**Stream title: Erasing Borders Through Climates for Diversity and Inclusion**

Stream convenor: A.K. Ward

Research suggests that organizational *climate* (shared perceptions of what is valued in the unit) has a strong impact on employee behavior (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009). Particularly relevant for border-spanning, *diversity climate* (McKay, Avery, Tonidandel, Morris, Hernandez, & Hebl, 2007) and *climate for inclusion* (Nishii, 2013) have been shown to positively influence employees’ attitudes and behaviors, allowing organizations to realize the synergistic benefits of a diverse workforce. Where a heterogeneous workforce exists, this diversity is more likely to lead to positive results for the organization when its employees share a belief that the organization appreciates fairness and difference (diversity climate) and is inclusive of all employees regardless of background (climate for inclusion). Diversity/inclusion climates allow us to break down boundaries – essentially, erasing borders - within organizations that once separated the powerful from the powerless. Such climates allow unique individuals to be appreciated for the value that their difference brings, rather than excluded or merely tolerated because of it.

While research consistently supports organizational benefits from positive diversity/inclusion climates (see McKay & Avery, 2015, for a recent review), little is known about how they develop or about how their benefits may be extended beyond the borders of the organization (e.g., into classrooms and larger communities). That said, we invite authors to submit papers addressing the development of diversity/inclusion climates as applicable to organizations, classrooms, communities, or other contexts. How do we develop environments in which individuals feel included and valued regardless (and, perhaps, because) of their differences?

* Appropriate research questions for submissions to this stream include, but are not limited to….
  + At the organizational-level, how can policies, programs, and procedures be shaped to effectively enhance diversity/inclusion climates – rather than to simply enhance heterogeneity? In other words, once diversity is present, how do we create an environment that appreciates it?
  + At the individual-level, what can pro-inclusion employees do to promote diversity/inclusion climates in their organizations? Is climate-control limited to leaders?
  + How can research on inclusive discourse be applied in organizational contexts to aid in diversity/inclusion climate development?
  + How do we extend research on organizational diversity/inclusion climates to the classroom, community, and broader contexts? Relatedly, how can research from distinct fields (e.g., education, management, psychology, sociology) be integrated to develop a more in-depth, broadly-applicable understanding of diversity/inclusion climate emergence?

Please contact A.K. Ward ([akward@vt.edu](mailto:akward@vt.edu)) for more information.

**References**

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