A Latin American perspective on diversity management: What does "inclusion" mean in a Peruvian context?

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Abstract

Although interest in inclusion is becoming widespread, there remains limited understanding of how organizations can create environments that promote inclusiveness and unlock the benefits of workforce diversity. Additional research is needed to better understand how inclusion is conceptualized and experienced in contexts other than North America and Europe. Taking an exploratory approach, the present research seeks to answer the question of how employees in Peru – one of the most socially and economically unequal nations in Latin America - understand the concept of inclusion in the workplace. Semi-structured interviews with thirty employed individuals found that inclusion was generally described as comprising belongingness, uniqueness, and equal treatment. Six elements emerged as key to the creation of workplace inclusion: participation, positive relationships, equality, feeling valued, climate and culture, and positive work conditions. As inhabitants of a developing country with high levels of inequality and discrimination, Peruvian employees' views provide valuable insight into how inclusion is lived and understood in such a context, and how it may be augmented.

As the number of women and ethnic minorities entering the workplace continues to rise, organizations strive to adapt to a more diverse workforce (Roberson, 2006). With 75% of Fortune 100 companies introducing diversity programs (Daniels, 2001), it is evident that awareness of the need to manage diversity is pervasive. Despite the proliferation of a range of diversity initiatives, however, one of the most significant problems that women and

minorities face in the workplace today is exclusion, both overt and covert (Mor Barak, Findler & Wind, 2003; Mor Barak, 2011).

Although the concept of inclusion has gathered increased attention in the last years, it remains a relatively new construct in the organizational literature, with some discrepancy between researchers regarding its nature and definition (Roberson, 2006; Shore et. al, 2011). Pelled, Ledford and Mohrman (1999: 1014) define inclusion as "the degree to which an employee is accepted and treated as an insider by others in a work system", and conceptualize inclusion as being composed of three key elements: decision making influence, information access and job security. Similarly, Mor Barak (2000: 52) defines inclusion as a "continuum of the degree to which individuals feel a part of critical organizational processes", although she highlights the importance of both formal organizational processes, such as access to information and decision-making channels, and informal processes, such as 'water cooler' meetings and interactions over lunch (Mor Barak, 2011). Based on various published characterizations of inclusion, Kandola (2009) concludes that inclusion is not defined by a set of conditions that need to be met in the workplace, such as the ones proposed by Mor Barak (2011), or by the removal of obstacles, as is suggested by Roberson (2006), but by the feelings and perceptions of individuals within the organization.

While these definitions may differ from one another, they are unanimous in stating that being "involved", "an insider", or "part of" an organization is essential when defining inclusion; that is, they all share what the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT) defines as Belongingness. Building on ODT, Shore et al. (2011: 1265) focus on the need for both belongingness

and uniqueness, and define inclusion as the "degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs of belongingness and uniqueness". Specifically, they propose that an individual will be included when s/he is accepted and treated as an insider, but is also valued and allowed or encouraged to maintain his or her uniqueness. This idea is supported by Bell et al. (2011), who posit that in an inclusive workplace individuals are both valued and recognized for their differences, as well as for being equal to other employees. It is important to acknowledge from these definitions that it is not only the feeling of being involved, but also the feeling of being valued by others that makes someone feel included. Likewise, the "Integration-and-Learning" organizational approach to diversity theorized by Ely and Thomas (2001) reflects the importance of uniqueness and belongingness, proposing that it is by acknowledging and valuing differences in individuals, and integrating them in the core tasks of the organization, that employees feel respected and valued for their contributions, enhancing cross-cultural learning and constructive conflict.

Although interest in inclusion is becoming widespread, there remains limited understanding of how organizations can create environments that promote inclusiveness and unlock the benefits of workforce diversity (Shore et al., 2011). As proposed in Mor Barak's (2000) theoretical model, it is a combination of diversity, both visible and invisible, and organizational culture that will lead to employee perceptions of inclusion or exclusion. These perceptions will in turn predict outcomes such as individual well-being, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and task effectiveness. Similarly,

Shore et al. (2011) draw from previous theory and research to propose a model in which a combination of climate for inclusiveness (involving fairness systems and diversity climate), inclusive leadership and inclusive practices lead to employee perceptions of inclusion, which in turn predict a wide range of outcomes such as high quality relations with group members and supervisors, job satisfaction, job performance, organizational citizenship, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, well-being, creativity, and career opportunities for members of minority groups. In addition, Bell, Özbilgin, Beauregard and Sürgevil (2011) propose voice as a key element of an inclusive workplace.

In a related vein, Nishii (in press) conceptualizes inclusive climates as consisting of three dimensions: ensuring fair employment practices that eliminate bias, having norms and expectations that promote the openness of individuals to be themselves, and the extent to which an organization actively seeks to incorporate the perspectives of its diverse workforce in decision making and core processes. Using this conceptualization, Nishii's (in press) empirical research concluded that relationship conflict is lower in diverse work groups characterized by highly inclusive climates.

Research on this topic is nascent, but has already established links between the perception of inclusion or exclusion and employee outcomes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, work tension, and well-being, as well as with extra-role behaviours such as citizenship behaviour, altruism and production deviance (Ensher, Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001; Mor Barak & Levin, 2002; Mor Barak, Findler & Wind, 2003; Sanchez & Brock, 1996; Stamper & Masterson, 2002). It is therefore clear that employee

perceptions of inclusion have important consequences for organizations and their members.

Thus far, diversity and inclusion research has been conducted predominantly in North American and European contexts. As Mor Barak (2011: 7) stated, "[b]eyond these two regions, little or no attention has been paid to issues of exclusion in the workplace (…). There is clearly a need to bridge this gap and develop a comprehensive knowledge base". In a rare piece of cross-cultural research on inclusion conducted by Mor Barak, Findler and Wind (2003), differences were found between American and Israeli workers in their understanding of inclusion and their perceptions of its relationship with other concepts. This suggests that cultural differences might exist in the experience of inclusion or exclusion in the workplace. Additional research is needed to better understand how inclusion is conceptualized and experienced in different contexts, and Peru exhibits particular characteristics that make it a relevant location for the study of inclusion.

The Peruvian context

Peru, located in South America, is a former colony of Spain that has been independent and a formal democracy since 1821. During the final decades of the twentieth century, Peru experienced one of the most violent periods of its history, with armed internal conflict and a state of terrorism.

The Gini coefficient measures inequality among values, and is generally used as a measure of inequality of income or wealth. The region of Latin America has a Gini coefficient of .53, and as such, can be considered 19% more unequal than sub-Saharan Africa, 37% more unequal than East Asia, and 65% more unequal than developed countries (Lustig, 2011). Peru is

one of the most unequal countries in Latin America, not only in economic but also in social, ethnic, cultural, and regional terms (Cotler & Cuenca, 2011), and racism and discrimination are still undeniably pervasive not only in the workplace but in society at large, where Peruvians have very different opportunities dependent on their race or ethnic background, or their economic status (Lerner, 2011; Thorp & Paredes, 2011). While the concepts of exclusion and discrimination in Peru are widely discussed amongst academics, their omnipresence and impact on society at large has distanced theory and research on inclusion from focusing on the context of work organizations.

In 2009, Peru's Economically Active Population (Población Económicamente Activa or PEA) numbered 15,316,129 individuals. According to the Decent Work Index, only 8.2% of these workers have jobs with all the characteristics necessary to be considered decent work (belong to category 1) – possession of a work contract or registered business, income higher than the minimum wage, work hours under 48 hours a week, provision of health insurance, and affiliation to the pension system (Gamero, 2011). Accordingly, the majority of the population is not affiliated to the public health system (Essalud), nor to the private or public pension system (AFP and ONP), a situation that derives from the insufficient number of job offers in the modern sector of the economy and the high costs of formalization (Torres, 2010). Torres (2010) argues that as long as Peru fails to introduce legislation that reduces entry barriers to formal employment, a dichotomy will continue to exist between a protected minority and a majority that lives outside the basic social benefits that are inherent to modern employment.

Peru's rich history, notable since colonial times as one full of inequalities and discrimination, as well as its current characteristics and lack of theory and research make the Peruvian context an interesting ground for exploring the concept of inclusion in the workplace.

Taking an exploratory approach, the present research seeks to answer the question of how Peruvian employees understand the concept of inclusion in the workplace. The study aims to contribute to the general understanding of both the concept of inclusion and the elements involved in employees' perceptions of inclusion/exclusion in a different (non-European or North American) context, such as Peru.

METHODOLOGY

The present study uses a qualitative approach, employing in depth interviews as the data collection method. Qualitative research is appropriate when the purpose of the study is to understand a phenomenon from the participants' perspective, allowing space for capturing beliefs, perceptions, and ideas relative to a particular context (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This is in line with the aim of the present research, which seeks to understand from the employees' point of view how the concept of inclusion/exclusion is perceived in a Peruvian context. Furthermore, a qualitative approach permits the elicitation of "tacit knowledge and subjective understandings and interpretations" (Marshall & Rossma, 2006: 53), which fits with an emic perspective of gathering information from an insider's point of view, reflecting on the cultural meanings attached to facts, events or experiences (Hennink et al., 2011).

As Hennink et al. (2011) describe, in depth interviews are best used when seeking to capture individual voices and stories, when trying to identify individual narratives, personal experiences, the subjectivity of the employee, and the particular context. Due to the nature of the present research, which seeks to understand perceptions of inclusion taking into account individual experiences and points of view in a new context, interviews are used as the method of data collection.

Sample

Participants were selected through snowball sampling, using the personal connections of the lead author to contact participants. This method was selected because of the sensitivity of the issues involved (i.e., recounting personal experiences). Thirty individuals participated in the research. All were working in Peruvian organizations, with the majority (63%) employed in the private sector, and smaller numbers working in the public sector (23%) and for non-governmental organizations (13%). The sample was predominantly composed of office workers, with only two participants occupying manual jobs as construction workers. There was a wide range of job levels among the office workers, from entry-level positions to supervisory roles through to senior management. The average age of the participants was 39 years, with the youngest being 24 and the oldest 58. Sixteen individuals were women and 14 were men.

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, based on the questions of what it means to feel included in the workplace, and what helps or hinders inclusion. Interviews took place either at the participant's workplace or home,

according to the participant's preference. They were scheduled for times selected by the participants, and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes each.

Data analysis

The first step for data analysis was the transcription of all interviews, which was done in Spanish in order to better maintain the personal narratives of the participants. Once the data were transcribed, the next step was the creation of codes. As Hennink et. al. (2011: 216) describe, codes refer to "an issue, topic, idea, opinion, etc., that is evident in the data". Codes were developed through the re-reading of the data, as they are topics discussed by interviewees, and represented the basic themes found in the data. After every transcript was read and coded, they were checked for repetition and accuracy of the coding, which generated a few changes in the codes (for example, two of the codes generated – 'equal treatment' and 'equality' – covered the same topic, and were thus finally coded as 'equality').

Categorization of the basic themes was the third step of the analysis, grouping together codes that fell under an underlying, organizing theme. These organizing themes were then categorized under global themes, which had been pre-defined by the research questions. These global themes are those present in the interview guide: "The nature of inclusion" and "Creating inclusion".

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are divided into two sections. The first section, "The nature of inclusion", analyzes what Peruvian employees understand as inclusion. The second, "Creating inclusion", examines what Peruvian employees perceive as being necessary elements for feeling included at work.

The nature of inclusion

As discussed earlier in this chapter, although the concept of inclusion has gained increased scholarly attention in recent years, it remains a relatively new construct and there is a lack of consensus regarding its exact definition or composition (Roberson, 2006; Shore et al., 2011). This section will seek to provide a preliminary definition for inclusion based on an analysis of interviews with Peruvian employees.

Inclusion was generally described by employees as having three components: belongingness, uniqueness, and equal treatment. This conceptualization aligns with that of Kandola (2009) and Shore et al. (2011), considering inclusion as the 'feeling' of inclusion, and not as a set of various conditions that need to be met. In order to create a more accurate distinction between the nature of inclusion itself and the elements that lead to feelings of inclusion, organizational characteristics are considered as antecedents to inclusion and are explored in the following section ("Creating inclusion").

Belongingness

The need to be a part of something, to be included, has been at the core of many definitions of inclusion. As Shore et al. (2011) highlighted, the theme of belongingness appears consistently in the inclusion literature, as indicated by words such as 'accepted', 'insider', or 'sense of belonging'. The

importance of belonging was echoed in many of the interviews. This sense of belonging did not relate only to the organization as a whole, but also as being part of a project or group, or as a part of a commonly shared goal. Inclusion was described by a 27-year old woman as "being a part of, feeling a part of, part of a project, of a group, of a goal". "People need to feel that they are there, that they are part of a collective," according to a 57-year old woman, whatever the 'collective' is referring to.

This idea of belonging was also expressed by a few participants as an integration between the employee and the organization. "Inclusion for me is to include, to integrate, to be a part of something bigger, of a group," explained a 27-year old man. A 32-year old man described inclusion as "how you integrate yourself with the process and culture of the organization, either formal or informal."

Uniqueness

While the idea of valuing and promoting uniqueness has not been explicitly recognized in the inclusion literature, it has been nevertheless been present in definitions of inclusion. As Shore et al. (2011) noted, phrases such as "valuing contributions from all employees", "individual talents", or "to have their voices heard and appreciated" demonstrate the ubiquity of uniqueness when defining inclusion. Furthermore, the Integration-and-Learning organizational approach to diversity proposed by Ely and Thomas (2001) highlights the importance of recognizing the value of each individual.

Participants in the present study emphasized the importance of feeling valued when describing what inclusion meant to them: "To know that you are an important part, that you are taken into account, that your work is being

valued" (Man, 58). Exclusion was expressed as the converse. In the words of a 42-year old man, "[e]xclusion is not being taken into account, that what you do or don't do doesn't matter, and in the end if you leave no one will notice, and they won't care."

In addition, it emerged that a key element of uniqueness was that employees feel free to be themselves, without having to 'act' differently across different situations. This is considered an element of uniqueness because it centres on the idea of being valued and accepted for your true self. As a 32-year old employee of a private organization expressed, " [t]o be accepted in the way that you are, not to have to be a different way out of the office and another one inside the office. This is important, that the organization not only gives you space to be yourself, but that the people accept you how you really are."

Aligned with the definition provided by Shore et al. (2011), the present research found inclusion to be described by the two components that they proposed: uniqueness and belongingness. This definition builds on Optimal Distinctiveness Theory, suggesting that a mix between uniqueness and belongingness creates feelings of inclusion in employees. However, the present research found an additional component to the definition of inclusion, which is the concept of equal treatment.

Equal treatment

The third element that interviewees described when defining inclusion resonates with the concept of diversity, since it refers to equal treatment in organizations and the provision of equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of characteristics that are not under the control of the individual.

As one 37-year old male employee explained, "it means that everyone, independent of their origin, is included, and that there isn't discrimination based on issues such as education, race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, political orientation."

Furthermore, inclusion extends to organizational processes, such as training and promotions, although more critically in the process of recruitment and selection. One participant, a woman of 24, described the importance of the selection process as the point where the issue of inclusion begins: "I believe that everything starts there…with people having opportunities to enter the organization because of their competencies, and not for how they look." The idea that inequalities and discrimination continue to exist in Peruvian organizations was widely shared by the interview participants. While the relevance of providing equal treatment might be salient in all contexts, it might be particularly salient in a context such as Peru, where employees acknowledge the ubiquity of inequality, and where governmental actions towards its reduction is minimal.

Creating inclusion

While researchers have proposed theoretical links between a diverse set of antecedents and the perception of inclusion in the workplace, these links have not yet been directly explored. The present research found six key elements to the creation of inclusion in the workplace: participation, positive relationships, equality, feeling valued, climate and culture, and positive work conditions.

Participation

The concept of participation is described here as the ability to contribute to the organization and voice opinions and ideas, as well as being able to participate in decision-making, whether that be related to an individual's own work, that of a team, or within the organization as a whole.

Consistent with Bell et al.'s (2011) proposition that voice be considered a key antecedent to inclusion, employees in the present study found the ability to speak their mind a significant factor contributing to feelings of inclusion. While the concept of voice has a variety of definitions, Brinsfield et al. (2009: 4) provide a helpful guide to analyzing the interview data by describing voice as "the expression of ideas, information, opinions, or concerns, and silence as withholding them". The existence of spaces and opportunities to speak was identified by interviewees as being important in order to feel included. These spaces and opportunities can manifest themselves as "open door" policies, or as having someone to talk to, as expressed by a 32-year old male employee: "Here you have open doors to speak to the manager, you can talk, give your opinions, and that helps, because you make yourself a part of the system."

The non-expression of ideas, silence, was also recognized as a contributor to exclusion; for example, a 24-year old woman working in a private company remarked that there were many employees in the organization who were afraid to volunteer their opinions, and who believed that those who speak up end up being fired. "You feel excluded if you don't have the freedom to say something."

Interview participants also noted that inclusion is predicated upon not only feeling free to express one's views, but upon knowing that these views

are heard. Management's failure to listen to employees was identified by participants as a common problem, and some believed that hierarchical differences play a key role in determining who is heard and who is not: "maybe the opinion of a storekeeper is not as important as one from an engineer," as a 32-year old male employee suggested.

The ability to contribute something to the organization and its goals was also mentioned as an important contributor to inclusion. A 55-year old male manager in a small organization expressed this point by stating that employees feel included when they are able to contribute to solving organizational issues. The concept of contribution also relates to the idea that employees need to have a clear awareness of how their work contributes to the functioning and development of the organization. This is consistent with Hackman and Oldham's (1976) Job Characteristics Model, which describes task significance as the extent to which an individual's job affects or is important to others, either within or external to the organization. As a 26-year old female employee explains, "I feel included because the responsibilities that we have matter, you feel that the things that you do matter because they lead somewhere."

Many participants highlighted being able to participate in the organizational decision-making process as a major element in creating feelings of inclusion, which concurs with the theorizing of Pelled et al. (1999) and Mor Barak (2000). Decision making at both the organizational and team levels was mentioned, and employees across the spectrum of job levels described how being involved in decisions created either a sense of inclusion or lack thereof. For instance, a 25-year old female low-level employee

explained that "making decisions…makes someone feel included, and I feel that when I make decisions, and they are correct and people support me, then that makes you feel that your word is very important inside your department." Perceptions of being excluded, meanwhile, were described by a 58-year old male manager as being generated "[w]hen you realize that regardless of your hierarchical rank, the institution starts to work with other decisions that you were never consulted on."

Related to the concept of decision-making is that of empowerment, which was also identified by interview participants as being necessary for creating inclusion. A 28-year old male employee describes how he feels included in his organization thusly: "Our decisions are always respected. I can sit and talk to the manager […] and he will listen to me. That is what makes it more horizontal, that he empowers me and the others to take decisions."

Positive relationships

Maintaining positive relationships, that are caring and supportive towards the individual, is characterized by interview participants as a fundamental element to promoting perceptions of inclusion. Positive relationships are relevant not only with regard to leaders, but also to the ties with co-workers and peers, as well as the notion of a supportive organization.

The importance of feeling supported by the organization has been represented in the concept of Perceived Organizational Support (POS), defined by Eisenberg, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986: 504) as the employee's "global belief concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being". Stamper and Masterson (2002) found that POS functions as an antecedent of perceived

insider status, which means that it fosters feelings of belongingness. Interviewees in the present study, who found the perception that the organization supports, values, and cares for them to be an important aspect for creating inclusion, echo this notion. As a 58-year old male manager argued, "[t]he worker feels excluded precisely when those that are directing the company don't take them into account, not their needs or work conditions. It is different when they are aware of their employees' needs, what they require to be able to work, or other needs that are not seen at work."

This perception of support is not observed only at the individual level, but also at the level of the work group. A 28-year old female employee working for a private company described how her team felt excluded by senior management when organizational activities were being planned: "Here in the organisation […] they sometimes don't consider the workload, and do it for example on the day that we have to deliver to the investment committee; they need to consider other areas besides themselves when organising events."

In Shore et al.'s (2011) model, inclusive leadership is considered one of the key antecedents for creating feelings of inclusion. According to this model, it is through leaders' philosophies and values, as well as by the decisions and strategies they take, that a climate for inclusion and inclusion itself can be promoted. In the present study, however, the importance of leadership is recognized not only because of the climate that it promotes, but because a positive relationship with one's leader makes an employee feel included. An example of this can be seen in the description that a 24-year old woman makes of leadership at her organization: "I always had the trust to go, approach them, call them by their names and everything; but there are people

that have been here twenty years and don't have the trust to just knock on the door, and talk. In that they feel very excluded."

Informal exchanges with co-workers and leaders, named here as social relationships, are also identified by interview participants as promoting inclusion. Attendance at after-work gatherings with co-workers, or where and with whom employees sit during lunch, are recognized by interviewees as being important indicators of the social ties that one has in the organization.

"That is what makes you feel included, the way others look at you, how they greet you, if they are open or not." (Woman, 25)

"If I tell someone what happened to me on the weekend, or you share things with that person, then you are creating a new type of bond, and another type of inclusion. The closer the personal relationship, more inclusion there will be." (Man, 27)

When one feels a part of these activities, it fosters feelings of inclusion; when an employee does not take part, perceptions of exclusion can be generated. Events considered unimportant by others can make a difference as well, as a 28-year old female employee reflects: "There are four men in my area and then me, so sometimes they have activities and comments that they share, like for example watching videos of girls or joking about girls, that I obviously don't share."

Equality

With high levels of social inequality and increased awareness of the subject, Peruvians are highly sensitive to the existence of differences and injustice. However, the importance of justice in organizations has been identified in the research literature as a key aspect in creating positive

outcomes such as organizational commitment, citizenship behaviours, willingness to cooperate, or positive attitudes toward change (Berneth et al., 2007; Brockner & Wiesenfel, 1996; Lavelle et al., 2009; Lipponen et al., 2004; Melkonian et al., 2011). As such, the key role played by fairness perceptions might not be particular to the Peruvian sample, although they might be more salient than in other contexts.

Perceptions of the existence or lack of equality in the workplace was identified by interview participants as a crucial aspect for fostering feelings of inclusion. Consistent with the concept of distributive justice, which holds that individuals judge the fairness of a situation based on outcome allocation (Colquitt et al., 2001), participants recognized that a fair distribution of outcomes such as payment, rewards or promotions was key to feeling included. As a 58-year old male manager said, "[w]hen you notice that for the same job there is a huge difference in payment or changes in work conditions, then you notice that you are not included."

Moreover, participants stressed that it was not only about the outcomes that one received, but also about how these outcomes were decided. This resonates with procedural justice, a dimension of organizational justice that focuses on the procedures taken when making decisions (Leventhal, 1980). A 42-year old male employee illustrated the importance of procedural justice by describing favouritism to make staff decisions can produce feelings of exclusion: "When I was working in G4S they only called on the favourites for the organizational events. It is different here; in every meeting or event they call on everyone, without excluding anyone. That makes you feel a part of the team."

When inequality and injustice occur due to employees' membership of a particular demographic group, such as women or an ethnic minority, it is defined as discrimination (Dipboye & Halverson, 2004). The existence of prejudice and discrimination was raised by interview participants a number of times, and identified as being a critical factor for creating exclusion in the workplace.

"It was hard to work there, they wouldn't pay attention to you or if you said something they would tell you why don't you go back to your house to cook, why don't you go back to your house and watch over your pans." (Woman, 53)

"I think that, for example, just statistically, there has to be someone gay here, and who doesn't feel comfortable saying it, because he or she thinks there will be a reaction to it." (Man, 32)

In addition to discrimination based on membership of a particular demographic category, participants also spoke of managers and co-workers discriminating against individuals on the basis of other criteria, such as education or international experience. In describing how a colleague was excluded from certain organizational activities, a 27-year old female employee shed light on some of the ramifications such exclusion might have for individuals' performance and career progress: "Because everyone has studied abroad except him, they separate him from the group, unconsciously, they don't invite him to training, don't give him power to take decisions, and block him all the time."

Positive work conditions

Salary, benefits, and job security were identified by interview participants as crucial determinants of feeling included at work. Although informality is an important issue in the Peruvian labour market, a lack of adequate salary and benefits can also be found in formal organizations, and not all organizations provide job security for their employees (Gamero, 2011). The presence of positive work conditions emerged as a key contributor to perceptions of inclusion in the workplace, as illustrated by a 32-year old male employee of a private company: "There is still much abuse from the employer towards the employee, so that if the game conditions are not fair it creates zero inclusion, zero concern about including."

Receiving a competitive level of remuneration is by no means assured in the Peruvian job market. Access to benefits is granted only to workers who have a contract with the organization, which entitles them to health insurance and a pension plan, as well as other benefits stipulated by law. As a 24-year old female employee pointed out, "[an] issue for inclusion is having all the benefits, being part of the organization, this means that when you arrive you have a contract, that you are part of the payroll, that you have social security and all the benefits by law. Because there are some organizations that hire you as an independent worker, and if something happens to you it is your problem." Insufficient rewards contribute to feelings of exclusion by signaling to the under-rewarded employee that he or she is not valued and, in the case of "independent workers", not even a legitimate member of the organization.

"At the individual level the situation is of exclusion, of workers to whom there is no respect for their working rights, their social benefits are not

counted, extra hours are not paid, security measures are not taken."

(Man, 33)

The importance of perceptions of job security when promoting inclusion has been raised by Pelled et al. (1999). In the present study, job security was an issue particularly salient for public sector workers.

"One of the issues in the public sector is the uncertainty, this idea that now we can be safe because the minister is close to the president. But we don't know if this is going to change, it might be that in a few months ministers change, and then all the leaders will change, and you will have to leave as well." (Man, 49)

Knowing that within a few months you may no longer be a member of the organization can impact feelings of belongingness, and contribute to employee perceptions of exclusion. A 31-year old male employee from a private organization gave an account of working for a previous employer: "[M]y last year there I was living with uncertainty, without any real stability, and the organization wouldn't tell us anything, and that makes you feel excluded." This quote also yields evidence of the significance of organizational communication and being kept informed; these elements will be discussed further in the sub-section on climate and culture later in this chapter.

Feeling valued

Consistent with the definition of inclusion visited earlier, feeling like a valued member of the organization is a key determinant of perceptions of inclusion in the workplace. Interview participants recognized that actions taken by the organization to make an employee feel valued, such as training

and promotion, as well as showing appreciation for their ideas and opinions, are essential precursors to feeling included.

"When the organization decided to bet on me and send me to a series of external courses…they invested in me. Then I felt I was part of a bigger plan." (Man, 31)

Acknowledging employees' contributions to the organization and its goals was mentioned by participants as necessary for creating perceptions of inclusion. When an organization actively seeks out employees' views, and shows evidence of hearing and implementing workers' ideas, individuals feel a greater sense of belonging and inclusion. As a 28-year old man explained, "[i]t makes you feel that your experience or opinions are valued […] you feel that you are taken into account, so you feel constantly included."

Climate and culture

While the concept of climate and culture can involve many aspects of the organization, including some of those already discussed earlier in this chapter, this category comprises the elements of information and communication as well as shared vision and goals. Interview participants also mentioned the general concept of culture as an important element for inclusion, an element regarded as crucial by Mor Barak (2011), who describes the need to have an inclusive culture espousing the value of diversity and promoting a space where prejudice and discrimination is prohibited.

"The culture [can't be] bothered by having…someone that brings new ways of thinking or new ways of being and behaving […] it has to [be] able to adjust to changes and differences." (Man, 32)

The importance of information when discussing inclusion in the workplace has already been highlighted by Mor Barak (2000) and Pelled et al. (1999). In accord with these scholars, participants identified having access to information as a key element for inclusion. This was discussed in the context of employees' own departments, other departments, co-workers, or the organization as a whole. Not knowing what is going on leads individuals to feel disconnected and excluded from their work groups and/or the organization. As a 53-year old female employee remarked of her co-workers, "[t]hey can create a whole project and present it, but I don't even know what it is about [...] To know what are the projects, the programs, the activities, that is inclusion for me."

Inclusion is also dependent upon an individual having received clear information about his or her own role and functions, expectation of him or her, and how internal procedures operate; according to a 57-year old female employee, without this knowledge, "you don't know where you stand".

Another significant determinant of inclusion that emerged from the study was feeling a part of a shared organizational goal or vision.

"You don't feel included if you don't know what is the vision of the organization, why you are doing what you are doing." (Woman, 32)

A 57-year old female participant working in an NGO described how having a conviction that you are part of something that is serious, that is valid and necessary, is key for generating inclusion: "[It's] when you connect with the vision of the organization that you really feel a part of it, that you feel included."

Conclusions

Despite an increasingly diverse workforce globally, there remains considerable evidence that many inequalities exist due to membership of particular social categories (Kirton & Greene, 2010). Many organizations acknowledge the importance of managing diversity, but there is much left unknown about what is necessary in order to unlock the full potential of a diverse workforce. In this scenario, the concept of inclusion appears as an answer to the question of how to do so. There is, however, no standard, accepted definition of inclusion or definitive list of its antecedents.

The present study makes three important contributions to the field of diversity and inclusion. First, it provides a better understanding of how employees understand the concept of inclusion. By proposing a definition of inclusion that comprises feelings of belongingness as well as those of uniqueness, it resonates with the definitions of Shore et al. (2011) and Kandola (2009), focusing on employees' feelings and not on a set of conditions that need to be met. However, the characterization provided by the present research also involves perceptions of equal treatment, proposing that equality is a core element in the definition of inclusion.

The second contribution of this study is its identification of six key antecedents to inclusion: participation, sustaining positive relationships, equality, feeling valued, the climate and culture of the organization, and positive work conditions. Many of these elements echo those proposed by Mor Barak (2000, 2011), Pelled et al. (1999), Bell et al. (2011), Nishii (in press), and Shore et al. (2011), providing empirical support for their theoretical propositions, as well as expanding on the categories proposed in

their models. As such, this research provides a more comprehensive approach to the elements that come into play when promoting inclusion in the workplace.

Finally, this research expands on the contexts where inclusion has been studied, providing an insight into how it might look in a significantly different environment. Peru is a developing country with high levels of inequality and discrimination, and Peruvian employees' ideas and opinions provide insight into how inclusion is lived and understood in such a context. As such it is important to note that some elements, such as equality or job conditions, might be particularly relevant in a context such as Peru.

Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations to the present study. The method of data collection allowed for the generation of propositions, but did not test theory directly. As such, the categories and elements identified and proposed are necessarily speculative, and are in need of further research and verification. Furthermore, the small sample does not allow for generalizations to be made, and thus some findings might be specific to this context. It is important to note that the research was conducted in Lima, Peru's capital, where work conditions are substantially different from those in other states, and this study thus cannot be considered to represent the "average" Peruvian worker. In addition, there were too few participants in each of the private, public and non-governmental organizational categories to make meaningful comparisons among the groups, although it can be expected that work conditions among them differ and this might have an impact on employees' views on inclusion.

Further research is undoubtedly needed to achieve a better understanding of what inclusion means, and how it can be attained in work organizations. Testing theory about the antecedents and outcomes of inclusion in both traditional and non-traditional contexts would yield valuable insights into this construct. While the use of a Peruvian sample in the present research helps to define inclusion in different environments, it is important that further research is done in order to better understand what might be the particularities of the Peruvian context, and what are the similarities that it shares with others. Furthermore, as Shore et al. (2011) advocate, the development of theory regarding mediating and moderating mechanisms is necessary in order to better understand how different elements lead to inclusion and how inclusion can produce different outcomes for organizations and for individual employees.

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Table 1: Themes

Global themes	Organizing themes	Basic themes	Illustrative quotes
Nature of inclusion	Equal treatment	Equality in organizational processes	"Starting with the issue of selection; I believe that everything starts there…with people having opportunities to enter the organization because of their competencies, and not for how they look." (Woman, 24)
		Equality and acceptance of diversity	"It means that everyone, independent of their origin, is included, and that there isn't discrimination based on issues such as education, race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, political orientation." (Man, 37)
	Belongingness	Belonging	"To…not be an outsider, but like being part of the family." (Man, 55)
		Integrating	"It's how you integrate yourself with the process and culture of the organization." (Man, 27)
	Uniqueness	Being valued	"That [your] being there is important." (Woman, 27)
		Acceptance	"Inclusion is to accept the variety of people that there are." (Woman, 53)
Creating inclusion	Participation	Voice (ability to speak)	"You feel excluded if you don't have the freedom to speak something." (Woman, 24)
		Being heard	"Maybe the opinion of a storekeeper is not as important as one from an engineer." (Man, 32)
		Ability to contribute	"I feel included because the responsibilities that we have matter, you feel that the things that you do matter because they lead somewhere." (Woman, 26)
		Access to decision making	"When you realize that regardless of your hierarchical rank, the institution starts to work with other decisions that you were never consulted on." (Man, 58)
		Empowerment	"Our decisions are always respected. I can sit and talk to the manager, telling him that in my agency certain issues do not apply, and he will listen to me. … [H]e empowers me and the others to take decisions in our own agencies." (Man, 28)

	Positive relationships	Perceived organizational support	"The fact that they come and ask you how are you, how is everything going here, it makes you feel a part of things." (Man, 32)
		Relationships with leaders	"I always had the trust to go, approach them, call them by their names and everything; but there are people that have been here twenty years and don't have the trust to just knock on the door, and talk. In that they feel very excluded." (Woman, 24)
		Social relationships	"That is what makes you feel included, the way others look at you, how they greet you, if they are open or not." (Woman, 25)
	Equality	Equal treatment	"When I was working in G4S they only called on the favourites for the organizational events. It is different here; in every meeting or event they call on everyone, without excluding anyone. That makes you feel a part of the team." (Man, 42)
		Prejudice and discrimination	"There are differences in issues of education, and instead of trying to bring people closer it is like a stigma, you are not part of my group and that is it." (Man, 49)
	Positive work conditions	Job security	"I think my last year there I was living with uncertainty, without any real stability, and the organization wouldn't tell us anything, and that makes you feel excluded." (Man, 31)
		Benefits	"Having all the benefits, being part of the organization; this means that when you arrive you have a contract, that you are part of the payroll, that you have social security and all the benefits by law. Because there are some organizations that hire you as an independent worker, and if something happens to you it is your problem." (Woman, 24)
		Payment	"Taking them into account means valuing them as vital elements of the organization; we are talking about payment, training, feeling that they can reach other levels." (Man, 58)
	Feeling valued	Valuing employees	"When the organization decided to bet on me and send me to a series of external courses…they invested in me. Then I felt I was part of a bigger plan." (Man, 31)
		Valuing ideas and opinions	"It makes you feel that your experience or opinions are valued…you feel that you are taken into account, so you feel constantly included." (Man, 28)

	Climate and culture	Organizational culture	"The culture [can't be] bothered by having…someone that brings new ways of thinking or new ways of being and behaving…it has to [be] able to adjust to changes and differences." (Man, 27)
		Being informed	"They can create a whole project and present it, but I don't even know what it is about… To know what are the projects, the programs, the activities, that is inclusion for me." (Woman, 53)
		Shared vision and goals	"You don't feel included if you don't know what is the vision of the organization, why you are doing what you are doing." (Woman, 32)