**When Diversity Isn’t Enough: Developing Just and Inclusive Leaders**

**Abstract**

**Purpose** – Building on prior research, the purpose of this paper is to explore the leadership behaviors that can enhance experiences of workplace inclusion, as well as the conditions in which these specific behaviors might be enacted.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Drawing from identity and social identity theories and using secondary interview data collected from a Canadian police organization, this paper puts forth a theoretical model of just and inclusive leadership.

**Findings** – The proposed leadership framework suggests that when leaders include themselves as well as maintain a personal fairness identity, they are more likely to engage in organizationally just (encompassing distributive, procedural and interactional justice), and inclusive leadership behaviors that actively support employees (and their full spectrum of identities); welcome, encourage and value diverse experiences/perspectives; ensure all voices are heard; and challenge exclusionary and other harmful behaviors. In turn, just and inclusive leadership is expected to contribute to experiences of workplace inclusion, and to several positive individual and organizational outcomes.

**Originality/value** – This paper makes an important contribution to the relevant literature by proposing a leadership model that is theoretically grounded and aligned with a specific definition of leadership. Further, this model suggests there are certain conditions under which just and inclusive leadership is enacted. A key distinction of this model is that it presupposes that before leaders can include others they must first include themselves.

**Keywords:** leadership; inclusion; organizational justice; police

**Introduction**

Many of today’s organizations are faced with not only recruiting and retaining employees from diverse backgrounds, but also effectively managing the challenges of creating an inclusive work environment that integrates the diversity of individual perspectives and experiences (Smith et al., 2012). Thus, diversity management approaches have shifted from a singular focus on diversity (counting the differences among people) to an integrated approach that seeks to facilitate both diversity and inclusion—a condition in which individuals can “feel safe, valued, and fully engaged, while believing that they can be fully themselves in ways that recognize, honor, and appreciate their full range of social identities”; Ferdman et al*.,* 2010, p. 10). As this definition suggests, inclusion is different from diversity. Whereas diversity typically refers to the differences among individuals (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, education, job position, and tenure; See Gonzalez and DeNisi, 2009; Homan and Greer, 2013), inclusion is about making these differences matter. Further, recent studies have shown that workplace inclusion has several positive outcomes for both individuals and organizations, such as increased job satisfaction (Brimhall et al., 2017; Mor Barak and Levin, 2002; Nishii, 2013), organizational commitment (Gonzalez and Denisi, 2009; Mor Barak, Levin, Nissly, and Lane, 2006; Nishii, 2013), organizational identification (Gonzalez and Denisi, 2009), individual/organizational performance (Dwertmann and Boehm, 2016; Sabharwal, 2014), lower turnover intentions (Gonzalez and Denisi, 2009; Hwang and Hopkins, 2012; Travis and Mor Barak, 2010) and reduced conflict within teams (Nishii, 2013).

To facilitate a greater emphasis on inclusion, scholars have examined the behaviors and practices that contribute to an inclusive work environment (Roberson, 2006; Sabharwal, 2014; Shore et al., 2018; Tang et al., 2015), with study findings suggesting that leadership has a critical role in facilitating experiences of inclusion. Indeed, the limited research on leadership and inclusion has identified a link between these two variables (Brimhall, Lizan0, and Mor Barak et al., 2014; Brimhall et al. 2017; Choi, Tran, and Park, 2015), further highlighting how the quality of interactions between leaders and their followers can enhance feelings of inclusion. More recently, researchers have focused on inclusive leadership as a specific means of leveraging the diversity of experiences and insights within work groups (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, and Ziv, 2010; Hirak et al., 2012; Mitchell et al., 2015; Nembard and Edmondson, 2006; Randel et al., 2018). While some of these studies have demonstrated positive relationships between inclusive leader behaviors and various outcomes, they have not presented theoretically grounded models for inclusive leadership, nor have they explored the link between inclusive leadership and experiences of inclusion. Conversely, Randel et al.’s (2018) inclusive leadership model is constructed from a specific definition of inclusion and incorporates a theoretical foundation that distinguishes their conceptualization of inclusive leadership from other forms of leadership. However, this model has not yet been tested. Thus, we are a left with insufficient knowledge of the specific leadership behaviors that contribute to experiences of inclusion, and to individual and organizational outcomes, as well as the conditions in which inclusive leadership might emerge.

Using identity and social identity theories and secondary data from a large Canadian police organization, I propose an expanded model of inclusive leadership that builds on prior research. Specifically, I propose that when leaders include themselves (i.e. the identities that make up who they are) and maintain a fairness identity, they are more likely to include others and to treat them fairly, which in turn, leads to positive outcomes for individuals, teams and organizations. The proposed theoretical model is depicted in Figure 1.

**Conceptualizations of Inclusive Leadership**

The term leader inclusiveness was first introduced more than a decade ago by Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) who proposed that leader inclusiveness represents “attempts by leaders to include others in discussions and decisions in which their voices and perspectives might otherwise be absent” (p. 947). The authors suggested that leader inclusiveness is related to both team leader coaching behavior and participative leadership; however, it focuses more on addressing status or power differences through behaviors that invite and acknowledge others’ points of view. As such, the authors put forth a three-item leader inclusiveness scale that assessed the extent to which leaders’ words and actions indicated both an invitation and an appreciation for others as contributing members of a team. Through testing in a hospital setting, Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) found that leader inclusiveness was positively related to psychological safety (“feeling able to show and employ one’s self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career”, Kahn, 1990, p. 708), which in turn was associated with engagement in quality improvement work. Further, leader inclusiveness was found to overcome the status differences found within teams, thereby promoting an environment in which low-status individuals were comfortable speaking up.

Whereas Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) limited their theoretical development of leader inclusiveness to differences with team coaching behavior and participative leadership, Mitchell et al. (2015) further distinguished leadership inclusiveness from transformational leadership. Specifically, Mitchell et al. (2015) suggested that inclusive leaders focus on a specific strategy of openness and accessibility, as opposed to transformational leaders who challenge the status quo and provide encouragement and support to others (Bass, 1985). Through testing in a hospital setting, Mitchell et al. (2015) found support for their theoretical model, which hypothesized that: 1) leader inclusiveness reduces perceived status differences, and in turn, enhances team performance, with this mediated relationship conditional on strong professional diversity; and 2) that leader inclusiveness increases the performance of inter-professional teams through team identity.

Using relationship leadership theory, Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, and Ziv (2010) defined inclusive leadership as leaders “who exhibit openness, accessibility, and availability in their interactions with followers” (p. 210). Aligned with this definition, the authors developed a nine-item scale that incorporated three items under each of the three dimensions of openness, availability, and accessibility. Consistent with Nembhard and Edmondson (2006), the authors found that inclusive leadership was related to psychological safety. Subsequent testing of this leadership measure demonstrated that when leaders are open, accessible and available, they encourage employees to speak up, which contributes to learning from failures and enhances overall group-level performance (Hirak et al., 2012).

Contrary to earlier studies that examined the relationships between leadership and inclusion, and several outcome variables (discussed in the introduction to this paper), the models previously discussed have not explored these links. In addition, these models have not taken advantage of other research that has examined the factors that contribute to an inclusive work environment. For instance, Roberson (2006) developed and tested an instrument that incorporated several inclusion factors, such as fair treatment, leadership commitment, employee involvement, and conflict resolution. Similarly, Sabharwal’s (2014) Organizational Inclusive Behaviors (OIB) measure consists of three items, including commitment from top leadership, the ability of employees to influence organizational decisions, and fair/equitable treatment from management. Building on prior research, Tang and colleagues (2015) identified seven inclusion management practices consisting of inclusive teamwork, inclusive communication, inclusive decision-making, fair treatment, supervisor caring and support, tolerance for mistakes and different points of view, and adaptation to the organization. Finally, Shore et al. (2018) suggest that inclusive behaviors are those that recognize, honor, and value diversity; and promote safety, involvement in the work group, respect and valuing of others, involvement in decision-making, and authenticity.

To address the gaps in prior work, Randel et al. (2018) grounded their theoretical model of inclusive leadership on Shore et al.’s (2011, p. 1265) definition of inclusion, namely, “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.” Thus, inclusive leadership is conceptualized as specific behaviors that satisfy the needs for belongingness and uniqueness within a work group (Randel et al., 2018). Based on optimal distinctiveness and social identity theory, the authors propose that inclusive leaders can facilitate belongingness by supporting all group members, ensuring justice and equity, and including employees in decision-making processes that affect them. Further, inclusive leaders can demonstrate support for the uniqueness in others by encouraging diverse contributions, and helping group members fully leverage their unique talents and perspectives. Finally, the authors suggest that individual differences, including pro-diversity beliefs, leader humility, and cognitive complexity (the ability to perceive others in a multidimensional manner), are likely to increase a leader’s propensity to enact inclusive leadership behaviors. In turn, the authors propose that inclusive leadership should enhance perceptions of inclusion, and to contribute both directly and indirectly to positive outcomes for individuals and organizations.

Although Randel et al.’s (2018) model has a strong theoretical foundation it has not been tested. Further, whereas Randel et al. (2018) theorize that individual differences, namely pro-diversity beliefs, leader humility, and cognitive complexity, are precursors to inclusive leadership, Ferdman’s (2010, 2011, 2014) extensive research on workplace inclusion suggests that the practice of inclusion requires leaders to first look within and understand their own identities without feeling the need to compromise or cover up any of these important identities that make them who they are. In other words:

To include others effectively and wholeheartedly, we first have to include ourselves; when we acknowledge the diversity of experiences, interests, and values that exist within ourselves, we are better equipped to notice and recognize the diversity around us in a more generative manner. (Ferdman and Roberts, 2014, p. 146)

Building on prior research, including Ferdman’s reference to self-inclusion, the aim of the current study is to further explore leadership behaviors that might enhance experiences of inclusion in the workplace, and the conditions under which inclusive leadership might occur.

**Methods: Developing an Expanded Model of Inclusive Leadership**

This study incorporated secondary qualitative data collected from a large Canadian police organization during the spring and summer of 2016. A police setting was selected for this study due to several reports that have highlighted the prevalence of exclusionary and other harmful behaviors enacted against women and other minority members within police workplaces (Broderick and Company, 2016; Hasham, 2016; Prowse, 2013; Schmunk, 2019). The sections below detail how potential leadership behavioral themes were identified through this process. For brevity, I briefly present an overview of the participants and procedures, followed by a summary of the core themes that were identified.

**Participants and Procedures**

At the time the data was collected, the organization had approximately 1200 employees, comprised of roughly 70% police officers and 30% civilian staff, of which 75% were men and 90% were Caucasian. Throughout the course of a five-month period, I conducted individual and focus group interviews with approximately 200 members from across the organization, including individual interviews with 40 of the most senior leaders within the organization. Although I did not capture specific demographic information for the study participants, due to concerns for anonymity, the sample was generally reflective of the population. Further, I was not able to audio record any of the interviews due to these same anonymity concerns. Instead, I relied on detailed interview and field notes. To provide a basis for the interviews, I utilized Ferdman et al.’s (2010, p. 10) definition of inclusion, which suggests that the process of inclusion creates the conditions for individuals to “feel safe, valued, and fully engaged, while believing that they can be fully themselves in ways that recognize, honor, and appreciate their full range of social identities”. Participants were asked to reflect upon this definition and to suggest behaviors that might contribute to their individual experiences of inclusion. An inductive approach was then employed to extract themes from the data.

**Leadership Behavioral Themes**

In nearly all interviews, participants expressed the desire for leaders to treat people fairly, and with dignity and respect. Specifically, participants suggested that leaders should be consistent in the application of policies and practices related to internal conduct, employee grievances/complaints, rewards and recognition, and career development opportunities; engage employees in decision-making; provide timely feedback on decisions made; and keep employees informed about issues that affect them. Another important theme pertained to leaders creating an environment in which diverse ideas/experiences were welcomed and valued and employees felt safe to speak up. Further, participants at lower levels in the hierarchy (mainly women), highlighted the importance of leaders supporting them as individuals with identities outside of policing. For example, participants communicated their perceptions that leaders often considered them to be ‘bodies’ simply filling a vacant spot on a roster rather than individuals with differing commitments and responsibilities outside of work (i.e., child or elder care). Similarly, participants proposed that they would be more likely to feel included if leaders took a genuine interest in them as people and supported them both personally and professionally. Finally, participants highlighted the perceived status differences between employees, such as by rank/level within the organization, function, employee role (i.e., civilian versus police officer), and gender, and how high-status individuals were perceived to be trusted more, had their opinions sought more frequently, were afforded more opportunities, and penalized less harshly. Thus, it was suggested that leaders should also work to diminish status differences, and their impact, by valuing and including all employees, and challenging behaviors that were exclusionary or harmful to others.

With some exception, many of the leadership behaviors identified in the current study were consistent with those highlighted in prior research, such as treating employees fairly, involving them in decision making (Roberson, 2006; Sabharwal, 2014; Shore et al., 2018; Tang et al, 2015), managing conflict, caring for and supporting employees (Tang et al., 2015), and creating a safe environment (Shore et al., 2018). In contrast to prior research, the findings from the current study suggest that fairness (i.e., the enactment of distributive, procedural and interactional justice; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997) is a critical leadership behavior. Accordingly, I put forth that organizational justice (fair treatment) is a significant leadership construct, and therefore, should not be subsumed under the umbrella of inclusive leadership. To the best of my knowledge, no researchers have explicitly attempted to theorize a justice-based model of leadership. In the following section, I present theoretical arguments in support of an expanded leadership model, that integrates both just and inclusive behaviors.

**Theorizing Just and Inclusive Leadership**

Organizational justice, which refers to judgements about the fairness of treatment by organizational authorities (Roberson and Colquitt, 2005; Whitman et al., 2012), was developed from early social justice theories, including equity theory (Adams, 1963) and distributive justice theory (fairness of outcomes; Homan, 1961). Over time, distributive justice was deemed to be too limited due to its focus on outcomes; therefore, attentions turned to the fairness of processes in achieving those outcome decisions (Greenberg and Tyler, 1987; Leventhal, 1980; Lind and Tyler, 1988). Through their work, Thibaut and Walker (1975) found that procedural justice may be more important than the outcomes it generates. Thus, organizational justice evolved as a construct comprising two key dimensions (Greenberg, 1987): *distributive justice* (equitable, equal, and responsible outcomes), and *procedural justice* (the involvement of employees in decision-making processes, and the application of procedural rule that are ethical, consistent, free of bias, and accurate).

Bies and Moag (1986) are often credited with introducing a third dimension of organizational justice (interactional justice), which refers to whether employees feel they are treated respectfully, politely and with dignity by management during various processes. Colquitt (2001) subsequently separated interactional justice into two components: *interpersonal justice* (treating employees with politeness, dignity, and respect), and *informational justice* (how well employees are informed about matters that affect them), thereby presenting a multidimensional construct that was comprised of four distinct, yet related factors. Other scholars have continued to recognize organizational justice as comprising three main elements: distributive, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997; Whitman et al., 2012). Additionally, studies have suggested that individual perceptions of justice (or injustice) are largely based on a set of rules to evaluate the fairness of treatment (Mayer et al., 2007). For instance, organizational policies and procedures are generally believed to be fair if they are applied consistently over time without bias (Leventhal, 1980; van den Bos, Vermunt, and Wilke, 1996), if they are applied accurately (De Cremer, 2004), if they are correctable, and if they are consistent with ethical norms (Leventhal, 1980).

In their work, Tyler and colleagues (Blader and Tyler, 2009;Tyler and Blader, 2003) argue there are minimal conceptual differences between the application of fair policies and practices and good interpersonal treatment and communication. Hence, the authors distinguish between just two forms of organizational justice; distributive and procedural justice. Finally, there has also been some been some shift toward a focus on overall organizational justice perceptions (e.g., Ambrose and Arnaud, 2005; Ambrose and Schminke, 2009; Lind, 2001; Lind and vanden Bos, 2002) based on the view that conceptualizing organizational justice as a multidimensional construct “may not capture the depth and richness of individuals’ justice experiences” (Ambrose and Schminke, 2009, p. 491). Notwithstanding the continuing debate of how organizational justice should be conceptualized, there is general agreement that the organizational justice framework has been useful for predicting employee behavior.

**Specifying Just and Inclusive Leadership Behaviors**

Based on the current study and a review of the relevant literature, I propose that the justice-based aspects of just and inclusive leadership pertain to three key behavioral categories: *procedural justice* (involving employees in decision-making processes, engaging in decision-making processes that are ethical, consistent, free of bias, and accurate); *distributive justice* (ensuring equitable, equal and responsible outcomes); and *interactional justice* (treating employees respectfully, politely and with dignity; and keeping employees informed about decision-making processes that affect them). For the inclusion dimension, I offer the following additional behavioral themes: supporting employees and their full spectrum of important identities; welcoming, encouraging and valuing diverse experiences/perspectives; ensuring all voices are heard, particularly, those from lower status group members; and challenging exclusionary and other harmful behaviors.

Examples of leadership caring and support might include getting to know employees as individuals and making reasonable accommodations for external commitments, such as holding staff meetings at more appropriate times of the day and providing opportunities for employees to more effectively manage their personal and professional lives through flexible working arrangements. Further, inclusive leaders can welcome and encourage diverse contributions by creating “an environment that acknowledges, welcomes, and accepts different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences” (Winters, 2014, p. 206). For instance, a more senior employee might be encouraged to share their ideas regarding the development of critical relationships with key stakeholders, or a junior employee could be prompted to share their suggestions for how the group might be able to effectively communicate with a younger audience. Additionally, soliciting employee input and listening to their ideas can increase employee perceptions that they are valued (Nembhard and Edmondson, 2006; Nishii, 2013). However, when organizational norms have often led to the rejection of individuals who voice their opinions (Mueller, Melwani, and Goncalo, 2012), leaders may need to provide different mechanisms for employees to share their insights. Within a hierarchical setting such as policing, leaders might also encourage input by actively championing the ideas of lower-level employees. In this way, employees, who may not normally be heard, can still have a voice without feeling intimidated or threatened in a larger group setting.

**Conditions for Just and Inclusive Leadership**

Consistent with Randel et al. (2018), I put forward that there are certain conditions under which just and inclusive leadership might be activated. First, I suggest that leaders must have a pre-disposition to organizational justice, which is contained within a personal fairness identity. In identity theory, identity refers to the various meanings attached to oneself by self and others (Gecas and Burke, 1995) as group members (social identities), occupiers of roles (role identities), and/or distinct individuals (personal identities) (Savage, Burke, Stets, and Fares, 2019). Although holding a role or being part of a specific group can activate role and social identities, personal identities, such as the fairness identity, are likely to be salient across diverse situations (Burke, 2004; Savage et al., 2019). Scholars submit that the fairness identity “consists of the meanings persons hold for themselves about being fair and just, equitable, principled, and unbiased” (Savage et al., 2019, p. 146), and spans across the different types of justice (i.e., distributive, procedural and interactions, Hegtvedt, 2018). Thus, leaders who maintain a fairness identity are more likely to act in ways that reinforce this identity across a variety of situations (Stets and Burke, 2000; Callero, 1985).

**Proposition 1a:** A fairness identity will be positively related to just and inclusive leadership.

In an earlier section of this paper, I highlighted Ferdman and Robert’s (2014) proposition that before individuals can fully include others they must first include themselves. Specifically, the authors propose that when leaders can appreciate, value and express their whole selves at work, they are more likely to appreciate the differences in others and work to create a platform for organizational inclusion.

According to status construction theory, hierarchical relationships among individuals are enacted through difference (Ridgeway and Erickson, 2000), based on beliefs that people who belong to certain social groups (as defined by characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, education, or occupation) are more esteemed than individuals from other groups (Webster and Foschi, 1988). Therefore, lower status individuals may choose to hide aspects of their identity to fit in with the dominant majority (Pettigrew and Martin, 1987). Various scholars have suggested that individuals with stigmatized identities (e.g., sexuality, religion, mental health, or race) are more likely to conceal these identities at work, thereby drawing clear distinctions between their personal and professional identities (Sedlovskaya et al., 2013). While such distinctions might be rationalized as appropriate, such as the distinction between being an executive during a certain time of the day and a parent during the evening, studies have shown there is a link between concealment and lower psychological well-being (DiClemente et al., 2001; Katon and Ciechanowski, 2002; Quinn and Chaudoir, 2009).

Concealment or self-suppression has been likened to self-silencing, “whereby people suppress and hide affect, attitudes, and beliefs that might result in conflict with close others” (Sedlovskaya et al., 2013, p. 697). Alternatively, if leaders better understand how their various identities intersect with each other in a more holistic way, they are more likely to adopt an integrated and authentic sense of self (Ferdman and Roberts, 2014), and to engage in a higher level of social exchange (Bowen and Blackmon, 2003). By including their full selves, leaders are also more likely to develop richer relationships with diverse others (Avolio and Gardner, 2005), have higher levels of psychological well-being (Sedlovskaya et al., 2013), to show courage in the face of challenge (as in calling out exclusionary behaviors in others), and to support the development of a more diverse and inclusive organizational environment (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Bowen and Blackmon, 2003; Ferdman and Roberts, 2014). While the integration of self as a precondition demonstrates some similarity with authentic leadership, the conceptualization of just and inclusive leadership is focused on including and treating others fairly, rather than relying on a leader’s authentic actions and behaviors.

**Proposition 1b:** Self-inclusion will be positively related to just and inclusive leadership.

**Outcomes of Just and Inclusive Leadership**

**Direct**

Leveraging Ferdman et al.’s (2010, p. 10) definition of inclusion (whereby individuals “feel safe, valued, and fully engaged, while believing that they can be fully themselves in ways that recognize, honor, and appreciate their full range of social identities”), I propose that the enactment of just and inclusive leadership behaviors will be positively related to individual experiences of workplace inclusion for several key reasons. First, social identity theory suggests that when individuals belong to specific social groups that maintain distinct and positive identities, they create an expanded sense of self (Tajfel, 1982), that reinforces one’s self-image (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Hogg and White, 1995). Specifically, positive social identities enable individuals to establish a sense of belonging and connection with members of the same group and to distinguish themselves from outsiders (Hogg and McGarty, 1990). Through social identification, people become attached to one another based on their common connection to a social group, which leads to enhanced feelings of trust and acceptance (Tajfel, 1982), and in turn, inclusion (Shore et al., 2011). Therefore, when leaders promote fairness and demonstrate greater inclusiveness, people of lower status in the workplace (such as by role or demographic differences) are more likely to feel supported and to believe that leaders see them as important members of the team. Likewise, the enactment of just and inclusive leadership behaviors may also create a greater sense of comfort in which group members perceive that they can bring their full selves to work and do not need to downplay or hide any differences that could enhance the performance of the group (Randel et al., 2018).

**Proposition 2**: Just and inclusive leadership will be positively associated with experiences of workplace inclusion.

**Indirect**

Prior studies on workplace inclusion have shown that when individuals feel included in the workplace, they are more likely to be satisfied with their job (Brimhall et al., 2017; Mor Barak and Levin, 2002; Nishii, 2013), be committed to and identify with their organization (Gonzalez and Denisi, 2009; Mor Barak et al*.,* 2006; Nishii, 2013), enhance their performance at work (Dwertmann and Boehm, 2016; Sabharwal, 2014), and be less likely to leave (Gonzalez and Denisi, 2009; Hwang and Hopkins, 2012; Travis and Mor Barak, 2010). At an organizational level, experiences of workplace inclusion have also been found to be positively related to reduced conflict within teams (Nishii, 2013). Rather than viewing these outcomes as being directly derived from experiences of inclusion, I suggest that inclusion is more likely to be directly related to organizational identification and job satisfaction, which in turn, contributes to enhanced job performance, lower intentions to leave, and higher levels of psychological well-being. Based on prior research, I propose that:

**Proposition 3:** Experiences of workplace inclusion will be positively associated with (a) job satisfaction, and (b) organizational identification.

**Proposition 4:** Job satisfaction and organizational identification will be positively related to (a) lower turnover intentions, (b) enhanced job performance, and (c) increased psychological well-being.

Focusing on the safe, valued and engaged dimensions of Ferdman et al.’s (2010) definition of inclusion, I further submit that when individuals feel included in the workplace they are more likely to voice their ideas, suggestions, opinions, or concerns (Morrison and Kamdar, 2011). Namely, when individuals feel safe and that their opinions are valued they are more likely to identify with their group and speak up and share their insights and concern with the group. This proposition is supported by other relevant research, which suggests that individuals who highly identify with their workgroup are likely to be more motivated to invest effort into communicating opinions and ideas that will help the group to perform better (LePine and Van Dyne, 1998; Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008).

**Proposition 5:** Organizational identification will be positively associated with employee voice.

**Discussion**

To date, the literature examining leader inclusiveness and the outcomes for individuals and organizations have presented some compelling findings; however, it has not sufficiently incorporated a theoretical framework nor explored the links between leader inclusiveness and workplace inclusion. This paper builds on prior work and presents a theoretical foundation for an expanded model of inclusive leadership that incorporates a separate, yet highly related dimension of justice. More specifically, this paper expands the theory and understanding of leadership, particularly as it relates to the conditions in which just and inclusive leadership might emerge, how specific leadership behaviors can contribute to experiences of workplace inclusion, and in turn, how inclusion in the workplace contributes to positive individual and organizational outcomes. Thus, the leadership model presented in this paper has several theoretical and practical implications.

**Implications for Theory and Future Research**

A key contribution of the just and inclusive leadership model is that it is theoretically grounded. For instance, status construction theory helps explain how hierarchical relationships are established among groups of people based on beliefs that some personal characteristics are more valued than others (Ridgeway and Erickson, 2000; Webster and Foschi, 1988), and why some people, including leaders, may choose to downplay or conceal certain personal identities at work (Sedlovskaya et al., 2013). Further, identity theory highlights how a leader’s embrace of an integrated sense of self (Avolio and Gardner, 2005), can lead to the development of better relationships with diverse individuals, more general support for a diverse and inclusive workplace, and the willingness to call out behaviors and practices that exclude others. Identity theory also helps explains how a personal fairness identity is likely to be salient across a variety of situations (Burke, 2004; Savage et al., 2019), thereby, compelling leaders who value fairness to adopt and promote fairness in actions involving others. In sum, the proposed model puts forth the theoretically supported conditions in which just and inclusive leadership might occur.

Additionally, social identity theory illustrates how just and inclusive leadership is likely to contribute to individuals feeling a sense of belonging and connection with members of the same group (Hogg and McGarty, 1990), and the perception that people can bring their full selves to work and not be compelled to conceal or downplay any personal identities. A further contribution of the proposed leadership model is that it builds on the extant literature on inclusion by grounding the model in a specific definition of inclusion. In contrast to Mor-Barak and Cherin’s (1998) generally supported 15-item inclusion-exclusion scale, which focuses on work group involvement, influence in decision making, and access to information and resources, the inclusion definition utilized herein encompasses the critical dimensions of safety, value, engagement, and authenticity. Finally, in addition to the linkage of inclusion with several commonly examined outcomes, such as increased job satisfaction, organizational identification, and performance, and lower turnover intentions, the proposed model also suggests that experiences of inclusion can enhance psychological well-being and lead to greater expression of employee voice.

Notwithstanding the potential benefits of the just and inclusive leadership framework, its foundational definition of inclusion that has not been tested. As such, future research should consider the development of a workplace inclusion measure that supports Ferdman et al.’s (2010) definition. Future research should also entail development of a just and leadership measure that is based on the conceptualization presented in this paper. Ideally, this measure would assess the justice-related behaviors pertaining to distributive, procedural and interactional justice, and the inclusive behavioral dimensions, which consist of supporting employees and their full spectrum of important identities; welcoming, encouraging and valuing diverse experiences/perspectives; ensuring all voices are heard; and challenging exclusionary and other harmful behaviors. Following the development and testing of these two measures, the proposed relationships presented within the framework could then be empirically validated.

Another consideration for future research is to explore the implications of a leader group prototype on an individual’s role identity as a leader. For instance, social identity theory emphasizes how group members may work to align their behaviors with a group prototype.

Therefore, future research should explore whether the existence of a leader prototype influences the enactment of specific leadership behaviors, such as those described in this paper.

**Implications for Practice**

The proposed leadership framework suggests that organizations can become more inclusive through the enactment of leadership behaviors that are focused on fair processes and practices, as well as seek to involve, engage, and support all members within a team. A key distinction of this framework is that requires leaders to first include themselves in order to better appreciate and value the diversity around them. Understandably, self-inclusion will create some challenges as it would require organizational leaders to engage in potentially difficult conversations about the practice of inclusion, and how they might promote inclusion within themselves and in others, such as identifying behavioural expectations for individuals and for leaders, establishing opportunities for knowledge and skill development at all levels, and creating mechanisms to both support and hold each other accountable. Additionally, the proposed framework provides a means in which organizations can better leverage the diverse experiences and insights of all individuals, thereby extending traditional diversity practices, which have tended to focus on a visible representation of diversity rather than integration.

**Conclusions**

By extending our traditional definition of diversity to one that recognizes both the visible and invisible differences in people, an argument can be made that diversity is a reality whereas inclusion continues to be elusive. By focusing on leadership behaviors that create a safe and welcoming environment and successfully leverage the contributions of all people, organizations are likely to be better equipped to attract and retain talent, and to effectively respond to current and future challenges.

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 Figure 1: Theoretical model of just and inclusive leadership.

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