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A Stage Model of Developing an Inclusive Community

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A Stage Model of Developing an Inclusive Community

Billy E. Vaughn and Katarina Mlekov

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KNOW – Knowledge, Technology, Human Capital

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The ENGIME workshops address the complex relationships between economic growth, innovation and diversity, in the attempt to define the conditions (policy, institutional, regulatory) under which European diversities can promote innovation and economic growth.

This batch of papers has been presented at the first ENGIME workshop: *Mapping Diversity*.

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A Stage Model of Developing and Inclusive Community

The Community Inclusion model described in this paper characterizes the stages through which a diverse group of people living within the same community develops into an inclusive community. The model is described in terms of its usefulness in the assessment of a community's current stage of inclusion, and determining the interventions needed to address lack of inclusion. Examples from Sweden (EU) and the United States (USA) will be used to demonstrate how the model works. Particular focus will be on the relationship between stage of inclusion and collective community action for economic development.

Keywords: Inclusion, cultural psychology, monocultural, symbolic difference, critical mass

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A Stage Model of Developing an Inclusive Community

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Introduction

Global villages in different corners of the world offer examples of how to achieve a peaceful multicultural society. Unfortunately, we can think of examples of violence between ethnic groups that have been neighbors for many years more easily. Ideological conflict along religious and other ideological lines increase the need for international security along borders where people have recently moved more freely. The cumulative knowledge and skills among social scientists is needed to address such threats to the social fabric of our global community (Vaughn, 2002; Trickett, E. J., Watts, R. J., & Birman, D. 1994). Social scientist are being challenged to development of useful models for managing the human diversity resulting from increased global dependence, international migration and demographic shifts within countries. This paper offers some insights, from a cultural psychology perspective, into the dynamics of communities challenged with entering the global community. An Inclusive¹ Community is the result of citizens actively participating in activities that utilize the wide range of cultural perspectives, knowledge, and skills of different identity groups in the service of collective interests.

The model is based on the assumptions that

- (a) a community of people becomes inclusive by virtue of constructing a shared sense of purpose,
- (b) inclusion is the result of creating an intentional, goal-directed activity system that capitalizes on the rich cultural practices available among citizens, and

¹ Inclusion refers to the extent that the range of human differences among constituents are embraced in an organization or community.

- (c) a community goes through a set of developmental stages in achieving inclusion.

This paper focuses specifically on the democratic inclusion of Third Country people into inner city communities in western societies, such as the United States and Scandinavia. While this restriction requires stretching the ideas shared here to account for the experiences of immigrants to other parts of the world and in areas outside of metropolitan areas, the authors felt that it was important to simplify the emerging ideas presented here. The remainder of the paper will describe how the developmental model of Community Inclusion is used as a framework for understanding the conflicts certain communities experience with increased diversity, and the challenges communities face in reaching higher stages of inclusion. It will conclude with a description of the general, practical steps that EU countries may find useful in inner city strategic diversity and inclusion planning.

Recent demographic shifts characterize the growing cultural diversity within major metropolitan areas across the globe. Immigration to Western Europe from China, Vietnam, and Afghanistan, to Scandinavia from Africa, and to the United States from South America indicates that people continue to migrate primarily for economic and political reasons. Most immigrants bring human capital that often goes untapped due to host culture perceptions of economic competition and the pressures it places on newcomers to assimilate (Kuusela, K., 1993). A litany of stories exist about medical doctors and engineers from Third Countries struggling to work their way up from a janitorial job in a host country that has a shortage of the credentials the newcomers bring (Böhm, T. 1996).

The community ultimately bares the responsibility for incorporating the immigrant into social and work life. A sense of civic responsibility in the community in which one lives increases loyalty to the host country, and a willingness to assimilate. As a result, local communities are in the best position to assess and recognize the human capital that immigrants bring to the new country. A community will reap the rewards of diversity only to the extent that it possesses the capacity to harness the cultural differences in the interest of productivity. This paper provides an argument for the view that the inclusion of immigrants requires a community to achieve a level of consciousness.

A Stage Model of Community Inclusion

The inclusion model presented in this paper emerges from applied diversity work in the organizational development profession (Miller & Katz, 1995). The applied work focuses on developing organizational change initiatives that help business community leaders meet the demands of demographic changes among employees, and the pool of recruits. Organizational development professionals working in the diversity management area base their assumptions about inclusion on social science research that indirectly supports the view that diversity results in increased productivity. In reality, the promise of diversity is still being tested. Lack of research support for the promise of diversity is not surprising. Existing studies tend to operationalize the concept differently, which is known to lead to different outcomes. In addition, studies of the impact of diversity within organizations may require a longitudinal analysis organizational practices that are at an early stage of infancy. We may not fully appreciate the impact of diversity for years to come. These research challenges have not prevented many Fortune 500 companies to hire consultants, and in-house resource specialists, to develop and implement an inclusion initiative (Employment Review, 1999). The promise of diversity is accepted on the basis of a logical argument.

Diversity professionals and their client organizations base their diversity initiatives on the logical argument that human diversity offers a host of problem solving perspectives that can lead to competitive products. The assumption, for example, is that a group of Swedish and immigrant engineers will be more creative in developing new technologies for Ericsson than working in separate groups. Immigrants are assumed to bring points of views based on their own cultural histories that augment that of their Swedish colleagues. Using ethnic group experts have led to increased profits for American companies. Latino American and African American advertising executives are changing the content of traditional marketing practices as they cleverly attract members of their own ethnic groups to products.

A major American clothing store recently discovered the negative consequences of not considering advantages of diversity in decision-making after marketing a new line of clothing decorated with Chinese caricatures. The Asian American community found

the images stereotypic and demeaning. The company had to pull the items from store shelves in order to prevent a boycott, instead of reaping financial rewards from an anticipated marketing success. The company clearly did not use Asian American advertising experts in making marketing decisions. Diverse communities have a rich resource for making everyone's life better if inclusion is achieved. This includes healthcare, economic, and social decisions that positively affect the entire community. Diversity as an increased pool of human capital is assumed in this paper as well.

Below we offer a list of other benefits of promoting community inclusion, which include:

- Development of a cooperative marketplace to serve community
- Shared common interest goals
- Decrease in the presence of illegal workers
- Increase in civic participation by all citizens
- Development of an achieved definition of the community
- Inclusive community problem solving

These benefits are predicted based on the set of assumptions outlined below. Let it suffice here to state that a major obstacle to inclusion is lack of attention to benefits. The remainder of this paper will outline the developmental stages through which a community moves from an exclusive culture to an inclusive one. First, each stage will be described. This will be followed by a discussion of the interventions needed at each stage to develop it further.

From a Monocultural to an Inclusive Community

The model of community development offered here characterizes the progress of a multicultural group of people living in close proximity who intentionally move from exclusive to inclusive community. In this way, our approach highlights the benefits of inclusion, along with the challenges of obtaining it. Other models of intercultural contact focus on challenges, such as discrimination, prejudice, adjustment, and competition, with most remedies focusing on changing individuals or policy-making. Our approach focuses on the rewards of achieving community by encouraging community members to

take advantage of the diversity among them. The result is that inclusion is put directly into the hands of the stakeholders.

The stages of Community Inclusion are (a) Monocultural Community, (b) Symbolic Difference Community, (c) Critical Mass Management Community, (d) Community of Acceptance, and (e) Inclusive Community. The Community Inclusion model is described below, and events in the United States & Sweden are used as examples. In addition, the examples often describe nationwide events, rather than those taking place in communities. This is done because too few community-wide examples to make the point exist at present. It is our hope that our line of thinking will stimulate more community level responsibility for inclusion. American inner city communities are, on the average, assessed to be in the Critical Mass stage, while Sweden's metropolitan areas are considered to be between the Critical Mass Management and Community of Acceptance stages. In reality, each community has features of each stage, as the discussion below demonstrates.

The majority of people in a **Monocultural Community** are multigenerational citizens who value the traditional norms of the society their ancestors "built." White Americans are a majority in number in the United States, and their prominent social status is the result of holding a considerable amount of political, economic, and social power relative to other groups. Hoarding of resources by the majority group is commonplace, and policies are put into place that their rights to do so. New immigrants and ethnic minorities quickly learn that upward mobility within the society is directly tied to negotiating with white American culture and power in the marketplace. White Americans expect immigrants and minorities to assimilate should the latter expect to gain access to the rewards of their society.

Minorities live segregated from the majority group, and recent immigrants often in poor neighborhoods. Politically, economically, and socially they remain at a distance from normal engagement in citizenship that the majority group members take for granted. Note that citizenship refers here to *citizenship of attribution*, rather than formal paperwork (Wihtol de Wenden, 2000). Who is American? What does it mean to be one hundred percent Swede? These questions reflect a citizenship of attribution. People who are different from the majority group in outward appearance and cultural practices

experience more difficulty in being perceived as belonging, and actualizing their potential. Even those who value their community's traditional norms enough to assimilate them often experience marginalization due to being perceived as outsiders. In this stage, majority group members often control the local small and large businesses, and hoards these economic interests from "foreign" competition.

A community embraces people who are different in the **Symbolic Difference Community** stage. As society matures, democratic treatment of minorities increases with protectionist legislation. Minorities are able to gain access to work, education, and better living space as a result. Social norms, primarily dictated by government policy and societal pressures, force the majority to treat minorities respectfully in the public (e.g., shopping centers) and semi-public (e.g., the workplace) spaces. However, majority group members resist doing more than accepting differences in appearance. They continue to value their traditional norms and expect new members to assimilate. In Sweden, for example, learning Swedish and participating in the country's traditions determine the extent of access to work. The exclusionary practices are not a matter of policy, but long-standing cultural practices. Put simply, minorities and immigrants are expected to assimilate the values and cultural practices of the majority group. Otherwise they are marginalized in the society. The exception would be the international business sojourners, also referred to as the Marriott Brigades (Romaniszyn, 2002)." Majority group members begin to develop clever ways to practicing exclusion under protectionism. Anti-Affirmative Action and anti-bilingual education legislation succeed in the United States to the extent that voters resonate to language about meritocracy and language deficiency, especially during times of economic downturn.

A **Critical Mass Community** stage exists when the number of cultural minorities in inner city communities reaches anywhere from 15 to 25% of the community's total population. This growth is evidence of a transition, which includes recognizable differences in points of view among community members on major social and political issues. Minorities are more vocal about their needs as a result of increased numbers and sociopolitical rights in the country. Majority group resistance to inclusion of new ideas remains, especially as the presence of a sizeable number of culturally different minorities becomes more noticeable. An immigrant working in an automobile service

station in Sweden recently sued his Swedish boss for paying him less than Swedish workers, and firing him after he complained about it. An investigation of the complaint by the established Swedish government department resulted in favor of the immigrant worker. However, the department does not have the authority to make the business pay, so it refused to do so. Natives, or majority group members, resist government efforts to regulate cultural diversity when they do not understand the immediate payoffs for themselves. Minority community activists in American inner cities who represent minority group interests have increasingly threatened to boycott buying products from local businesses that treat them unfairly. These nonviolent approaches to demanding fair treatment have been quite successful in the United States. The community in this stage will undergo similar cultural group tension unless serious local and societal efforts to overcome the remaining barriers continue.

Community members are perceived as belonging to distinct, yet connected, identity groups in the **Community of Acceptance** stage. The community accepts the presence of immigrants and minorities, realizing that earlier exclusionary efforts threatens community stability. In addition, cultural differences are perceived as adding value to the once monocultural community. The community's focus is no longer on struggling with tensions between assimilation and accommodation. It now experiences the economic and social payoffs of promoting and managing diversity. A community's civil servants, such as police, fire department, and politicians, reflect its diversity. Majority group members still maintain most of the power, however an honest effort to represent the community is undertaken. The city of San Francisco in California is a good example of an inclusive city, along with Oakland, which is a neighboring city across the bay. The city's political views are as inclusive as the everyday lives of community members. Interracial marriage is common, and interracial political and community coalitions. The community rewards members who model diversity and inclusion, and welcomes increased diversity.

The **Inclusive Community** actively includes and utilizes the wide range of skills and perspectives of its distinct identity groups. This is a very rare community indeed. We were not able to find examples either in Sweden or the United States. A noteworthy example surprisingly comes out of the Middle East. An intentional community located

outside of Tel Aviv is home to about 300 people made up of Jewish and Arab families. They developed the community to model peaceful co-existence between the two groups. The community works toward equal representation in all forms in governance and social structure. Conflicts between Israelis and Arabs in the larger context of their society strengthens the community's cohesiveness by placing particular focus on the importance of their work. An inclusive community is geared for, and always committed to, constant changes brought about by demographic shifts, improvement associated with increasing diversity, and the reality of diversity in modern life. Members systematically engage in efforts to harness diversity in the collective interests of the community. The technology needed to facilitate problem solving, and developing an inclusive governance structure requires expertise that the community may not have. Local government needs to lend the financial support and expertise to help these communities actualize their potential.

The stages of inclusion briefly depict a continuum along which communities become more inclusive. Our assumption is not one of a simple linear progression from one stage to another. Communities are dynamic in many ways, and certainly diversity plays an important role. A community may behave more like it is in a Monocultural stage by passing anti-immigrant laws, but have all the other characteristics of a Critical Mass stage. A well-to-do community on an island outside of progressive Stockholm refused to welcome a group of immigrants designated to their area of the city. Otherwise liberal-minded citizens showed their prejudice when social responsibility for including refugees was placed in their backyards. At least one southern U. S. state allows interracial marriage, even though it has a longstanding law against such marriages. Communities struggle along the path towards inclusion. Sometimes the path is more like a spiral, and other times it fits the linear pattern. More important is the actions community members need to take in order to move its community from one stage to another.

Interventions for Achieving Higher Stages of Community Inclusion

The diversity and inclusion model presented here is only as good as it's practical implications. Generalizing further from the business organization perspective, each stage of development towards inclusion has a corresponding set of interventions to

move the community along. A Monocultural Community stage group of citizens need incentives to collaborate on common interest goals.

A good example comes from Studs Terkel's (1992) individual interviews with Americans who honestly discussed the topic of race. An African American civil rights activist, Ann Atwater, and her nemesis, a Ku Klux Klan leader named Pete Ellis, agreed to work on a city government-sponsored civil rights project. Pete had been encouraged by his fellow Klansmen because they saw it as an opportunity to get free money from the government. Ann took on the challenge, in spite of Pete's involvement, because she believed in the work involved in the project. Overtime, the two of them began to understand how feuds between poor white black communities served the interests of those in economic and political power. The result is that although Pete and Ann entered their partnership to serve counter purposes, forced collaboration helped them understand what they had in common. Pete left the Ku Klux Klan afterwards, and began to teach his children about inclusion. Ann recognized that her understanding of white Americans was based on stereotypes that were too simple to explain the dynamics of their relationship with her people.

Another example involves the collaboration among different groups in a multiethnic community in San Diego. A charitable foundation donated millions of dollars to develop an enterprise zone in this economically depressed community. A needs analysis indicated that community members wanted access to good supermarkets and other community services that are prominent middle class neighborhoods. The foundation was clever enough to involve as many people in the process of economically revitalizing the community as possible. Cross-cultural teams made up of paid and volunteer community members were developed to tackle different aspects of the project. The goal was to build a shopping center and cultural area to serve the community, which would also provide a source of revenue to fund future community projects. Historical tensions among the African American, Filipino Americans, Laotian, and Latino Americans living in the community challenged the work initially, but everyone began to realize that the project was too important for the community at large to allow differences among them to get in the way. Using incentives to get different groups together can be helpful.

Symbolic Difference Community stage community members need to learn about the contributions of the various minority group members in historical context. A promising change in consciousness among many white Americans is that (a) many Asian Americans can outperform them on achievement tests, and (b) the historical roots of many disciplines, such as mathematics, came out of Africa. Community members in this stage need as many facts about the gifts other groups possess as possible. In fact, same ethnic group facilitators will be most effective. White males will work with their group, while an African American will be assigned to her own group. Same group facilitators decrease politically correct behavior. It is also important to get different groups to spend some playful time together, rather than working on a task each time they talk.

The goal is to offer the Symbolic Difference Community new ways of thinking about people who are different. Sweden's historical efforts to integrate refugees into the social fabric of society by placing them communities located in different areas of the country, instead of forcing them to segregate in inner cities, is an example of a promising way to expose natives to newcomers. One potential outcome of such policies is that people will receive exposure to immigrants that help them view them as similar, rather than different. From a distance, it is easy to view people who are different categorically. The goal is to help them to view them continuously, that is, as being similar in many ways, but different in shallow, unimportant ways.

The Critical Mass Management Community requires expert knowledge and skills to facilitate dialog and discussions about how to harness differences in the service of the community. Honest discussions about differences will need to be presented with respect to the challenges they pose for finding common purpose, rather than as distasteful group characteristics that must be changed as a condition of engagement. Many westerners, for example, find the wearing of a veil by Islamic women offensive. Native people may make negative comments to them in the marketplace, or refuse to hire them based on their cultural attire. Empathy for differences is the primary objective during this stage. This involves empathic listening and understanding on the part of all parties, should the community desire to move forwards. Empathy for people who are

different, especially differences in their worldviews, is difficult. Expert facilitation is needed to help community members relate to each other empathically.

Members of a Community of Acceptance must continue working on their empathy for members who are different. The primary goal of majority group members is to avoid patronizing those who are new to the country and lack access to full participation in society. Too often the majority group members wish to do things for minorities in an effort to show inclusion. True inclusion involves allowing community members to actualize their own potential as they see fit. This often requires being available to them, rather than prescriptive. Immigrants and refugees will have to trust that community members are well-intentioned, and are acting in their best interest as much as possible.

The majority group member who helps the immigrant access social services and shop without empathizing with their need to eventually do these things on their own is well intentioned, but harmful to the person they try to help. Immigrants and minorities must not reject their assistance, but assert their needs to become competent at negotiating their own lives. Offering immigrants voting rights, such as that which is done in Sweden, is a good example of inclusion that many other countries can model.

An Inclusive Community is the result of immigrants, refugees, and natives re-creating their community to develop a Third Culture. This Third Culture is based on the cumulative strengths of the combined cultural practices across all groups living in the community. In other words, the majority group and minority groups empathetically learn about each other and consider the ways in which differences can achieve a more cohesive mosaic in governing the lives of community members. A similar culture resulted from the Israeli-Arab community existing outside of Tel Aviv. The promise of a Third Culture is that each group perceives the result as an achievement that includes their perspective. A unique set of cultural practices, based on the Third Culture vision, regulate the community members' lives in their collective work together. This requires each group to take on the cultural practices from other groups that have been integrated into the new culture.

A common goal is essential. Sometimes the vision of the Third Culture will be on economic development, others may focus on cultural development. The result is that

each community will likely result in a unique Third Culture based on local circumstances, and joint needs. A common interest vision is essential. Working towards a goal that ethnic groups value collectively sustains commitment, and increases the likelihood of success. Once inclusion is achieved, the community needs to maintain the culture and strengthen it with new ideas in order to prevent stagnation or spiraling effects.

Moving from one stage to the next is a matter of consciously working on activities that effectively mature the community. The process is a matter of starting with a focus on the advantages of becoming more inclusive in order to increase local buy-in. An Inclusive Community is the result of empathically learning about differences and discovering ways to harness them in the collaborative interests of the community as a whole. Achieving a Third Culture is the culmination of ideas across members of a diverse community to serve collective interests.

Conclusion

An Inclusive Community enjoys the benefits of diversity. Economic stability is nearly always essential for culturally diverse communities. Developing collaborative economic goals as a community, based on a shared set of common interests, is effective only to the extent that differences in problem solving are appreciated. Communities can decrease the presence of illegal workers by embracing the needs of the local economy, which attracts illegal guest workers, instead of blaming the victims. The result is a decrease in the designation of illegal workers, and community commitment to better tracking of migration into the community and society. Inclusion also leads to an increase in civic participation by all citizens. People will participate in the voting process and learning civic responsibility to the extent that they see doing so as in their interest. Creating a Third Culture leads to the development of an achieved definition of community, rather than that which is ascribed by the media or stereotypes. In this way, community owns their collective reality through intentional and sustainable activities. Lastly, an Inclusive Community offers the promise of more effective problem solving of solutions to the community's collective lives. These benefits make it

imperative to consider how promoting inclusion in inner city communities around the globe can lead to healthier lives with less human conflict.

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