Article

Paradoxes of Inclusion: Understanding and Managing the Tensions of Diversity and Multiculturalism

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Abstract

Inclusion is a process and practice that involves working with diversity as a resource. In inclusive organizations and societies, people of all identities and many styles can be fully themselves while also contributing to the larger collective, as valued and full members. Working toward inclusion in diverse organizations and societies can often be experienced as polarizing and presents many challenges and tensions. These tensions can productively be understood and addressed from a paradox perspective. This article discusses three core paradoxes of inclusion: those involving self-expression and identity, boundaries and norms, and safety and comfort. The manifestations of and approaches to managing each paradox are discussed.

Keywords

diversity, inclusion, multiculturalism, paradox, leadership, intergroup relations

In an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* in October 2016, Yale University's president, social psychologist Peter Salovey, affirmed that—for him and his institution—there is no contradiction between free speech on the one hand and inclusion and equality on the other. A year prior, Yale had found itself quite publicly mired in controversy and protests over racial discrimination at the school, demands for more faculty diversity, and concerns about racial tension across the United States (Stanley-Becker, 2015; Swarns, 2015). Protests were triggered in part by an open letter from a residential college administrator and lecturer who, in criticizing suggestions by Yale's Intercultural

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Affairs Committee that students should not wear culturally insensitive Halloween costumes, argued that college students should be able withstand even offensive affronts and maintained that the right of free speech should be paramount (Stack, 2015). This letter upset many students, particularly of color, who experienced the administrator's stance as a grievous setback to efforts to create multicultural inclusion at Yale and claimed that faculty administrators—especially at the residential colleges—have a special responsibility to foster safety and inclusion for them and other members of previously excluded and stigmatized groups. In his op-ed, Salovey sought to make room for both seemingly contradictory perspectives.

What made this situation so challenging? What could be so controversial about Black and other students of color demanding full equality—including to be safe and respected at their own campus (Grewal, 2015)? What makes it so contentious at times for organizations, and more broadly the United States and other societies, to seek to eliminate inequality while increasing and valuing diversity and multiculturalism? This article examines such questions from a paradox perspective, with the goal of bringing out the covert or unstated contradictions that often underlie work on diversity and inclusion in organizations and society, and of indicating ways to manage these paradoxes so as to enable continued organizational change for social equality.

Inclusion has increasingly become a focal frame to think about and work with diversity (Ferdman, 2014) and to systemically foster social equality across multiple dimensions of identity. Yet, despite increasing agreement that more equality is needed (e.g., Equal Rights Trust, 2008; Fetterolf, 2017; Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe, 2011), tensions, controversies, and dilemmas about how to achieve it proliferate. Over many years of working to design or implement organizational change efforts to increase equality, diversity, and inclusion, I have observed a range of impasses and conflicts that—when considered and addressed from a paradox perspective—can help point the way to deeper and more effective work and ultimately more productive and sustainable individual and organizational change. By exploring the multiple and often seemingly incompatible ways in which people think about and respond to organizational and societal change processes designed to increase inclusion and social equality, as well as by considering contradictions inherent in inclusion itself, we can better understand diversity dynamics, address resistance to such change, and find clearer paths to successful implementation. In this article, after briefly discussing some of the organizational and societal diversity dynamics that frame the issues and after describing the concept and complexities of inclusion, I argue that inclusion is inherently paradoxical. I then explain and analyze three core paradoxes of inclusion—self-expression and identity, boundaries and norms, and safety and comfort—and provide suggestions for managing each of them to facilitate systemic work on diversity, multiculturalism, and equality.

Diversity Dynamics: Societal and Organizational Contexts for Change

The situation at Yale played into larger national controversies, not only about police killings of young Black men or sexual violence on campuses but also over the appropriate balance among multicultural sensitivity, inclusion, free speech, and freedom of

expression, especially at universities and in other learning environments (e.g., Azziz, 2015; Gay, 2015; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015; Shulevitz, 2015). If students and faculty must watch what they say or what they wear, for fear of offending someone, does not that violate their freedom of expression, and therefore their ability to be fully authentic and unrestricted? And if students or faculty must worry about being targeted by or witnessing offensive speech or caricatures of members of their group, does not that violate their freedom to participate in the university as equals, without fear of mistreatment and stigmatization, and therefore their ability to be fully authentic and unrestricted?

In this mix, Jonathan Hollaway, the first African American dean of Yale College (and an expert on Black protest movements), found himself pulled in different directions (Swarns, 2015). Despite being an active supporter of inclusion initiatives and of student calls for more faculty diversity, and despite having faced discrimination as an African American himself, Holloway was criticized—even by Black students whose causes he had championed—for not moving quickly or doing enough. Students of color may have assumed that Dean Holloway, as a Black man in a position of authority, should have been much more proactive in taking up their cause. Yet, given his status as an African American pioneer at the highest level of Yale's administration—one with apparently less authority than prior Yale College deans (Swarns, 2015) and who probably wondered whether this was attributable, in part, to his African American identity—Holloway was already most likely extending himself to challenge the institutional status quo.

Can a person of color or member of other underrepresented groups help increase organizational diversity without at the same time feeling trapped or torn? Is free speech fully compatible with diversity, inclusion, and equality, as Salovey (2016) claims? Yale's experience indicates that although free speech, equality, diversity, and inclusion may certainly coexist, they do so only in a tension-filled way that must be consistently managed, and that often risks tipping to one or the other side and reigniting conflict. Salovey's attempt to manage this tension illustrates the types of issues that leaders and practitioners must consider and juggle to address disputes that arise with growing diversity and multiculturalism and with efforts to advance social equality and inclusion in organizations and in society at large.

Globalization—accelerated by technological advances and increasing flows of people, goods, capital, and ideas, together with migration resulting from economic and political changes—has increased the cultural diversity of many countries, bringing more people into regular contact with others different from them in both identity and culture. More societies face the need to absorb and integrate immigrants and refugees, to address intergroup—particularly racial and ethnic—differences and disparities, and to increase social justice and equality; simultaneously, many societies must address many other types of diversity, including in religion, sexual orientation, age, disability status, and gender identity and expression. Concurrently, a growing number of organizations have implemented diversity initiatives to address and prevent invidious discrimination, avoid negative intergroup conflicts, and derive benefits from multiple perspectives and ideas (Ferdman & Deane, 2014). Corporate approaches to diversity management typically address heterogeneity along multiple dimensions, although the

relative emphasis on any given dimension often varies across organizations, time, and locations.

At both societal and organizational levels, leaders must in some way address diversity and intergroup relations. Doing this requires addressing questions about the proper role of differences in culture and identity at both individual and group levels and about appropriate ways to structure relationships across these differences. It also requires clarifying which differences matter, in what ways, and to whom. Answers to these questions are often grounded in widely divergent values and ideologies regarding diversity. For example, many societies have assumed that newcomers, to the extent that they are allowed in, must fully assimilate to the receiving society. This has also been a typical premise in many organizations: It is up to newcomers to learn the ropes and adapt to the way things are already done in the organization. This is markedly so to the extent that those newcomers diverge in notable ways from those previously in the organization, especially in terms of cultural patterns, visible identities, and power.

From an assimilationist approach, a key condition of acceptance is leaving behind one's prior cultural values and identities and taking on all the characteristics and values of one's new society or organization: becoming one of "us" requires becoming just like us. But assimilation has come into question for many reasons, including competing ideologies such as pluralism and multiculturalism; the realities of intergroup relations, including prejudice and discrimination, which often create large barriers to assimilation; modern values regarding democracy, self-determination, individual versus collective rights, and social justice; recognition of past and present oppression of indigenous peoples; and growing evidence regarding the psychological and societal benefits of integration and multiculturalism over those of assimilation. Inclusion, as a concept and practice (Ferdman, 2014) that builds on and extends prior conceptions of pluralism and multiculturalism, provides a counterpoint to assimilation as a lens and goal for how to work with diversity and increase social equality in organizations and society.

The Concept and Practice of Inclusion

Inclusion is an active process in which individuals, groups, organizations, and societies—rather than seeking to foster homogeneity—view and approach diversity as a valued resource. In an inclusive system, we value ourselves and others because of and not despite our differences (or similarities); everyone—across multiple types of differences—should be empowered as a full participant and contributor who feels and is connected to the larger collective without having to give up individual uniqueness, cherished identities, or vital qualities (Ferdman, 2014).

On its face, inclusion can be simple and straightforward: it is about presence, participation, safety, voice, authenticity, equity, and equality for more people across multiple identity groups. Yet, at the same time, inclusion is complex and multifaceted. Inclusive systems—through a combination of individual behavior and attitudes, group norms, leadership approaches, and organizational policies and practices (Ferdman, 2014)—enable each person to flourish and develop, providing opportunities to fully

connect and engage in ways that are beneficial for both the individual and the collective (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Ferdman & Deane, 2014). Like multiculturalism, inclusion values the coexistence of multiple values, perspectives, styles, and means of accomplishing goals within the same social system. However, it broadens the focal dimensions of difference and more fully addresses their intersectionality (e.g., Dawson, Johnson, & Ferdman, 2013; Ferdman & Brody, 1996; Ferdman & Sagiv, 2012; Thomas, Tran, & Dawson, 2010). Inclusion provides a lens that reorganizes how we look at and experience identity, interpersonal interactions, group dynamics, intercultural interactions, intergroup relations, and even work itself.

How inclusion looks and feels may depend on its context, as well as who defines it and for what purpose, leading to differential emphasis on some of its elements over others. For example, even assimilation can be construed as inclusive, if inclusion is defined narrowly and focused solely on the presence of specific groups or individuals in a social system, rather than on their freedom to express themselves in preferred ways. But this is inclusion without diversity. Even in the context of diversity initiatives, the framing and meaning of inclusion can also differ (Ferdman & Brody, 1996). A focus on morality, ethics, and individual rights, for example, emphasizes increasing equality, removing group-based barriers to opportunity, and helping everyone achieve their full capability. A focus on legal or social pressures can highlight the importance of avoiding invidious discrimination or unfair obstacles and treating everyone the same. And a focus on organizational success or "integration and learning" (Ely & Thomas, 2001) accentuates the collective benefits that can derive from the unique capacity, potential, and contribution of each person and group.

Inclusion is best seen as a multilevel system and set of practices (Ferdman, 2014). Inclusion spans and connects macro, meso, and micro processes and contexts, ranging from societal and organizational ideologies, values, policies, and practices, to leadership models and practices and group norms and climates, to interpersonal behavior and individual experiences of inclusion. Two people referring to inclusion, then, could be thinking about diversity dynamics at any, some, or all these levels of analysis (Ferdman, 2014; Mor Barak, 2017). For Mor Barak (2017), for example, a fully inclusive organization attends to and values not only its own diversity but also that of its surrounding communities, nations, and world. I have emphasized the psychological experience of inclusion—people's belief that they can be safe, heard, engaged, fully present, authentic, valued, and respected, both as individuals and as members of multiple identity groups (Ferdman, 2014; Ferdman, Barrera, Allen, & Vuong, 2009). Others (e.g., Nishii, 2013) highlight the organizational or group climate for inclusion. In a group, inclusion involves creating and maintaining safety, engaging in dialogue and soliciting and using multiple perspectives, and treating others fairly, in the way they would like to be treated. It also requires holding space for both similarities and differences, with suitably permeable yet appropriate boundaries such that members do not have to leave valued parts of themselves outside as a condition of membership, yet can feel stability and connection to others regarding collective goals.

At the intergroup level—both in organizations and society—inclusion can become even more complex—and perhaps a bit different. For example, in assessing whether a

given social identity group is fully included, it can be challenging to define the boundary of the system under consideration and the appropriate point of reference for the group. Should inclusion be assessed from the perspective of those group members already present inside the organization or country? Or should it also consider whether potential newcomers believe that they can or will be able to join? In the case of immigrant communities, should maintenance and even enhancement of transnational perspectives and sensibilities count as evidence for or against inclusion? Where, exactly, is the boundary for the group that is presumably included?

Addressing inclusion at more macro levels is also complex because how it is approached and experienced may depend on the type of group or dimension of diversity involved. For example, fostering inclusion of people with disabilities may involve a different focus than inclusion across racial groups, both because of the nature of the differences involved and because of the historical relations among the relevant groups. Finally, inclusion of a specific group or type of group (e.g., people with disabilities) differs from inclusion across a range of dimensions simultaneously. Organizational inclusion initiatives typically address multiple types of diversity simultaneously; in contrast, societal-level inclusion initiatives often focus on one dimension (e.g., social class or immigrant status), or perhaps two or three at most (e.g., age, immigrant status, and color).

In sum, inclusion encompasses multiple components and dynamics that vary depending on the level of analysis. Across levels of analysis, inclusion entails unique tensions or dilemmas; because inclusion incorporates seemingly contradictory components, it is thus inherently paradoxical. The rest of this article explores these paradoxes.

Paradoxes of Inclusion

The process and practice of inclusion involve tensions that can be productively viewed through the lens of paradox. As W. K. Smith and Lewis (2011) suggest, a paradox perspective explores "how organizations can attend to competing demands simultaneously" (p. 381). For example, leaders may experience demands to focus on current needs versus future needs, or to choose between a focus on profit and a focus on people. Yet such tensions, like others shaped by the complexities of organizational life, and perhaps of life more generally, are often best addressed by a "both/and" rather than "either/or" approach (W. K. Smith, Lewis, & Tushman, 2016). By viewing situations through a paradox lens and recognizing that many tensions—even when pulling in opposing directions—often have their source in the very same process or dynamic (K. Smith & Berg, 1987), we can find new ways to manage otherwise seemingly intractable challenges and dilemmas (Jules & Good, 2014).

Lewis (2000) describes those tensions best approached from a paradox perspective as "cognitively or socially constructed polarities that mask the simultaneity of conflicting truths" (p. 761) and "that obscure the interrelatedness of the contradictions" (p. 762). She explains that, "unlike continua, dilemmas, or either/or choices, paradoxical tensions signify two sides of the same coin" (p. 761). For this reason, approaching the conflict between polarities that coexist in paradoxical relationship from an "either/or"
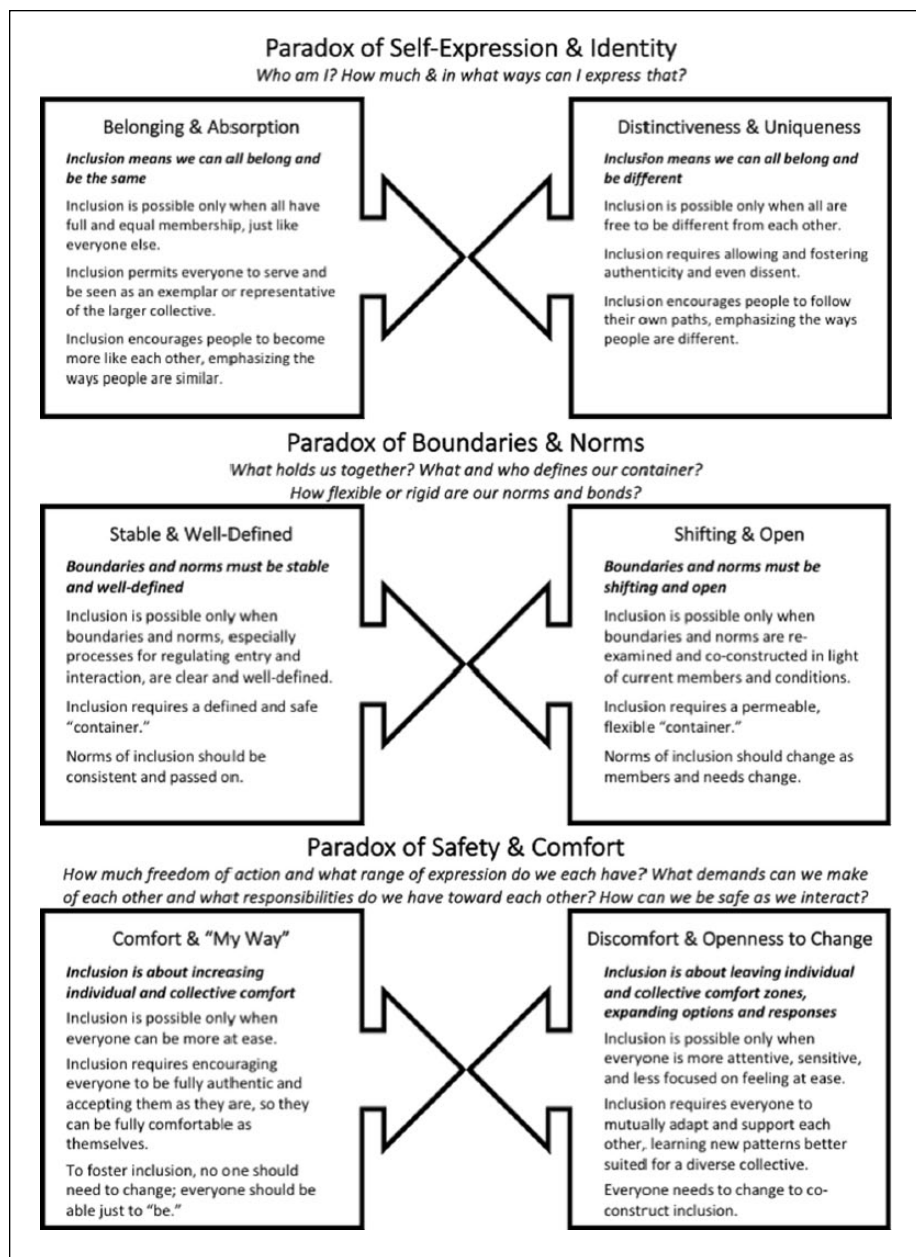
perspective may create short-term comfort, but inevitably exacerbates the tensions (Lewis, 2000; K. Smith & Berg, 1987). Indeed, it is often the assumption that we must choose one or the other that is the problem, and it becomes easier to manage the dilemma when we can recognize our own participation in framing and maintaining the choices as mutually exclusive opposites.

Inclusion, at its core, involves such seemingly contradictory facets coexisting in paradoxical tension. Approaches that focus on only one side of inclusion's polarities tend to be short lived or problematic, typically giving rise to the opposing need, perspective, or force. Adopting a paradoxical perspective can be quite useful—and often necessary—in considering and addressing the challenges and tensions of inclusion, because it helps avoid getting trapped in one or the other side of the tension. For example, to be inclusive, should we treat everyone the same or treat them differently? To be inclusive, should we focus on aligning our goals and processes so that we all follow the same approach, or should we each do whatever best brings out our individual strengths and aligns with our interests? To be inclusive, should we highlight our commonalities with each other, or should we highlight our differences? To be inclusive, should we help people group themselves with others based on their identities and common interests, or should people be compelled to mix-up across identities and other characteristics? These and many similar questions cannot be resolved by holding fast to one or the other side. Holding the paradox is usually much more productive than becoming polarized, particularly because the nature and dynamics of diversity mean that, despite their apparent contradiction, both perspectives must be addressed to foster inclusion (Ferdman, 1995; Ferdman & Brody, 1996).

Creating inclusion and reaping its benefits often require holding and living with paradox in productive ways. In the rest of this article, I explore and analyze three core dilemmas of inclusion that are best seen and addressed from a paradox perspective and provide suggestions for how to manage each of them. The paradox of self-expression and identity contrasts an emphasis on belonging and absorption versus distinctiveness and uniqueness. The paradox of boundaries and norms contrasts an emphasis on stable and well-defined standards versus shifting and flexible standards. The paradox of safety and comfort contrasts an emphasis on comfort and "my way" versus discomfort and openness to change.

Self-Expression and Identity: Belonging/Absorption Versus Distinctiveness/Uniqueness

One of the most salient tensions inherent in inclusion relates to self-expression and identity; it contrasts the view of inclusion as constituting full acceptance by, belonging to, and absorption into a larger social unit, versus inclusion as the ability to maintain one's distinctiveness from and uniqueness within the whole without losing benefits or rights available to other members. This dilemma (illustrated in Figure 1) involves divergent answers to these focal questions:

Paradox of Self-Expression & Identity
Who am I? How much & in what ways can I express that?

Belonging & Absorption

Inclusion means we can all belong and be the same

Inclusion is possible only when all have full and equal membership, just like everyone else.

Inclusion permits everyone to serve and be seen as an exemplar or representative of the larger collective.

Inclusion encourages people to become more like each other, emphasizing the ways people are similar.

Distinctiveness & Uniqueness

Inclusion means we can all belong and be different

Inclusion is possible only when all are free to be different from each other.

Inclusion requires allowing and fostering authenticity and even dissent.

Inclusion encourages people to follow their own paths, emphasizing the ways people are different.

Paradox of Boundaries & Norms
What holds us together? What and who defines our container?
How flexible or rigid are our norms and bonds?

Stable & Well-Defined

Boundaries and norms must be stable and well-defined

Inclusion is possible only when boundaries and norms, especially processes for regulating entry and interaction, are clear and well-defined.

Inclusion requires a defined and safe "container."

Norms of inclusion should be consistent and passed on.

Shifting & Open

Boundaries and norms must be shifting and open

Inclusion is possible only when boundaries and norms are re-examined and co-constructed in light of current members and conditions.

Inclusion requires a permeable, flexible "container."

Norms of inclusion should change as members and needs change.

Paradox of Safety & Comfort
How much freedom of action and what range of expression do we each have? What demands can we make of each other and what responsibilities do we have toward each other? How can we be safe as we interact?

Comfort & "My Way"

Inclusion is about increasing individual and collective comfort

Inclusion is possible only when everyone can be more at ease.

Inclusion requires encouraging everyone to be fully authentic and accepting them as they are, so they can be fully comfortable as themselves.

To foster inclusion, no one should need to change; everyone should be able just to "be."

Discomfort & Openness to Change

Inclusion is about leaving individual and collective comfort zones, expanding options and responses

Inclusion is possible only when everyone is more attentive, sensitive, and less focused on feeling at ease.

Inclusion requires everyone to mutually adapt and support each other, learning new patterns better suited for a diverse collective.

Everyone needs to change to co-construct inclusion.

Figure 1. Paradoxes of inclusion.
Note. This figure displays the contrasting perspectives that characterize each of the three paradoxes of inclusion.

- How can we foster a sense of belonging and unity that elicits inclusion in a diverse group, while enabling those differences to coexist and to add value to and inform the whole group?
- How can we be both alike and different simultaneously?

Achieving inclusion requires simultaneously addressing people's needs to belong and to be separate and distinct (Shore et al., 2011). These needs occur in a dynamic and shifting relationship; their relationship and relative prominence vary depending on the context, the individual or group, and the type of inclusion. Similarly, tensions typically arise between a focus on group-level differences or issues versus on individual uniqueness and experience (Ferdman, 1995, 2014). On one hand, for me to fully feel and be included, I need to identify with the whole and with all the other members, as an equal and full member, regardless of and despite my differences from the others. On the other hand, for me to fully feel included, I need to be able to feel and be different from other members without believing that my identities and being must be wholly subsumed by the collective and the need to be like others. To experience inclusion, every member of a collective should be able to fully engage in and contribute to the task of the whole, as a full and equal member, without feeling the need to hide, give up, or compromise valued identities or qualities (Ferdman, 2010). As K. Smith and Berg (1987, 1997) point out in discussing the paradoxes of belonging in groups, collaborating in a group—especially one that is diverse—requires adaptation, compromise, and subsuming oneself to the whole. At the same time, to the extent that individuals lose or give up their unique and differentiated perspectives or their sense of difference from other group members, they also reduce or even lose their capacity to provide added value to the group, and therefore can paradoxically undermine the group's collective work (Ferdman, Avigdor, Braun, Konkin, & Kuzmycz, 2010).

Inclusion is about mutual adaptation in the service of the collective, and at the same time, permitting and even fostering the capacity of members to stay as they are without having to adapt as a condition of participation. Thus, inclusion involves experiencing a sense of complete connection and participation combined with a seemingly contradictory sense of difference, uniqueness, and even distance. This tension may be heightened when there are group-based patterns of historical inequality or stigma, or when the collective identity was previously associated more (or wholly) with one of the component subgroups and not others.

Belonging and Absorption as Keys to Inclusion. In many ways, being fully included in a larger unit—such as a work group, organization, or society—involves being completely a part of and identified with that larger collective. From this perspective, being included means that we focus on our similarities, and we mutually adapt so that we can become more alike. I am included to the extent that I can be wholly absorbed into the group, the organization, and/or the community, so that I have complete and full membership and voice in that larger unit, as valuable and equal to those available to any other and to all members, and such that I have not left parts of myself outside—that I

do not have, as it were, one foot in the circle and one foot outside. In a work group, for example, I may feel less included to the degree that I do not see myself reflected in the goals of the group and even in its collective identity.

If I can be a full-fledged representative and champion of the group, then most likely I will feel more included than if I cannot. Alderfer (2011) discusses the dynamics involved in organizations when members are representatives of multiple groups—as everyone is. For example, a bank employee may be a branch manager, a lesbian woman, an immigrant, a Latina, and a resident of California; to the degree that other bank employees, customers, and others see her as a full-fledged and even representative member of the bank staff, she is likely to experience more inclusion than if that association is questioned or seen as somehow less complete or legitimate than that of a heterosexual White man, for example. Thus, individuals who can see their identity as defined in important ways by their membership in the collective—and who are treated by the collective (and by outsiders) as core or even representative members—are more likely to experience greater inclusion. In businesses, for example, inclusion initiatives seek to ensure that everyone, across social identities, has similar access not only to entry but also to development and advancement opportunities, and that rules are applied to everyone in similar ways, avoiding even the appearance of invidious discrimination.

Within a society or community, those who can move about with full freedom and who see themselves and are easily seen and identified by others as representative members will also feel more included than those who cannot. At a societal level, someone with a hyphenated identity (e.g., a Latino or Latina American) may see herself or be seen by others as less completely part of the national whole than someone without such a combination. To experience full inclusion and belonging, an individual should be eligible to serve as an exemplar of the group or collective. Being anything less than a full-fledged member of the whole is also less than full inclusion. Thus, at the societal level, policies for inclusion that focus on belonging and absorption seek to make it possible for everyone to learn the country's language and culture, to have an equal civic voice, and to have access to a range of educational, economic, political, cultural, and other resources and opportunities. More focally, such initiatives (e.g., for immigrants) aim to enhance the sense of national or civic identity on the part of newcomers and the willingness of established populations to treat the newcomers as valued and equal fellow citizens. Policies and practices targeted at inclusion of people with disabilities similarly seek to avoid differentiating members of the group or forcing them to miss experiences or opportunities available to others.

Distinctiveness and Uniqueness as Keys to Inclusion. Inclusion also involves being able to differentiate oneself from others in the larger collective, in the sense of not having to give up one's other valued identities, styles, perspectives, or cultural features—or one's individual characteristics—as a condition of full membership and voice. From this perspective, being included means that we allow ourselves and each other to be different, without pressure or desire to assimilate or conform. I am included to the

extent I can be fully myself—without having to change or become like everyone else—while still being completely and fully part of the whole.

Indeed, for me to feel fully included, I would like to be valued for my differences. This is one of the key elements of many accounts of multiculturalism (e.g., Berry, 2016; Berry & Sam, 2014), which use metaphors such as that of a salad or mosaic and describe the importance of being able to maintain one's culture and identity in a diverse group or society. In a truly multicultural and inclusive society, members of diverse communities maintain their cultures, and at the same time equitably participate, "engage with, and become constituents of, the larger society;" moreover, these are "widely accepted features of the society" (Berry, 2016, p. 415).

In a work group, I am likely to feel more included if I am permitted and even encouraged to dissent from others and bring in my unique and sometimes divergent perspectives (Berg, 2011), in ways that others show interest in and value. Indeed, inclusion of people representing multiple dimensions of difference is only useful to the group—in terms of supporting creativity and innovation, for example—to the extent that such individuals can maintain their distinctiveness (cf. Ferdman et al., 2010; Page, 2007). These differences can then be a source of energy, new possibilities, and learning for the group. When everyone in the group is basically the same as each other—even if they feel identified with the group and each other, and included to some degree—it is not a type of inclusion that benefits from diversity. And even when there is some homogeneity, for newcomers who are quite different from this norm to feel fully included, they must be accepted as full members without having to become like all the rest. Indeed, this view of inclusion indicates that it is precisely the divergence of many members from the norm that can strengthen the larger group. Martin Luther King, Jr. (2012) famously once said that "human salvation lies in the hands of the creatively maladjusted" (p. 19). Colin Kaepernick, the football quarterback who refused to stand for the U.S. national anthem at games, was cited by many as an example of the strength of democracy; this suggests that beyond distinctiveness and uniqueness, the capacity to invite and embrace authentic dissent can also be a hallmark of inclusion.
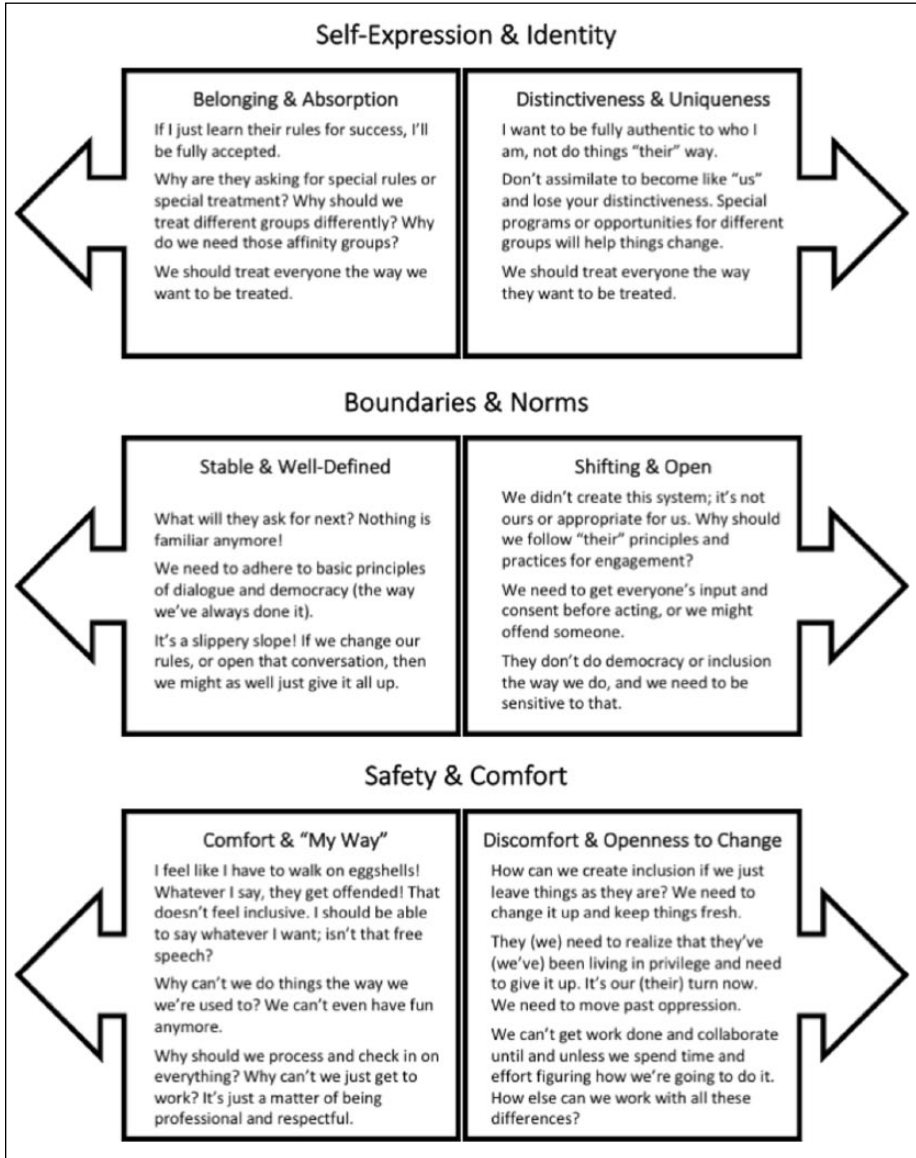
From this perspective, when the price of admission and participation involves giving up or subsuming valued aspects of myself, then I will most likely feel less included than if I can maintain a sense of authenticity and continuity with my other identities and their associated values—many of which I do not share with other members of the collective. Inclusion, then, involves being able to maintain the differences, often including a vibrant connection to externally anchored identities. From this perspective, inclusion for those with a hyphenated identity (e.g., Latino Americans) exists only to the extent that they can be fully fledged members without having to assimilate and without giving up the hyphen; rather, they must be able to bring in their unique contributions, perspectives, and approaches, in ways that benefit the larger whole and still maintain their distinct identities. To have complete and full membership, equal to that of all other members, I should not have to change to join. In diverse organizations and societies, assimilation may lead to belonging, but it is not truly inclusive.

This view emphasizes allowing everyone to contribute based on who they are and what makes them special and different, rather than expecting to be and to function the same as other members. In a workplace, this can involve creating tailored opportunities, seeking out distinctive voices, highlighting the uniqueness that each person and group brings, and both allowing and fostering identity-specific opportunities (e.g., employee resource or affinity groups). At both the organizational and societal levels it means celebrating differences in cultures and identities, recognizing multiple histories and perspectives on those histories, and ensuring that the concept of membership, nationality, or belonging does not privilege some groups over others. In some cases, it means creating an organizational or national story grounded in difference, rather than one that emphasizes similarity, as well as providing opportunities to explore those differences.

Manifestations of the Paradox. These competing needs and desires can manifest in a variety of ways, often in the form of frustration, conflict, or a sense that inclusion can never be accomplished. Figure 2 illustrates some of the statements one might hear on one or the other side of this tension as individuals and groups—coming from one side of the paradoxical divide—respond to the other side. At its extreme, the focus on belonging and absorption can lead to an overemphasis on the collective identity—and even homogeneity—to the exclusion of any subgroup or individual differences within the group. On the other hand, an extreme focus on distinctiveness can lead to an inability or unwillingness to develop a collective overarching identity and some common goals or points of connection and unity.

On one hand, individuals in previously excluded groups who are now absorbed into an organization or more assimilated to the society's dominant group may be perceived by others who share a stigmatized or marked identity but who are less assimilated as "selling out" or as leaving the group behind. At best, they may be claimed as success stories, but this can have the effect of giving others the message that the price of inclusion is leaving behind valued aspects of one's identity or history. On the other hand, individuals may resist developing or changing in productive and adaptive ways because they fear leaving behind such valued aspects of themselves. In seeking to maintain one's uniqueness, one may refuse to belong; in seeking to belong, one may give up or leave behind distinctive and important aspects of oneself that could also be valuable to the collective within which one is included.

In organizations or societies endeavoring to incorporate previously excluded people and groups, this tension can sometimes result in the perception that such newcomers are being ungrateful or unwilling to participate and belong. They may be perceived as aloof and asking for special treatment. People may wonder why "those" people can play by different rules or continue to emphasize their distinctive features, customs, and identities, when the collective has gone to such efforts to "allow" them in. This can be especially exacerbated when groups in multicultural societies or individuals in multicultural organizations maintain transnational identities and connections, seemingly calling into question their willingness to put the national identity first. This can be mirrored by the newcomers when they continue to believe that they are not full-fledged

Self-Expression & Identity

Belonging & Absorption

If I just learn their rules for success, I'll be fully accepted.

Why are they asking for special rules or special treatment? Why should we treat different groups differently? Why do we need those affinity groups?

We should treat everyone the way we want to be treated.

Distinctiveness & Uniqueness

I want to be fully authentic to who I am, not do things "their" way.

Don't assimilate to become like "us" and lose your distinctiveness. Special programs or opportunities for different groups will help things change.

We should treat everyone the way they want to be treated.

Boundaries & Norms

Stable & Well-Defined

What will they ask for next? Nothing is familiar anymore!

We need to adhere to basic principles of dialogue and democracy (the way we've always done it).

It's a slippery slope! If we change our rules, or open that conversation, then we might as well just give it all up.

Shifting & Open

We didn't create this system; it's not ours or appropriate for us. Why should we follow "their" principles and practices for engagement?

We need to get everyone's input and consent before acting, or we might offend someone.

They don't do democracy or inclusion the way we do, and we need to be sensitive to that.

Safety & Comfort

Comfort & "My Way"

I feel like I have to walk on eggshells! Whatever I say, they get offended! That doesn't feel inclusive. I should be able to say whatever I want; isn't that free speech?

Why can't we do things the way we we're used to? We can't even have fun anymore.

Why should we process and check in on everything? Why can't we just get to work? It's just a matter of being professional and respectful.

Discomfort & Openness to Change

How can we create inclusion if we just leave things as they are? We need to change it up and keep things fresh.

They (we) need to realize that they've (we've) been living in privilege and need to give it up. It's our (their) turn now. We need to move past oppression.

We can't get work done and collaborate until and unless we spend time and effort figuring how we're going to do it. How else can we work with all these differences?

Figure 2. Polarizing reactions.
Note. This figure illustrates the types of polarizing reactions often observed in response to the seemingly opposing perspective. These perspectives are best seen as paradoxically connected.

members of the collective unless they become just like the old-timers. Even second- and third-generation Latinos, for example, may sometimes refer to Anglos as "Americans" in a way that suggests that they themselves are not also fully American.

The other side of this can play out in dynamics such as creating "special" or targeted opportunities—such as leadership programs for Latinos—and then finding that members of the targeted groups are ambivalent at best about taking advantage of these opportunities, for fear that they might be seen as less than full-fledged members of the larger organization (Ferdman, 1997). Those reacting this way may prefer simply to blend in and not be noticed for their unique identities. At the same time, they may be frustrated by their inability to advance on their own terms or stymied by the experience of cultural and other differences that make it difficult to be fully heard, to fully contribute, or to truly be treated "just like everyone else."

Managing the Paradox. *The key to managing the paradox of self-expression and identity is to understand and accept the intimate connection between the two sides.* Essentially, we need to embrace the paradox and avoid polarizing between the two options. To fully belong, I need to be able to keep my separate and distinct identity; for that identity to matter and make a difference to the whole, I need to fully belong. K. Smith and Berg (1987), discussing the paradox of identity, compellingly remind us that "any conception that separates group and individual identity is an oversimplification" (p. 93); in considering belonging and the paradox of individuality, they further suggest the following:

> [T]he only way for a group to become a group is for its members to express their individuality and to work on developing it as fully as possible and . . . the only way for individuals to become fully individuated is for them to accept and develop more fully their connections to the group. (p. 100)

In other words, it is in part through wholly accepting and owning one's identity with the larger group that one can paradoxically also accept and express one's distinctiveness from the rest of the group. At the same time, one's sense of authentic belonging to the larger group can be strengthened by affirming and expressing one's uniqueness or difference from others. In this sense, belonging and uniqueness (Shore et al., 2011) are interwoven, rather than separate. The following paragraphs indicate additional ways to manage this paradox.

Recognize that "special" interest and affinity groups, by strengthening the parts, serve the whole. Your interests are different than mine—and are also my interests. Many organizations sponsor employee resource groups, also known as affinity groups, as well as development opportunities targeted to people with specific identities (e.g., leadership programs for women). Such initiatives, while seemingly separating people along lines of identity, reinforce the connection of the members to the organization and to the collective enterprise. I have taught for over a dozen years in Wells Fargo's Latino Leadership Program (LLP), part of its "Diverse Leaders" offerings. LLP graduates report being more energized and proud of being part of Wells Fargo—often more than ever before—after the program; many move from feeling stifled or experiencing roadblocks at work to finding new motivation and energy to participate and be engaged. Similarly, in public life, organizations focused on the needs of specific identity groups

can be seen, not as "special" interests that somehow detract from the whole, but rather as groups very involved in community life in ways that benefit the whole. Instead of demanding that such groups assimilate, those in power or in the dominant group can create more connection by recognizing the key differences and including these groups as they are.

Understand how we are all joined together in our difference and uniqueness. We all vary in how we join and engage. Therefore, we must recognize that, because everyone is different, we are in that sense similar: everyone has multiple identities and affiliations, and no one is defined by just one membership or identity. Our differences can therefore be a source of belonging and connection. To be an American, for example, is to be someone with a unique story; Americans are all similar in that each has a different story.

Construct multifaceted accounts of collective identity that can apply to all, while recognizing and addressing specific histories, needs, and aspirations. Avoid stereotyping and overgeneralizing; shared identity, whether as fellow citizens or residents, employees of an organization, or members of a work team, cannot and should not be defined by any single component or feature. In this sense, we especially must avoid creating an image of the whole grounded in any one subgroup, as often happens when historically one subgroup has been dominant in a given setting. At the same time, making sure to address and recognize the specific groups involved and their histories, needs, and aspirations, makes needed room for diversity.

Find ways to address both collective identity and individual uniqueness (Ferdman, 1995). In terms of interventions in groups and organizations, it can be especially helpful to use identity mapping, sharing of life stories, and other opportunities to develop nuanced and complex images of ourselves and each other (see, e.g., Ferdman & Roberts, 2014; Wasserman, 2014). For example, in my work with Wells Fargo's LLP, I provide opportunities for participants to explore not only their connections as Latinos and Latinas but also their individual identities and many differences with each other. By more fully expressing their individuality they paradoxically strengthen and deepen their Latino American and Wells Fargo identities.

Accept and embrace intergroup processes and perspectives, even while emphasizing individuality. Understand and accept that considering and addressing intergroup dynamics is normal and necessary, even in a small and cohesive group (and much more so in complex organizational systems and societies). Even though any given identity group or social category (e.g., based on gender) incorporates a great deal of diversity, due in part to cross-cutting identities and individual differences (Ferdman, 1995), members of that category may nonetheless share experiences or perspectives that differ from those of people in other categories. For example, as a gender-conforming person, if I interact in my workgroup with a transgender colleague only assuming we are the same—based on our common workgroup roles and identity, by glossing over our difference I may paradoxically prevent a deeper connection. It may be more effective to understand that our relationship includes both interpersonal and intergroup elements, to recognize our differences (and similarities), and to improve our connection by developing and deploying competencies for engaging effectively in intergroup relationships (e.g., Ramsey & Latting, 2005).

Boundaries and Norms: Stable and Well-Defined Versus Shifting and Open

The definition of collective space and identity—particularly regarding the boundaries marking that space, the bonds connecting the members, and the norms guiding their interactions and behavior—plays an important role in inclusion and gives rise to distinctive tensions. In any group, organization, or society there are typically ways—whether explicit or implicit—to decide or know who is in and who is out. Similarly, there are norms and assumptions about appropriate or necessary behavior for members. Yet, these boundary markers, norms, and assumptions may not be shared by all members and can be very much in contention. Indeed, the paradox of boundaries and norms (illustrated in Figure 1) lies in this process of definition and agreement (or disagreement), as shaped by disparate answers to questions such as these:

- What holds us together? What and who defines our container? How flexible or rigid are our norms and bonds?
- How do we clearly and effectively define our collective boundaries and norms (especially for inclusion) without losing the benefits of expansion, challenge, and pressure that can help make our norms more adaptive to and representative of changing membership and conditions?
- How can we pay attention to and address everyone's needs and views and still do work, especially as membership shifts?

Inclusion in a group, organization, or society requires members' collective commitment to a predefined boundary and set of basic norms, combined with their simultaneous and paradoxical willingness and ability to reexamine, together and often, those boundaries and norms (Ferdman & Davidson, 2002). On one hand, the concept of inclusion implies that a specific collective is taking in individuals and groups and has stable and well-defined rules for doing so. I need to be included *into* something, with confidence that the system I am joining has and will have norms and processes to ensure my continued inclusion. From this perspective, I am included to the extent I become part of an organized and stable system with persistent and well-defined rules and boundaries, as well as established and shared norms that I and others can follow. This suggests a collective that is clearly demarcated; for example, one could focus on inclusion of immigrants into the United States, or people with disabilities in the hospitality industry, or of multiple groups into a specific business organization. This also suggests that the collective has stable and defined norms and practices consistent with and supportive of inclusion and civility. On the other hand, practicing inclusion implies that everyone should have a voice in defining the collective; this means, then, that the boundary must periodically—or even constantly—be reexamined with the participation of newer members, and that norms and practices need to be assessed for suitability and relevance for current conditions, needs, and priorities. From this perspective, I am included to the extent that I can push the limits and be involved in creating or adapting our collective rules and conventions so that they fit my (and others') unique needs in

a flexible and ever-changing system that has norms and boundaries suitable to its members. Because it requires shifting and open boundaries and norms, this process can be experienced as an unproductive and problematic change or even as an unwelcome transformation into an altogether different and perhaps unrecognizable collective.

Thus, inclusion involves managing tensions between the need for clear and well-defined versus permeable and even shifting collective boundaries and limits—including norms and processes for addressing and holding difference, for managing the boundary (e.g., bringing in new members and deciding who is in and who is out), and for managing change. As Lewis (2000, citing Connor, 1995) points out, inclusion also means exclusion, because saying who is in requires also saying who is out. Yet, for those committed to expanding the circle of participation, such limits can be experienced as problematic, too rigid, and even arbitrary.

Inclusion Requires Stable and Well-Defined Collective Boundaries and Norms. To work toward inclusion in a specific collective or social system, first it must be clear what defines and constitutes that collective or system. If the goal is a more inclusive organization, for example, its boundaries—and its approach to defining who can come in and with what rights and responsibilities—need to be well-defined and regulated in some way. Similarly, there must be a way to organize interactions among members, so that inclusion is possible and ongoing. This is also true at the societal level. In the United States, for example, the Constitution and the system of government help address this; an abiding commitment to democracy has made it possible to foster inclusion of new groups and to extend civil rights to more groups. Without a stable entity, inclusion of all can become relatively meaningless, because there would then be nothing specific to be included into. And without rules for positive interaction across difference, then anything goes and differences could easily spiral out of control into overt and destructive conflict.

From this perspective, we need a well-defined "container" in which to create and foster inclusion. This matters not only from the perspective of collective identity but also because it allows establishing and holding on to guidelines and processes for inclusion. Clear and stable boundaries permit developing and implementing norms for appropriate behavior, for defining and ensuring safety, and for establishing practices and processes to meet and engage across differences. Notions and practices of civil discourse (including precision about what is meant by *civil*) are only possible to achieve when there is a recognized boundary that holds and unites the parties involved (with and across their differences). And when members (and leaders) come and go—as they will in an inclusive system—stable and well-defined boundaries and norms provide the constancy needed to ensure sustainability of inclusive processes and practices.

Inclusion Requires the Capacity and Willingness to Open and Shift Collective Boundaries and Norms. Because fostering inclusion means taking in and being attentive to new perspectives and ideas, together with incorporating new members and/or bringing out previously suppressed differences among existing members, it also requires openness

to redefining the nature, purpose, boundaries, and norms of the collective. An organization that integrates both new members and new perspectives may need to reconsider core competencies and its business focus; this can even result in a reconfiguration of the business itself (e.g., going into new countries, expanding into new markets, or giving up lines of business). At the societal level, full inclusion might require redefining the national identity, the notion and rules of citizenship, and the shared image of the collective, and in the case of previous colonial powers, redefining relationships with former colonies and their peoples.

Even in a system without a notable influx of newcomers or additional forms of diversity, inclusion means recognizing and providing for changes over time in current members and their priorities and interests. If the boundary is too static and the rules cannot be reexamined, then it is not possible to make sure they still function well for current (and potential) members. Because individuals change over time, shifts in conditions, perspectives, and relationships may require accompanying changes in the collective boundary and in shared norms for interaction, even in groups, organizations, and societies with the same nominal members. Additionally, as members do come and go, flexibility is necessary because boundaries and rules that "worked" for the prior configuration of members may not be adaptive in the current group.

Manifestations of the Paradox. These competing frames, at their extremes, can manifest as rigidity and conservatism versus extensive, ongoing demands for change. They can then play out in various ways (see Figure 2 for illustrative examples) that evoke, on one hand, a feeling of inflexibility and even insincerity about inclusion, and on the other hand, a sense that nothing familiar holds and that the changes are inappropriate and overwhelming. And each of these evokes reactions from the other side that further exacerbate the tensions and challenges.

A notable manifestation of the paradox of boundaries and norms involves who gets to set the "rules" and even whether that is open for discussion or negotiation. In many collectives—whether business organizations or societies—established patterns and norms, together with tradition and history, are seen as fixed; indeed, the collective identity and boundaries may be framed in terms of those norms. Yet, it is both those norms and the sense that they are immutable and not theirs to influence that can provoke resistance from individuals and groups who differ from those traditionally in power. In the United States, tension over established patterns and boundaries and whether those were open to renegotiation led to a Civil War, framed from the perspective of the victorious North as a war to preserve the Union. Paradoxically, the North's victory also established the idea that certain kinds of intergroup relationships and patterns, most notably slavery, were now outside the scope of what was considered acceptable.

What is evolutionary for some can feel transformative or revolutionary for others; what is necessary for some to experience inclusion can be problematic to others and can result in the latter feeling less included. In organizations, this can be seen in debates over, for example, communication styles and needs, dress codes, or recognition of different holidays, as well as appropriate competencies for leaders and rules

and processes for admission. At a more macro level, some societies grapple with the inclusion of groups perceived by current citizens as not sharing the same inclusive or "democratic" values as the majority. Yet, they sometimes address this by creating more boundaries—and more exclusion—even in the name of preserving democracy and pluralism. In some cases, resistance to opening boundaries or to changing how "we've always done it" may come from fear of a slippery slope: "If we change this, what will be next, and where will it end?" "If we allow same-sex marriage, won't we also have to permit people to marry animals?" And so, nothing changes. On the other hand, an exclusive focus on constant renegotiation and accommodation of new perspectives and needs can also mean that nothing gets done, in this case not because of too rigid boundaries but because no clear boundaries are created to hold the various parties together in a shared identity and within which they can collaborate toward shared goals.

An ongoing challenge of inclusion is maintaining commitment to the value of opening boundaries to all while avoiding the real danger of having this very value be used to subvert and even destroy inclusion itself; we have seen individuals and groups who do not truly believe in or practice inclusion sometimes claim the right to profess and impose their more restrictive values on others, while using the language of inclusion to do so. In the context of societal multiculturalism and diversity, some are particularly troubled when they observe groups that maintain transnational identities and connections. From that perspective, differences in identity and culture may be acceptable, but only when everyone is contained within the superordinate category of the national identity and has complete loyalty to it. Yet requiring this can result in substantially less inclusion for some subgroups.

Managing the Paradox. As with the paradox of self-expression*, the paradox of boundaries and norms is best managed by first recognizing and owning it. In part, this requires noting our own internal ambivalence about boundaries and norms,* both in general and as it arises, as well as recognizing when we are pulled to one or the other side of the paradox. As Alderfer (2011) discusses, both overboundedness and underboundedness can be a problem for social systems; the challenge is to get it just right. This is even more difficult in the context of diversity because inclusion requires not only engaging across differences but engaging across different approaches for engaging across differences. When we do this in the spirit of learning and possibility, without expecting that any one of us can or will have the answer alone, it becomes more likely that we can accept and manage the paradox. This also requires letting go of our claims on the whole boundary and recognizing that incorporating multiple voices and perspectives can ultimately strengthen the collective and its boundaries (Ferdman & Davidson, 2002).

Inclusion implies both loosening boundaries and simultaneously enhancing them. For "new" or "different" people to feel included, the overall category must be clear, yet, at the same time, this category must be redefined. This can feel fuzzy and disorienting, especially to those accustomed to a prior definition; Indeed, this may be true both for earlier "insiders"—previously they were the sole definers of the boundaries

and norms and now they must share some of this power—and for "new" people—who were previously accustomed to being on the outside and now must redefine their relationship to the group, to the other members, and to the category itself, so that they are also a part, rather than apart.

Understand and communicate that inclusion does not mean the absence of limits, that "anything goes," or that there is an absolute possibility to question everything. This is especially the case regarding behavior or practices meant to undermine inclusion itself or the legitimacy or participation of specific members or subgroups. Paradoxically, inclusive societies, organizations, and groups—to make space for difference and for many ways to behave and engage—must have strong ways to set appropriate limits, while at the same time creating opportunities to make sure these limits are just, equitable, and work for all. A key to this is that members must self-manage and expect others to do so; paradoxically, inclusion increases this responsibility. Although inclusion is about expanding what is possible and acceptable and incorporating multiple voices, it is not about chaos, anarchy, or rule by either acclamation or intractability. As we collectively give ourselves and others more freedom to be authentic, everyone must also be more self-responsible, self-aware, and better managers of our effects on others—which paradoxically can often feel constraining, especially in the context of messages about expanding limits and opening conversations about organizational or cultural norms. Examples of this include the former revolutionary who now becomes part of a coalition government and must now show civic responsibility to the whole, giving up the desire to destruct the system while retaining commitment to divergent ideals and to speaking out to keep these alive. Similarly, Meyerson (2001) describes how "tempered radicals"—people who wish to belong and participate as insiders in their organization but also advocate for substantial change within the system—function in organizations. To create change from within a group or organization and to challenge established norms, styles, and policies, tempered radicals use approaches ranging from creative and divergent self-expression to strategic coalition building.

Coconstruct norms and processes for inclusion—with clear parameters—and hold each other accountable. When many people across a range of differences in a group or organization are engaged collaboratively to create agreements on how to work together, it is more likely that everyone will see the coconstructed rules as their own. At the same time, given diversity, members should be prepared for actual or apparent norm violations or deviations. To hold each other accountable, it is important to learn together from these occurrences, in the context of processes established for such exploration. Clear, systematic approaches to inclusion (Ferdman & Deane, 2014) can provide frameworks to develop these practices and give members the sense of security that allows for experimentation and systems change.

Create and use rules for dissent and rule breaking. A basic first step, as Berg (2011) indicates, is to recognize that dissent can be a vital element in the diversity dynamics of groups and organizations, playing a communicative function that can enhance engagement and relationship, but only when boundaries are sufficiently open to allow for differences. Healthy groups, organizations, and societies need to incorporate ways

to challenge the system and its limits without self-destructing. This can involve creating spaces for dialogue with clear and defined norms for engagement, but not with rules about the outcome. Engaging people in processes of large-group organization development (e.g., Bunker & Alban, 2005) or deliberative democracy (e.g., Lukensmeyer, 2013), among others, can provide additional such vehicles. Deliberative democracy, for example, involves a set of practices to give all stakeholders the opportunity to engage in dialogue about and to influence decisions and policies that may affect them; Lukensmeyer (2013) describes a range of such approaches. In this context, it is important not to allow the rhetoric of inclusion to be used as a vehicle to destroy the system of participation itself, to foment division and polarization, and particularly to demonize, stigmatize, demean, isolate, or exclude subgroups, especially those with less power now or in the past.

Create a collective definition or boundary based on shared values while holding space for divergent values. This involves articulating and acknowledging both what is similar and different, and recognizing how both—together—provide a unifying frame. To this end, work to develop and hold to a unified and unifying superordinate identity, grounded in clear values and history, while embracing evolution and change. Be consistent about learning and growing within this framework.

Work with those present, while making space for newcomers and their possible dissent (but do not focus on or cater to imaginary "others" so that the group becomes paralyzed). Rather than letting worries about slippery slopes or every hypothetical situation stop the collective from addressing immediate issues, it is important to allow for incremental and evolutionary steps. Do not let utopian ideals—as important and necessary as they may be—prevent taking steps to create inclusion for the range of diversity at present. At the same time, be prepared to take additional steps to expand the range of needs and perspectives that are included. For example, many organizations struggle with what to do about accommodating their members' varying religious needs, including holidays. It is not practical or necessary to start by making a list of every possible religious holiday in the world; it may suffice to learn what those currently in the organization may need or want. This first step can make it possible to test new approaches, which can be revised and expanded later; indeed, such revision is likely to be necessary, because those with particularly divergent religious needs were probably less likely to have joined the organization before the initial change in policy and practice.

Safety: Comfort and Preservation of "My Way" Versus Discomfort and Openness to Mutual Influence and Change

Truly engaging in inclusion of multiple differences always involves some degree of both comfort and discomfort (Ferdman, 2014), requiring balancing the needs to be safe and to take risks. This paradoxical tension (illustrated in Figure 1) is captured by the need to continually address divergent answers to the following questions in the practice of inclusion:

- How do we experience, balance, and manage the inherent tension between the discomfort of differences and the creation and maintenance of a safe, "comfortable," inclusive environment?
- How can we become suitably and sufficiently comfortable with discomfort (Ferdman, 2016)?

Inclusion requires making it possible for a greater range of people and groups to be safer and more at ease. Yet, as we make space for a broader range of differences—many of which can be unfamiliar and even seemingly incompatible—we increase the likelihood that everyone will need to move out of familiar patterns and comfort zones. On one hand, creating and fostering inclusion means facilitating the possibility for individuals and groups—especially those in previously stigmatized, subordinated, or disregarded categories—to express themselves in authentic ways and to be able to maintain their preferred identities and ways of living and working. On the other hand, creating and fostering inclusion requires everyone to be more attentive to others' needs and perspectives and to be more mindful about the impact of their preferred approaches and styles, which means more—rather than less—mutual adaptation.

I have previously described the issue in this way:

> In many ways, inclusion involves creating more comfort for more people, so that access, opportunity, and a sense of full participation and belonging are facilitated across a greater range of diversity than ever before, for the benefit of all. At the same time, practicing inclusion means distributing discomfort more equitably. We need to move out of our individual and collective comfort zones, yet do so in a way that leads to growth, learning, and mutual and collective benefit. (Ferdman, 2014, p. 32)

Thus, inclusion requires managing the tensions between feeling safe enough to function well and at our best and feeling too safe to be mindful and sensitive to others, and conversely, between feeling uncomfortable enough to function well across difference and too uncomfortable to perform or relax. From a leadership perspective, this can include giving up or sharing some power. Similarly, in working to foster social equality through more inclusion, members of dominant identity groups, in particular, find that they need to address not only individual and collective comfort but also additional questions such as the following: To what extent can/should we rely on familiar ways of doing things (ways that may be optimal for me or us)? How much do I (and we) need to change to include you (and them)? Who decides? And what do we do considering the historical realities of such comfort?

Inclusion Should Increase Individual and Collective Comfort and Permit Maintaining Preferred and Valued Styles. A key goal of inclusion is to enhance individual and group participation, confidence, and security, in ways that allow and encourage authenticity. To feel included, I need to feel comfortable with myself and with my environment and to believe that others accept me for who and how I am without asking me to change or go outside of my comfort zone. I am included to the extent I can be completely and comfortably

myself; it is only when I feel safe and secure that I can fully belong, participate without restraint, and thoroughly engage across differences. Moreover, to fully experience inclusion, my unique strengths and approaches to work and life should be not only accepted but also encouraged. When this experience spreads across individuals and multiple identity groups, then the collective is more likely have access to a greater range of diversity, diversity that can then better contribute to collective success. In this sense, then, inclusion very much requires making space for more people and groups to be at ease, to be comfortable, and to be fine with being exactly who they are (Ferdman, 2016).

Inclusion Requires Leaving Our Individual and Collective Comfort Zones and Expanding Our Options and Responses. To truly become inclusive of diversity, individuals and groups must change old patterns of behavior and of intergroup relations, even when those patterns are comfortable in some way. With increasing diversity and inclusion in groups, organizations, and societies, we will regularly need to interact and collaborate with others who are very different and do things very differently from us. Inclusion not only allows but also encourages this; thus, we must expect, accept, and even appreciate that we will more frequently engage in unfamiliar and perhaps even jarring ways, that we will often face unexpected reactions from others, that our familiar behavior and styles may not have the intended results, and that we may not necessarily understand or agree with others around us. It is those who can do this skillfully and wholeheartedly who are most likely both to experience and to enhance inclusion. Thus, from this perspective, I am included to the extent I can move beyond my comfort zone and engage in challenging situations that test my biases and open my mind, so that I can fully belong, safely participate, and thoroughly engage across differences. Moreover, for me to be included, I must accept others for who they are, even if that might cause me discomfort and require me to adapt.

This can be difficult and challenging for those accustomed to being in power and therefore to defining reality, such as the rules of the organization or what is considered "professional." Inclusion asks people to bring in and listen to other views about what is and should be and to cocreate reality together with others who may have very different views and aspirations. This process, though ultimately rewarding, can be uncomfortable. In any case, inclusion must involve more than self-interest and self-preservation and incorporate a good dose of mutual responsibility and sensitivity.

Manifestations of the Paradox. Given these polarities, the tension can be difficult both to experience and address, and can play out in a variety of ways (some of which are illustrated in Figure 2). In facilitating groups to coconstruct norms for inclusion, I have found that participants are often challenged by the need to stretch beyond their comfort zones, not only in terms of allowing for styles and perspectives that are different than their own but also in managing the tension between their own needs and desires at any given moment and those of the group as a whole or of members who may be coming from a very different perspective. At a societal level, this tension can be aggravated, particularly in the context of power struggles among groups or a history of domination or marginalization. When groups seek tangible or symbolic benefits to

address their historical grievances, for example, they are in a sense struggling to be more safe, comfortable, and able to live in their preferred way. But this can then provoke other more established and therefore more comfortable groups to feel a sense of loss (and even attack), and to respond with parallel demands or to seek to suppress or minimize the demands of the group seeking change. Indeed, the tensions at Yale described at the beginning of this article can be understood from this perspective.

To be included, individuals and groups need to believe that they can determine their own future, preferably from a position of strength and acceptance. At the same time, in most interdependent groups, organizations, or societies, the choices made by one set of individuals or by subgroups have consequences for others. Thus, inclusion also involves not only taking these consequences into account, but limiting or managing one's scope of action to avoid negatively affecting others. When this is experienced as too restrictive and not sufficiently inclusive, it can set off a cycle of polarizing reactions and counterreactions.

Managing the Paradox. To manage the paradox of safety and comfort it is key to *understand and accept that comfort always has limits and that self-expression and self-determination must happen in a collective context of mutual understanding and collaboration.* As humans, we must always adapt to other humans; indeed, even in homogeneous groups, there is always mutual adaptation and even conflict. (We can experience conflict within ourselves, too, in the form of competing desires, commitments, and pulls; see, e.g., Kegan & Lahey, 2009) Many philosophers and psychologists have focused attention on how, as human beings, we must always balance our individual needs and desires with the limits imposed on us by our social and physical conditions. This tension is similar, albeit exacerbated, when we seek to practice inclusion. Essentially, managing the inclusion paradox of safety and comfort versus discomfort requires us to engage in ongoing dialogue and learning, be willing to learn new ways to do things and to engage with others, and recognize that growth and learning are an essential part of being human. To be inclusive, we must learn to be "more comfortable with discomfort" (Ferdman, 2014, p. 47; see also Ferdman, 2016); to manage conflict productively, effectively, and authentically; and to be willing to venture into new, unexplored, and potentially risky interactions and insights.

Learn to be able to be uncomfortable, and to understand that those whom we do not understand are important to our individual and collective growth and success. For many of us, key moments of growth and development came when we were willing to pay attention to people or ideas that we did not understand or that made us uncomfortable, especially at first. Letting go of certainty, as difficult as it can sometimes be, can allow us to explore new possibilities and vantage points, and in that sense, expand our knowledge, experience, and skill, paradoxically making us more secure and more comfortable, over time. Doing this requires us to trust the possibility of wisdom and truth being created from many parts, and to recognize that no one part or member can see the whole picture. When we believe that all voices and perspectives are needed, even those that we do not understand or that make us uncomfortable, we can be more prepared to be comfortable with discomfort and to gain the benefits of inclusion.

Remember that becoming more oneself requires growing and learning, especially from those who are very different or whom we do not understand. As human beings, we continue to grow and mature throughout our life-span; indeed, life involves a continuing process of becoming and learning. Even when I have values and goals that I consider core and relatively fixed, I can engage in ongoing and intentional development; doing this can help me further my values and goals, even as I change. Indeed, I can foster and benefit from connections and learning across boundaries and sectors, in that way possibly even reinforcing both my sense of authenticity and my ease in being myself.

Promote and accept dissent, in the context of improving and perfecting the society and system. In the same way that testing our assumptions and participating in new experiences can foster our individual development into a better version of ourselves, the process of engaging with difficult differences in a group, organization, or society can also catalyze adaptation and growth. We can collectively choose to face the discomforts and risk of differences in productive and positive ways, knowing that doing so can help us create a better and even safer future. By engaging across difficult and seemingly intractable differences, outside our accustomed safety zones, we may find that we end up being better off and ultimately safer and more comfortable than we could have imagined had we not ventured there.

Conclusion

Inclusion work—like organizational change for social equality—when embarked on in a deep and authentic way, brings with it many challenges and tensions. Considering these tensions from a paradox perspective is not only a way to enrich ourselves—individually and collectively—and find a path to benefit from inclusion but also a key to embedding inclusion more thoroughly and systemically in groups, organizations, and societies. Diversity and inclusion practitioners or others engaged in seeking to foster social equality must be prepared to see opposing views not as resistance, but as varying and normal manifestations of diversity dynamics in organizations and societies and of the practice of inclusion itself. President Salovey's approach to managing the tensions at Yale, described at the beginning of this article, is unlikely to eliminate them, but instead provides a paradoxical frame that encourages them to coexist productively, thus increasing the likelihood of a more inclusive university. When we can recognize, hold, and even welcome the contradictions inherent in inclusion, we should be better equipped to engage and address diversity dynamics in organizations and society as well as the ongoing work of expanding social equality in ways that are at once realistic and more effective.

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