emphasis on formal processes.
- There is a significant interaction effect between gender and race/ethnicity identity groups: minority women are more likely than any other group to feel excluded.
- Average scores of the diversity perceptions scale are higher for the personal dimension than for the organizational dimension. In other words, employees don’t think their organization is doing enough to address diversity and inclusion.

Notes:

- Overall diversity environment in an organization is conceptualized as having two dimensions. Generally, organizations have climates that are more accepting of diversity when the perceptions along these two dimensions are more positive (i.e. less individual bias and less discriminatory policies).
  1. **Personal dimension (Diversity Value and Personal Comfort):** “Individuals’ views and prejudices toward people who are different from themselves that can affect attitudes and behaviors towards others in the organization.”
2. **Organizational dimension (Fairness and Inclusion):** “Management’s policies and procedures specifically affecting minorities and women, such as discrimination or preferential treatment in hiring and promotion procedures.”


**Abstract:** “We studied the impact of demographic diversity on individual attachment and firm unit performance in a relatively diverse organization. We implemented cross-level regression to study gender and race/ethnic categorical, relational, and organizational demography in a sample of 26 units part of a regional restaurant chain. At the individual level, we found that diversity climate (DC) moderates the impact of relational and categorical demography on affective organizational commitment, organizational identification, and intention to quit. At the organizational level, we found that DC moderates the impact of organizational diversity on firm productivity and return on profit. We discuss the importance of organizational DC as organizational context on individual attachment, and implications for firm effectiveness in diverse organizations.”

**Sample:** 1,069 blue-collar employees working in 30 restaurants of a regional restaurant chain from the Southwestern United States with some presence in the Southeast as well. Ultimately, 271 employees from 26 restaurants participated in the study. Respondents were 56.3% female, 43.7% male (the company overall is female-dominated), and, on average, 29 years old.

**Methodology:** Survey with a $100 raffle incentive. Authors measured individual organizational attachment (through affective organizational commitment, organizational identification and intention to quit); individual demography (similar to/different from coworkers); organizational demography; diversity climate (through 10 Likert-type items that comprise the organizational dimension of the Diversity Perceptions Scale by Mor Barak et al. (1998)); and restaurant performance. Archival data (demographic composition, sales, income, and wage and other expenses) was provided by the company. Authors controlled for organizational tenure and position level, as well as organizational size in the organization-level study. For the analysis, they ran two separate sets of cross-level ordinary least squares regressions.

**Results:**
- Diversity climate shapes the impact of relational demography across demographic lines. Diversity climate also moderates the effects of organizational demography on firm effectiveness, i.e. in a supportive diverse climate, even demographically diverse individuals work together more effectively.
- The proportion of dissimilar others in gender (i.e. being surrounded primarily by coworkers of the opposite gender) was positively related to intention to quit, but not under a supportive diversity climate.
- At the organizational level, race/ethnic heterogeneity was associated with higher return on income and productivity under a supportive diversity climate (productivity was always found to be higher in a supportive diversity climate regardless of demographics).
- When a workplace is already highly diverse, there may be backlash against efforts to increase diversity further.
Notes:

- The authors define diversity broadly as referring to “differences between individuals on any personal attributes that determine how people perceive one another.”
- Diversity climate “refers to the aggregate member perceptions about the organization’s diversity-related formal structure characteristics and informal values. Climate as an organizational-level variable is comprised of the perceptions organizational members share, such as global reactions and ideas resulting from the organization’s efforts to promote diversity.”
- Employees’ perceptions of whether an organization is fair toward all social groups (i.e. distributional, procedural and interactional justice) are central to diversity climate.

INCIVILITY / SUBTLE DISCRIMINATION / MICROAGGRESSIONS


Abstract: “Extant research suggests subtle, interpersonal forms of discrimination, though often normalized and overlooked, may be just as detrimental to targets as compared to more traditional, overt forms of discrimination. To further examine this question, we meta-analyzed the current literature to estimate the relationship between discrimination and a host of psychological, physical health, and work-related correlates as a function of its form (subtle or overt). Analysis of 90 effect sizes suggested that subtle and overt forms of discrimination hold relationships of comparable magnitude with a host of adverse correlates. By demonstrating that these two forms of discrimination are not differentially related to relevant outcomes, our findings call into serious question the pervasive belief that subtle discrimination is less consequential for targets as compared to overt discrimination (Landy, 2008; McWhorter, 2008). Taken together, our results suggest that subtle discrimination is at least as important to consider and address as its overt counterpart. Implications for organizational scholars and practitioners are discussed.”

Sample: A total of 44 samples/works cited include 26 journal publications, 11 dissertations, one conference presentation and one unpublished study.

Methodology: Meta-analysis of discrimination through a literature search (keywords include covert discrimination, implicit discrimination, modern discrimination, everyday discrimination, explicit discrimination, traditional discrimination, blatant discrimination and hostile discrimination; outcomes of interest include health, career success, stress, life satisfaction, well-being, academic achievement, depression and psychological distress).

Results:

- The authors find that subtle discrimination is at least as positively related to adverse correlates as overt discrimination (the relationships between subtle and overt discrimination and all correlates examined were comparable).
  - Effect sizes for subtle discrimination were in fact larger in absolute magnitude than those for overt discrimination. The discrepancy between subtle and overt effect sizes was larger for organizationally relevant correlates (0.31 vs. 0.28), individual work correlates (0.25 vs. 0.22), and psychological correlates (0.31 vs. 0.28) and smaller for physical health correlates (0.17 vs. 0.16).
Notes:
- Authors define workplace discrimination as happening “when individuals from a stigmatized group are put at a disadvantage in the workplace relative to other groups with comparable potential or proven success.”
- Authors “contend that the ramifications of subtle discrimination are at least as substantial, if not more substantial, than the consequences of overt discrimination for three reasons”:
  - The difficulty in identifying and assessing subtle discrimination increases the likelihood that employees internalize negative feedback with deleterious impacts on self-esteem, self-regulation and task performance. In clear situations, people attribute negative feedback to prejudiced evaluators; in ambiguous situations, people may instead attribute negative feedback internally (“it’s not them, it’s me”). “Thus, harmful actions with ambiguous intent might be even more confusing and stressful for targets as compared to explicitly discriminatory actions.”
  - The experience of subtle discrimination may be more negative than that of overt discrimination because there are fewer clear options for reporting and/or remedying the behavior.
  - Subtle discrimination may be more damaging to targets because of its chronic and frequent nature (chronic stress is a stronger predictor of depressive symptoms than acute stress) – indeed, past study participants report experiencing subtle discrimination more often than overt discrimination.


Abstract: “This paper argues that subtle discrimination is now the principal scaffolding for segregation in the United States. The author suggests this scaffolding is built of ‘micro-inequities’: apparently small events which are often ephemeral and hard-to-prove, events which are covert, often unintentional, frequently unrecognized by the perpetrator. Micro-inequities occur wherever people are perceived to be ‘different’: Caucasians in a Japanese-owned company, African-Americans in a white firm, women in a traditionally male environment, Jews and Moslems in a traditionally Protestant environment. These mechanisms of prejudice against persons of difference are usually small in nature, but not trivial in effect. They are especially powerful taken together. (As one drop of water has little effect, though continuous drops may be destructive, one racist slight may be insignificant but many such slights cause serious damage.) Micro-inequities work both by excluding the person of difference and by making that person less self-confident and less productive. An employer may prevent such damage by developing programs on diversity, like ‘valuing differences’ and team-building. The author does not believe micro-inequities should be made the subject of anti-discrimination legislation.”

Sample: Most anecdotes are from 1989. Insights drawn from experiences throughout author’s career.

Methodology: Author’s personal analysis based on “17 years as ombudsman to MIT and as a consultant to companies in North America.”

Insights:
- “Discriminatory microinequities are tiny, damaging characteristics of an environment, as these characteristics affect a person not indigenous to that environment. They are distinguished by the fact that for all practical purposes one cannot do anything about them; one cannot take them to court or file a grievance.”
In male-dominated environments, gender-based microinequities are culturally so “normal” that they are not noticed by the majority.

Each person is an expert on what constitutes a microinequity in any given instance, and there is an infinite variety of microaggressions. It is impossible to catalog every existing type.

Reasonable people would agree that microinequities are unjust toward individuals because the particular treatment is only occurring due to a group characteristic (e.g. gender) unrelated to work performance.

“Microinequities exert their influence both by walling out the ‘different’ person, and by making the person of difference less effective.”

- Victims of microinequities feel helplessness (because they cannot change the reason why they are being treated unequally); uncertainty and anger (about whether one was left out or put down); and overvigilance (in an attempt to make up for past injustices).
- Victims suffer double damage because dealing with microinequities – their own or others’ – takes effort, time and energy, which detracts from being productive at work.

Organizations suffer as a result of microinequities because employees’ creativity and output can be reduced; talented and capable employees may be overlooked for projects and promotions; and disgruntled employees may leave (as a consequence of, for example, unfair pay).

Microinequities perpetuate gender inequalities directly but also indirectly: it is harder for women than for men to find mentors to help them deal with microinequities, and the few existing senior women are disproportionately called on to spend extra time as same-sex mentors for more junior women.

To overcome the negative effects of microinequities, the author recommends:

- Employee attitude surveys.
- Education through company newsletters, staff meetings, and management trainings.
- Mentoring programs (forming networks of women and minorities to support each other).
- Increased awareness and attention by supervisors (including intervention).
- Consciousness-raising cartoons.


Abstract: “This article advances a theory of incivility as a veiled manifestation of sexism and racism in organizations. To support this argument, I draw from social psychological research on modern discrimination. The result is a multilevel model of selective incivility, with determinants at the level of the person, organization, and society. Selective incivility could be one mechanism by which gender and racial disparities persist in American organizations, despite concerted efforts to eradicate bias. I discuss scientific and practical implications.”

Sample: 99 works referenced/cited.
Methodology: Literature review.

Insights:

• The author proposes that “employees may at times be differentially targeted with incivility on the basis of their sex or race, potentially creating disparate work environments across social groups.” Such selective incivility, which is a “disguised form of workplace discrimination”, may result in a less diverse workforce and possibly legal liability. The author presents three sample scenarios:

1. “Reasonable, forward-thinking, tolerant employees unknowingly target women and minorities with disproportionate incivility, despite being explicitly opposed to sexism and racism. That is, the employees’ implicitly stereotypic attitudes, preference for in-group members, motivation to maintain social power, and so forth could give rise to subtle biases against the outgroup. Lax antidiscrimination policies, permissive leadership behavior, and antisocial models in the workplace could set the stage for employees to act on those biases. Cultural traditions of sexism, racism, and asymmetrical power compound the situation. These instigators might have plausible, nonracial, and non-gendered explanations for the uncivil conduct (e.g. “I didn’t see you,” “I’m having a bad day,” “I thought you were done speaking”) – explanations that they themselves believe.”

2. “Some people may be particularly motivated to think in stereotypic ways and may use controlled processing to promote stereotype use. For example, an employee may consciously experience blatant antipathy toward women and minorities and make no attempt to prevent it from influencing his or her behavior toward coworkers, but may hide prejudice behind the guise of ‘general’ incivility.”

3. “An employee has strong egalitarian values, both explicit and implicit, but works alongside coworkers who express sexism and racism on a regular basis. The employee is caught in a quandary: not going along with the biased conduct could lead to ostracism from the peer group, which constitutes a significant part of the employee’s social world, but participating in blatantly biased behavior would be antithetical to the employee’s values and, thus, highly aversive. One means of solving this dilemma would be to target women and people of color with subtle disrespect – that is, incivility. The discriminatory nature of this conduct would fit in with group norms, and the low-level (possibly unconscious) nature of the deviance might be tolerable for the instigator, who prides himself or herself on being nonsexist and nonracist.”

• Workplace incivility is defined as “low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others. -- Although incivility may occasionally have visibly injurious objectives, it can often be attributed to other factors, such as the instigator’s ignorance, oversight, or personality; intent, whether present or not, is ambiguous to one or more of the parties. However, workplace incivility, by definition, is completely distinct from physical aggression and violence.”

• Workplace incivility is pervasive: the author cites her own past work which reveals that some form of uncivil conduct was encountered by 71% of a court employee sample, 75% of a university employee sample, and 79% of a law enforcement sample. Other researchers have reported similarly high rates of related workplace behaviors, including “generalized harassment” (75%; Einarsen & Raknes, 1997); “generalized workplace harassment” (64%; Rospenda, 2002); and “rude or disrespectful treatment” (67%; Neuman, 2004).

• Uncivil behaviors at work can be categorized as “daily hassles”, i.e. routine nuisances of everyday life that lack the intensity of major life events. However, as chronic, repetitive and subtle stressors, uncivil behaviors can “wear down” an individual over time, both
psychologically and physically. Given the ambiguous nature of many uncivil behaviors, targeted employees may have difficulty coping with and controlling them.

- Finally, potential interventions to address selective incivility at the person, organization and society level are discussed:
  1. **Person-level interventions:** Broadening peoples’ conceptions of who belongs to their in-group (e.g., by spatially integrating people, creating a common group name, and implementing joint evaluation and reward systems); fostering situations that “give rise to individuated processing in lieu of stereotyping” (e.g., situations that involve high stakes, emphasize the need for accuracy, hold people accountable for their judgments, relax time pressures, or require cooperation toward shared goals); promoting “learning and self-regulation processes [that] can help individuals self-monitor and recognize situations in which they are susceptible to stereotyped responding” so as to interrupt stereotyped thinking.
  2. **Organization-level interventions:** Proactive, preventative, and educational approaches are recommended instead of, e.g., reactive complaint mechanisms. Senior management should model respectful workplace behavior and company written materials (e.g., missions statements, codes of conduct) should explicitly state expectations of civility. Prospective employees’ references should be checked in particular with civility concerns in mind. New employees should receive civility training/education, and all employees should undergo interpersonal skills training. Instigators of incivilities should be “sanctioned swiftly, justly, and consistently.” Finally, organizations should provide holistic, inclusion-focused training programs, rather than targeting gender, race or any other category specifically (since that may result in backlash/resistance).
  3. **Societal interventions:** The author concludes that “traditional, reactive, and legalistic approaches to combating blatant discrimination may not be effective for managing subtle biases in the form of selective incivility” at the society level.


**Sample:** Over 9,000 employees, managers, HR executives, presidents and CEOs across the United States (in surveys, focus groups, workshops, experimental studies and interviews).

**Methodology:** For experimental studies, participants were subjected to identical treatment (same form of incivility delivered in the same way, in the same context) in either the treatment group for uncivil behavior or the control group for civil behavior. The occasions for incivility (or civility), however, were varied: sometimes the experimenter was rude to participants for being late, sometimes a stranger treated participants uncivilly, and sometimes participants were asked to think about how they would react to various types of incivility. For each situation, the authors measured participants’ performance (through various verbal tasks), creativity and helping behaviors.

**Results:**
- Experimental evidence reveals that uncivil behavior has numerous negative consequences for the target:
  - Incivility reduces concentration and task focus (participants treated uncivilly recall nearly 20% less than the control group, which was treated civilly).
  - Incivility reduces creativity (participants who experienced incivility are 30% less creative and produce 25% fewer ideas that were less diverse than the control group’s).
Incivility reduces participants’ inclination to assist others (35% offer to pick up a dropped item vs. 90% without incivility; in a separate study, 24% of rudely treated participants offer to provide directions vs. 73% of the control group).

Uncivil behavior also negatively impacts witnesses (i.e. people who simply witnessed uncivil behavior without being its target):

- Witnesses to incivility perform 33% worse on verbal tasks and come up with 39% fewer creative ideas than the control group (which experienced civil behavior).
- In a separate study, witnesses to incivility perform 20% worse on word puzzles and produce nearly 30% fewer ideas in a brainstorming task.
- Witnesses to incivility are also less likely to help another person (25% of witnesses to incivility volunteer to help, as compared to 51% of the control group).

In organizations, uncivil behavior and/or uncivil environments likewise have negative effects:

- Employees in uncivil workplaces have 26% less energy, 30% less motivation to learn new ideas and skills, 30% less vitality, 36% less job satisfaction and 44% less commitment to their organization compared to employees in civil workplaces (statistics drawn by comparing employees working in the top and bottom 10% of civil and uncivil workplaces).
- Uncivil environments diminish performance and squander team productivity: nearly 20% of respondents in a survey refused to work with people who had been uncivil to them, even if they were teammates, and nearly 25% reported leaving tasks for teammates to finish that when they were treated uncivilly.
- Incivility within teams decreases members’ sense of psychological safety: team members are less comfortable and less likely to seek or accept feedback, ask for help, talk about mistakes, and inform each other about problems.

Retaliation for incivility ranges from sabotaging the organization to not covering the boss’s back, to not passing along valuable information; 94% of targets of incivility get even with their offenders and 88% of workers treated uncivilly get even with their organizations.

In organizations, the costs of incivility are numerous and varied (based on surveys and non-experimental work):

- 48% intentionally decreased work effort.
- 47% intentionally decreased time at work.
- 38% intentionally decreased work quality.
- 80% lost work time worrying about the incident.
- 63% lost time avoiding the offender.
- 66% said their performance declined.
- 78% said their commitment to the organization declined.
- 12% said they exited the organization as a result of their uncivil treatment.

Notes:

- Authors define incivility as “the exchange of seemingly inconsequential inconsiderate words and deeds that violate conventional norms of workplace conduct.”
- Examples of incivility include:
  - Raking credit for other’s efforts or passing blame for own mistakes.
  - Not listening or checking e-mail or texting during meetings.
  - Talking down to or belittling others.
  - Withholding information.
  - Paying little attention or showing little interest in others’ opinions.
  - Making demeaning or derogatory remarks.
  - Avoiding someone.
Authors propose recommendations for combating incivility in organizations:

1. Executives should model civil behavior at all times (setting a norm), and publicly commit to civility standards and reinforce them in person and in writing. Because leaders’ tolerated behaviors are a signal of what is valued and rewarded by the organization, leaders should be offered coaching and 360-degree feedback to help them model the desired behavior.

2. Teams should avoid hiring/engaging uncivil employees, vendors, contractors, or customers in the first place.

3. Organizations should offer civility training that is highly experiential (including role-playing, candid discussion and videotaping on topics like listening, conflict resolution, negotiation, dealing with difficult people and stress management).

4. Organizations should tie civil behavior to performance evaluations, raises and promotions.

5. Individuals and organizations should be on the lookout for uncivil behavior and seek to weed it out early; “smart leaders work to establish an open-door policy and to keep an open mind when they hear reports of uncivil interactions.”

6. Managers should not make excuses for uncivil behavior but instead take decisive action (for example, not simply move an offender to another location).

7. Organizations should conduct exit interviews and post-exit interviews (around six months after an employee’s departure) to gather information and reflect upon the experiences and reactions of employees who leave because of incivility.


Abstract: “Although blatant expressions of sexism in the American workforce appear on the decline, many researchers note that discrimination is not disappearing but is instead becoming more subtle and ambiguous. Drawing from Sue et al.’s construct of microaggressions, which examines manifestations of prejudice ranging from subtle to overt, the present research provides the first known empirical investigation of gender differences in third-party perceptions of microaggressions against women at work. Undergraduate women and men read vignettes describing interactions between male supervisors and female subordinates, which portrayed potentially discriminatory supervisor behavior, ranging in explicitness from subtle to blatant. Results indicate that although both men and women perceive differences in microaggression explicitness, women tend to detect greater discrimination than men, particularly when instances are subtle in nature. Both genders expect microaggressions to generate more negative work outcomes as explicitness increases. We discuss practical implications of our research, including the importance of raising awareness of workplace gender microaggressions, especially its most subtle forms, and of developing supporting programs to help observers of discrimination, who may be more likely to be women in cases of perceived microaggressions against women. Future research directions for addressing the broad range of discrimination facing working women today are also explored.”

Sample: 150 undergraduate students at a mid-size, Mid-Atlantic U.S. university (46.7% women, 53.3% men).

Methodology: Laboratory experiment and survey. Each participant read eight scenarios depicting interactions between female employees and their male supervisors at a fictitious organization; the vignettes depicted different forms of microaggression (two each of microinvalidation, microinsult and...
microassault). Two control vignettes in which discrimination was not present completed the set of eight. Participants then responded to both a perceived microaggression scale (13 items on a 5-point Likert scale yielding an average perceived microaggression score) and a projected negative work outcomes scale (7 items on a 5-point Likert scale). A univariate repeated measures analysis of variance was deployed for all analyses with the microaggression condition (microassault, microinsult, microinvalidation or control) as the within-subject independent variable, gender as a between-subject independent variable, and perceived microaggressions and projected negative work outcomes as separate dependent variables.

Results:

- Regardless of gender, observers (study participants) perceive greater microaggression against women as the explicitness of discrimination increases. Women are also expected to experience poorer work outcomes as a result of more blatant microaggressions. Both women and men detect nuances in gendered microaggressions.
- Female and male observers are equally attuned to the lack of microaggressions (in the control condition) and the most egregious microaggressions (in the microassault condition). However, female observers are significantly more likely to perceive the two most subtle gendered microaggressions than men (microinsults and microinvalidations; small effect size). Women are more apt to notice subtle forms of discrimination than men.

Notes:

- Authors define gender microaggressions as “intentional or unintentional actions or behaviors that exclude, demean, insult, oppress, or otherwise express hostility or indifference toward women.”
- The microaggressions scale is as follows (adapted from Sue et al., 2007, which focused on race):
  - Microinvalidations encompass “actions that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiences of [women].”
  - Microinsults involve “actions . . . that convey insensitivity, are rude, or directly demean a person’s [gender] identity or heritage.”
  - Microassaults include expressions similar to old-fashioned [sexism] that are “most often deliberate on the part of the microaggressor, whose intent is to hurt, oppress, or discriminate.”
- “Women’s greater sensitivity to gender microaggressions may stem from personal experiences with sexism, either actions directed at them or at their female colleagues. -- In contrast, men’s more infrequent personal encounters with sexism may lead them to be less attuned to subtle expressions of discrimination against women. This discrepancy may hinder efforts to achieve inclusive workplaces because what men may consider fair could be seen by women as disenfranchising. Also, if women view men as less likely to acknowledge subtle discrimination, they may avoid reporting such incidents to male supervisors.”
  - Women’s greater sensitivity to microaggressions can help and hurt: it helps women to respond more effectively when targeted and to provide support to other victims, but it also imposes a psychological burden on them as witnesses of discrimination (and has potential effects on work effectiveness and willingness to remain in the organization).
- To overcome microaggressions, the authors suggest raising awareness of gender discrimination in all its forms (through formal training, campaigns, employee affinity groups etc.); educating employees about manifestations of contemporary workplace gender discrimination; and providing guidance about appropriate ways to respond.

**Insights:** Derald Wing Sue presents a six-point guide for overcoming individual biases and microaggressions (pp. 227-230).

1. Underrepresented employees’ voices must be heard in the workplace. This can happen through employee resource groups, focus groups or other minority employee organizations: “Clustering that allows for support and nourishment may lead to greater multicultural interactions in the long term.”

2. Leaders must demonstrate commitment to creating an open and bias-free workplace. Microaggressions are more detrimental when delivered in superior-subordinate contexts than in peer-to-peer contexts; therefore, “diversity implementation is most effective when strong leadership is exerted” in the form of actions and words.

3. Organizations should create a vision statement as well as an operational definition of diversity and inclusion. These should be supplemented by a clear action plan, objectives, and timelines for addressing disparities in the organization.

4. Organizations should create oversight team(s) that are genuinely “empowered to assess, develop and monitor the organization’s development with respect to the goals” of diversity and inclusion. Such a team or group should report directly to the President or CEO.

5. Accountability for diversity must be built into the system. Individuals, teams, departments and divisions must be held responsible for achieving diversity-related goals.

6. Organizations “must develop a systematic and long-term commitment to educate the entire workforce concerning diversity issues.” Trainings should include everyone in the organization from top to bottom.


**Insights:** The authors define microinequities as the “subtle putdowns, snubs, dismissive gestures, or sarcastic tones that can undercut employee performance and encourage employee turnover.” They provide the following specific examples of microinequities in the workplace:

- Dismissing the idea of one employee only to embrace it when paraphrased by another.
- Using a formal handshake with one employee and a playful pretend punch for another employee who will then be perceived (correctly or not) to be in management’s “inner circle”.
- Going out to lunch with certain employees more frequently than others.
- Not saying “good morning” or otherwise greeting [certain] employees.
- Checking one’s [phone] or otherwise multi-tasking while speaking to an employee.
- Addressing some employees by chummy nicknames, and others more formally.
- Mispronouncing, despite earlier correction, the name of an employee or confusing the names of two employees.
- Crossing one’s arms when listening to a comment from an employee.
- Routinely being late for or leaving early from meetings.
- Ridiculing accents or peculiar speech patterns of employees.
- Continually interrupting employees or completing sentences for people.
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

EDMONDSO, A. (1999). PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND LEARNING BEHAVIOR IN WORK TEAMS.

Abstract: “This paper presents a model of team learning and tests it in a multimethod field study. It introduces the construct of team psychological safety – a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking – and models the effects of team psychological safety and team efficacy together on learning and performance in organizational work teams. Results of a study of 51 work teams in a manufacturing company, measuring antecedent, process, and outcome variables, show that team psychological safety is associated with learning behavior, but team efficacy is not, when controlling for team psychological safety. As predicted, learning behavior mediates between team psychological safety and team performance. The results support an integrative perspective in which both team structures, such as context support and team leader coaching, and shared beliefs shape team outcomes.”

Sample: 427 individuals organized into 51 work teams at Office Design Incorporated, a U.S. manufacturer of office furniture with approximately 5,000 employees in total. The 51 work teams included 34 functional teams (made up of managers/supervisors and direct reports in sales, manufacturing, and staff services such as information technology and accounting), nine self-managed teams (made up of peers in the same function in manufacturing and sales), five time-limited cross-functional product development teams, and three time-limited cross-functional project teams. Teams differed in organization level, department, type, size, tenure and team age.

Methodology: Qualitative interviews; observations of team meetings and team work; two surveys; and a structured interview instrument to obtain quantitative data for all 51 teams in the sample. Regression analyses on the group-level data set (N = 51) with customers' ratings of team performance as the dependent variable and measures obtained from team members as regressors. General linear model analyses on the individual-level data set (N = 427).

Results:

- Teams that have higher psychological safety engage in more learning behaviors.
  - Context support (e.g. access to information and resources), team leader coaching, and team membership (random effects of belonging to the same team) were significant predictors of individuals’ ratings of team psychological safety. The effects of team type and team tenure were insignificant.
  - Team psychological safety, team efficacy, and team membership were significantly related to team learning behavior, while team type and team tenure were insignificant.

- Team psychological safety affects learning behavior, which in turn affects team performance. Psychological safety arises in part from team leader coaching and context support, in that they contribute to an environment in which team members can develop shared beliefs that well-intentioned interpersonal risks will not be punished; these beliefs, in turn, enable team members to take proactive learning-oriented actions that promote performance.

- Team psychological safety goes beyond interpersonal trust and includes components of trust, respect for each other's competence, and caring about each other as people.
  - A climate of safety and supportiveness enabled team members to, for example, embrace errors and to seek feedback from customers and make changes in product design. On the flip side, a lack of psychological safety made team members more reluctant to ask for help, more unwilling to question the team’s goals, and more fearful of sanctions by management.
• This study suggests that structural and interpersonal factors work together in an integrative fashion (as opposed to separately) to influence learning and performance in teams, thereby promoting team effectiveness.

Notes:
• Psychological safety is defined as “a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. -- The term is meant to suggest neither a careless sense of permissiveness, nor an unrelentingly positive affect but, rather, a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject, or punish someone for speaking up. This confidence stems from mutual respect and trust among team members.”
• Learning at the group level is conceptualized as an “ongoing process of reflection and action, characterized by asking questions, seeking feedback, experimenting, reflecting on results, and discussing errors or unexpected outcomes of actions. For a team to discover gaps in its plans and make changes accordingly, team members must test assumptions and discuss differences of opinion openly rather than privately or outside the group.” These actions are referred to as learning behaviors.

SOCIAL NORMS


Abstract: “As work organizations become increasingly gender diverse, existing theoretical models have failed to explain why such diversity can have a negative impact on idea generation. Using evidence from two group experiments, this paper tests theory on the effects of imposing a political correctness (PC) norm, one that sets clear expectations for how men and women should interact, on reducing interaction uncertainty and boosting creativity in mixed-sex groups. Our research shows that men and women both experience uncertainty when asked to generate ideas as members of a mixed-sex work group: men because they may fear offending the women in the group and women because they may fear having their ideas devalued or rejected. Most group creativity research begins with the assumption that creativity is unleashed by removing normative constraints, but our results show that the PC norm promotes rather than suppresses the free expression of ideas by reducing the uncertainty experienced by both sexes in mixed-sex work groups and signaling that the group is predictable enough to risk sharing more – and more novel – ideas. Our results demonstrate that the PC norm, which is often maligned as a threat to free speech, may play an important role in promoting gender parity at work by allowing demographically heterogeneous work groups to more freely exchange creative ideas.”

Sample: Undergraduates from two U.S. universities and online respondents from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk website.

Methodology: Two separate laboratory studies and a survey involving undergraduates in the U.S.
1. Study 1: 264 undergraduates from two U.S. universities (53% female, average age 21 years) were paid $20 for participating in a laboratory experiment. They were randomly assigned to mixed- or same-sex groups of three and asked to generate ideas as a group; the experimental groups were first primed with the PC norm while the control groups were not. The authors analyzed the results using a 2 (PC norm vs. control) by 2 (mixed-sex vs. same-sex group composition) factorial design and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The researchers also recruited
121 respondents from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk website to read a brief scenario about an organization that was attempting to manage interactions in mixed-sex work groups. Participants were asked to list the five best examples of how to be politically correct/sensitive/polite in mixed-sex work groups, depending on the condition to which they were assigned; in the control group, participants simply listed five things about their previous day.

2. **Study 2**: 219 undergraduates from two U.S. universities (50.7% female, average age 21 years) were paid $15 for participating in a laboratory experiment. They were randomly assigned to mixed-sex groups and asked to generate ideas for a new business to fill a space left vacant by a mismanaged restaurant during a 10-minute idea-generation period.

3. **Survey**: 62 undergraduates (51% female, average age 20 years) responded to a survey about uncertainty in working groups where they rated several statements on a scale of 1 to 7.

**Results:**
- The political correctness norm facilitates mixed-sex groups’ expression of novel ideas and raises their level of performance to match that of same-sex groups without the PC norm. The experience of uncertainty stifles mixed-sex groups’ creativity and a salient PC norm reduces the uncertainty experienced by both women and men in mixed-sex working groups.
  - The positive effects of the PC norm in mixed-sex groups apply both when political correctness is subtly primed and when it is introduced as a group norm. This suggests that “overtly instructing groups to be politically correct can effectively liberate idea exchange rather than trigger reactance.”
- Without the PC norm, mixed-sex groups generate significantly fewer ideas when members feel higher uncertainty than when they feel lower uncertainty.
- On the other hand, “the PC norm impairs same-sex groups’ performance, perhaps because it seems irrelevant and inappropriate, potentially confusing group members or distracting them from the task.” The PC norm appears to provide “contextually relevant guidance”, and it can harm or improve group performance depending on the group’s composition.
- Survey results show that women worry more than men that their ideas might be criticized or not useful; men worry more than women about offending someone or having their ideas perceived as inappropriate. Women’s and men’s overall levels of uncertainty are nearly identical, and the PC norm works to encourage both sexes to share their most creative ideas.

**Notes:**
- “The PC norm may act as an equitable intervention that precludes backlash because it reduces uncertainty for both men and women. And because the PC norm is typically externally imposed, it may make the stigma of sexism explicit to the entire group and reduce uncertainty for group members who know they should appear unprejudiced but are not sure how to do so. -- People continue to be uncertain about how to enact gender parity in words and behavior when working together, even as numerical equality emerges in the workforce. In some sense, then, the paradoxical utility of the PC norm reflects the unfinished status of gender parity at work.”
References


