Diversity, Inclusion, and Commitment in Organizations:
International Empirical Explorations

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ABSTRACT

Research on social demography in the workplace indicates that people from diverse groups commonly find themselves excluded from networks of information and opportunity. In today's global economy, diversity needs to be examined from an intra-national as well as international perspective. Utilizing social identity and intergroup theories and focusing on the inclusion-exclusion construct, this article formulates a conceptual model of the relationship between diversity, inclusion and commitment and tests it in two samples drawn from high-tech companies in the U.S. and in Israel. The results support the applicability of the model across the two cultures, but the role of diversity in the model proves to be more limited than hypothesized. The results suggest that, while the context of diversity and its specific categories differ across cultures, there are similarities in the associated experience of exclusion.

Worldwide, diversity issues impact the workplace. Women, older adults, and members of ethnic and racial minority groups are often excluded from important information networks and from the organization's decision making process (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormly, 1990; Ibarra, 1993; Kanter, 1977). Group membership may be defined within gender, ethnicity, language, social class, religion, etc. wherein each culture determines the context of social exchange and reward allocation (Lind & Earley, 1992; Hofstede, 1997). As a result of immigration as well as internal gender and cultural differences, countries throughout the world are struggling with intergroup relations, prejudice, discrimination, and even violence in the workplace (Pettigrew, 1998; Stephan, Ybarra, & Martinez, 1998). Across nations and cultures, these group divisions contribute to exclusion of women and minorities from positions of power in the workplace.

The premise of this article is that, while the context of diversity and its specific categories may differ from one nation or culture, the actual experiences associated with belonging to a diverse group, as well as its consequences, may be similar. More specifically, we focus on the connection between diversity, workers' perception of inclusion in information networks and decision making processes, and their sense of organizational commitment. We provide the theoretical underpinnings for the inclusion-exclusion concept and use social identity and

intergroup relations theories (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Alderfer and Smith, 1982) as well as research on organizational demography (Ely, 1995; Konrad and Gutek; 1987, Zinner; 1988) to develop the research hypotheses. We explore the applicability of our conceptual framework to samples drawn from two organizations, one in California and the other in Israel, representing two different cultures. We conclude with an overall model of the relationship between diversity, inclusion, perception of fairness, stress, social support and organizational commitment that is tested across the two samples.

Theory and Hypotheses: Diversity and Perception of Inclusion-Exclusion

Theory and research on social demography in the work place indicate that demographic characteristics of organizations, such as race and gender distributions and group composition, help shape the meaning people attach to their identity group memberships at work (Wharton, 1992, Ely, 1994). According to intergroup theory, the way we perceive our social reality is determined to a great degree by our group memberships, our race, gender, or ethnic affiliations (Alderfer, 1986). Each member of the organization represents one or more of these groups when dealing with other people in the organization (Alderfer and Smith, 1982). Social identity theory indicates that the connection between individual identity and social structures in the organization is shaped by the meanings that people associate with their membership in their various identity groups (Tajfel, 1982) and their interactions with others, either from their own identity group or from others, are in turn shaped by these group affiliations (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). People from diverse groups commonly find themselves excluded from networks of information and opportunity (Cox, 1994, Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). These networks allocate a variety of instrumental resources that are critical for job effectiveness and career advancement as well as expressive benefits such as social support and friendship (Ibarra, 1993).

Milliken and Martins (1996) identify the following commonly used categories: observable, or readily detectable attributes, and less visible, or underlying attributes. The first category of observable attributes includes characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender and age. The second category of less visible attributes includes characteristics such as education, tenure and status in the organization, and socioeconomic background. This distinction has important practical implications. Observable characteristics more easily evoke bias, prejudice and discrimination. It is easier to single out and exclude that person from activities within the work group or the organization.

Diversity groupings vary from one culture or country to the next. For example, immigrants from Eastern Europe and Northern Africa settling in Western Europe in recent decades were viewed as not "belonging" and have had difficulty obtaining citizenship. Both direct and indirect discrimination against new minorities is reportedly pervasive (Pettigrew, 1998). In the U.S., the demographic changes in the population coupled with civil rights legislation and affirmative action programs have created unprecedented diversity in the American workforce. During the last three decades the United States experienced the highest rates of immigration since the Great Depression with almost 80% of these immigrants coming from Asia and Latin America (Judy and D'Amico, 1997). Like the U.S., the population in Israel is not uniform. Immigrants include a variety of races and cultures with different languages and customs. Among the recent immigration waves, most prominent are the ones from Ethiopia and

from the former Soviet Union (Encyclopedia Brittanica, 1999) with significant numbers of women and older adults (Ponizovsky, Ginath, & Durst, 1998).

Our first hypothesis is that, while the definitions and categories of diverse groups vary from one culture to the other, the experience of inclusion/exclusion is similar. Therefore, we can expect varying degrees of inclusion experiences depending on a person's visible and invisible diversity characteristics within the context of the diversity typology that is specific to his or her national culture.

Hypothesis 1: Visible and invisible diversity characteristics are correlates of perception of inclusion-exclusion in work organizations and their relationships are similar across the two cultures. More specifically:

Visible diversity

1a. Men experience inclusion more than women in the organization.

1b. Members of the "majority" group (e.g., Caucasians in the California organization, Israeli born in the Israeli sample) experience more inclusion than members of racial/ethnic minority groups.

1c. Older employees experience inclusion more than younger employees.

Invisible diversity

1d. Employees with higher education feel more included than those with lower education.

1e. Exempt employees feel more included than non-exempt employees (categories relevant to California only).

1f. Employees in the technical category feel more included than those in the non-technical category (relevant to Israel only).

The inclusion-exclusion experience: Theoretical perspectives

Within the organizational context, we conceptualize inclusion-exclusion as a continuum of the degree to which individuals feel a part of critical organizational processes such as access to information, connectedness to co-workers, and ability to participate in and influence the decision making process (Mor Barak and Cherin, 1998). The importance of the inclusion-exclusion experience has its historical roots in basic human needs. Since people have always depended on one another for their livelihood and needed to work together in order to get food, shelter and clothing, social inclusion has had an important survival function (Baumeister and Leary, 1995).

Festinger's social comparison theory (Festinger, 1957; Mullen and Goethals 1987) and Mead's symbolic interaction theory (Collins, 1988; Mead, 1982), provide insights into the role of inclusion-exclusion experiences of individuals in social systems. The social comparison process postulates that individuals have the need to evaluate themselves and to assess their standing within groups (Mullen and Goethals 1987). The symbolic interaction process highlights the fact that individual interpretation and synthesis of symbols and objects in their environments drive both situational analysis and individual behavior (Collins, 1988). Together these social psychological theories provide us with the concept of the interior monologue; the internal evaluation process that individuals continuously engage in with regard to their social

environment. Perceptions of inclusion or exclusion, therefore, are a form of an on-going personal evaluation. These evaluations are the chief methodology that individuals utilize to assess their position within groups and organizations, and are assumed to be universal, not culture specific.

We hypothesize, therefore, that while the definitions of groupings under the diversity category may vary across cultures, the factor structure of the inclusion-exclusion construct would be similar, as indicated in Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2: The factor structure of the inclusion-exclusion variable transcends cultural differences. It is hypothesized that both populations will yield similar factors of this variable.

Towards a model of Diversity, Inclusion, and Organizational Commitment

While the focus of this article is on the relationship between diversity, inclusion and organizational commitment, its aim is to formulate and test a more general model that includes several control variables. Previous research suggests important linkages between perception of fairness, stress, and social support to our main research variables. Equity theory proposes that "fairness" relates to an equality between one's contributions to outcome and the input-outcome ratio of others in similar positions (Greenberg, 1982; Leung et al., 1996). Studies examining the relationship between fairness and organizational commitment found that procedural and distributive justice perceptions are positively associated with organizational commitment (Hendrix, Robbins, Miller, & Summers, 1998; Reiley & Singer, 1996). Job stress in the workplace may be a result of a variety of factors including differences in beliefs and values, a lack of clarity in decision-making, differences in opportunity for advancement, unfair practices, and exclusion from organizational networks and the decision making process that result in unfair practices such as blocking one's promotion opportunities. Job stress has been found to be negatively and significantly related to organizational commitment (Tao, Takagi, Ishida, & Masuda, 1998; Flynn & Tannenbaum, 1993). Research on social support has provided evidence of its effect as a buffering agent against stress thereby reducing potentially deleterious psychological impacts (Koeske & Koeske, 1993; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Social support of supervisors, co-workers, and family have all been found to be important predictors of organizational commitment (Morris, Shinn, & DuMont, 1999; Schaubroeck & Fink, 1998).

Due to cultural differences between the two countries under study, as they are experienced within the organizational cultures, we anticipate significant differences between the Israel sample and the California sample with respect to all the analytic variables – inclusion/exclusion, fairness, stress, social support and organizational commitment. On the individualist-collectivist continuum that distinguishes one culture for the other (Hofstede, 1980), the Israeli culture is more collectivist while the US culture is more individualist. Within Hofstede's classification system, the U.S. has a significantly larger power distance score (40) and individualism score (90) compared to Israel's power distance (13) and individualism (54) indicating a much greater independence in U.S. culture and a greater interdependence in Israeli culture (Hofstede. 1997). In collectivist cultures, what constitutes "in-group" is somewhat flexible, including family, co-workers, co-religionists, and organizations (Triandis, 1989). Collectivism has been linked to high context style communication wherein interactions include primary consideration of development and maintenance of harmony (Hofstede, 1997; Gudykunst, et al., 1996), emphasis on group goals, and self-worth based on group membership (Guzley, Zraki, & Chalmers, 1998). In contrast, individualistic cultures focus on self-identity,

emphasize independence, individual rights and goals, and may be characterized by low-context style communication (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988) and conflict is seen as a normal part of interaction.

It is posited that Israel's collectivistic-based culture will contribute to an increased sense of inclusion, fairness, and organizational commitment and a decreased sense of job stress among the organization's employees compared to its U.S. counterpart.

Hypothesis 3: Employees in the Californian organization will differ from employees in the Israeli organization with respect to the analytic variables. Specifically, we anticipate significant differences between the two populations regarding inclusion-exclusion, perception of fairness, job stress, social support and organizational commitment.

We now turn to the formulation of an overall model of diversity, inclusion-exclusion, fairness, stress, social support and organizational commitment. Social identity theory provides the connection between social structures and individual identity through the meanings people attach to their membership in identity groups such as racial, ethnic or gender groups (Tajfel, 1982). These meanings, in turn, shape the way individuals interact with others from their own identity group or from other groups (Tajfel, 1978, 1982; Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987). As intergroup theory has demonstrated, the way we perceive our social reality is largely determined by our group memberships such as gender and racial/ethnic affiliation (Alderfer, 1986). It follows that individual perceptions of organizational policies and actions and their sense of attachment and commitment to the organization would be affected by our identity groups.

A range of intergroup experiments have studied social categorization and social comparison in relation to intergroup behavior. Tajfel and associates (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel, Flament, Billig, & Bundy, 1971) demonstrated that individuals confronted with choosing between in-group member(s) and out-group member(s) will favor the in-group at the expense of the out-group. These findings are supported by extensions of Tajfel's work (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Billig, 1973; Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Turner, 1975, 1987). In culturally diverse work settings, in-group and out-group members may bring conflicting values to the workplace (Bochner & Hesketh (1994). The social identity theory literature emphasizes the importance of distinctiveness, prestige, and salience of out-groups as contributing to the separation of groups (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

Employees with characteristics different from those of the mainstream are likely to experience a sense of exclusion due to lack of participation in decision-making and involvement in the workplace that contributes to job stress. Further compounding stress due to exclusion, perception of unfair organizational practices may contribute to increased job stress. Based on reduced workplace social support networks, minority groups are less able to access supportive resources needed to buffer job-related stress and, hence, are more likely to experience a lessened sense of organizational commitment. Explorations of communication patterns indicate that exclusionary processes and in-group preferences may lead to reduced availability of social support within the organization (Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 1998; Suzuki, 1998).

Employees who belong to groups that are not part of the organizational "mainstream" often face the issue of whether their attempts to achieve inclusion are successful. If they perceive that there is a large discrepancy between their desired image and their current image in the

organization, they may cease to be motivated employees who are committed to the organization (Allison and Herlocker 1994). We therefore expect a strong interconnection between diversity, inclusion, fairness, stress, social support, and commitment to the organization. Our main proposition is that, regardless of cultural and national differences, this model will be able to account for a significant proportion of the variance in the outcome variable of commitment in both populations under study. We expect this model to transcend cultural and national differences and be relevant within the diversity definitions that are specific in each culture.

Hypotheses 4: Diversity characteristics, perception of inclusion-exclusion, perception of fairness, stress and social support are correlates of organizational commitment. These relationships are similar across the two cultures.

Method and Procedures

To test the conceptual framework and its derived hypotheses, two samples were drawn, one from a high-tech company in southern California, and the other from a high-tech company in the central urban area in Israel. Both companies face the challenge of surviving in today's highly competitive high tech field and both are successful in their respective products. The Israeli company, like most of Israel's high tech industry, is relatively young, while the Californian company is a well-established one. The management team in the California company was particularly interested in understanding the diversity characteristics of its employees and the organizational attributes that are relevant to generating more inclusive workplace policies. The Israeli management team was interested in understanding its employees' perception of fairness of the company's policies and their level of commitment to the organization. We worked with advisory groups in each of the companies (chronologically, first the California one and then the one in Israel), and jointly developed questionnaires that were similar enough to allow comparison, but at the same time unique enough to focus on the issues of concern to each organization. The questionnaire was first written in English and then translated to Hebrew using the Brislin (1980) back translation technique.

Sample

The California company was larger than the Israeli company (about sixty five hundred employees compared to two hundred and fifty, respectively). To generate samples that were more equivalent in size, a random sample was drawn from the California company, while in the Israeli company questionnaires were sent to all two hundred and fifty employees. The resulting samples of 350 participants in the California study and 114 in the Israeli study constitute response rates of 52% and 46% respectively (the latter somewhat below the acceptable rate of fifty percent).

Utilizing the companies' human resources databases, the samples' ethnic and gender compositions were compared to the overall distributions in each company. The results indicate that both samples closely resembled the employee populations with all differences within +/- 5% and not statistically significant). The two samples had similar gender and ethnic majority/minority proportions: males constitute about two thirds of employees in both organizations and, similarly, the ethnic majority group (Caucasians in the California sample, Israeli born in the Israeli sample) constitutes about two thirds of each sample (69.5% and 67% respectively). Employees in Israel tend to be younger than those in the California sample. The

76

median age category for the California sample was 36-45, and for the Israel sample 26-35. Both groups were highly educated with more than half holding academic degrees (63.8% in the California sample and 55.2% in the Israel sample).

Measures

Diversity characteristics

Visible diversity variables include the following: **Gender** - pre-coded as 1-male and 0-female. **Race/ethnicity** - categories for this variable were similar to those used by each organization for its internal surveys. For the California sample, the categories included: Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic/Latino (a), Native American, Asian-American, and Other. For the Israel sample, the categories were based on Country of Origin and included: Israel, Asia/Africa, Europe/North America, and the Former USSR. **Age -** included 6 categories: Less than 25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, and over 65. Invisible diversity variables included: **Education** - measured by the highest degree achieved: High School or Less, Associates, Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate. **Job categories -** for the California sample included the following: Exempt engineering and scientific, exempt administrative, exempt technical support, nonexempt technical, shop and service, and non-exempt administrative. The job categories for the Israel sample differed from those utilized in the California company, using the following: Technical, marketing and sales, finance and administration, and operations.

The inclusion-exclusion scale

Developed to measure the degree to which individuals feel a part of critical organizational processes, the Inclusion-exclusion scale taps into issues such as access to information, connectedness to co-workers, work group engagement, and participation in and influencing the decision making process (Mor Barak and Cherin, 1998). Initial validity tests demonstrated adequate convergent and discriminant validity. The scale is comprised of 10 items that are summed to create a composite inclusion-exclusion score with two reverse-scored questions to prevent response sets in answering the questions. Higher scores on the scale reflect a higher sense of inclusion in important organizational processes. The data obtained for the current study indicate high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha for the California sample at .90**,** and for the Israel sample at .81. **Perception of fairness** - was measured with widely used scales of organizational justice assessing employee's levels of procedural, distributive and interactional justice (Sweeney and McFarlin, 1993; Price and Mueller, 1986). Questions on the overall perception of fairness scale asked participants to indicate whether they are fairly compensated for their work, whether the procedures used to determine compensation are fair, and whether they are treated fairly by their supervisor. The overall scale had a reliability score of .94 for the California study and .93 for the Israel study, indicating high internal consistency. **Social support -** was measured with the scale developed by Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison and Pinneau (1975) and was used to assess the extent to which people around the employee provided support as good listeners or as reliable help providers when needed. The scale includes eleven items pertaining to trust, accessibility and supportiveness between the respondent and the supervisor, coworkers and friends and relatives. The overall alpha coefficient for the social support composite scale was .81 for the California study and .79 for the Israeli study. **Stress –**

was measured utilizing the Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970) scale to determine the employees' perceived levels of role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload. The various types of stress were measured with the three highest loading items on the respective factors. The alpha coefficient for the California sample was .79 and the alpha coefficient for the Israel sample was .76. Finally, **Organizational commitment** was measured utilizing Allen and Meyer's (1990) Affective Commitment Scale assessing employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization. The eight item scale was scored on a six point Likert scale, with three items revers-scored items to prevent response patterns. The Cronbach's alpha for the California sample was .85, and for the Israel sample .81, indicating better than adequate internal consistency in both samples.

For all of the above described scales, an overall score was computed by adding up the scores on each item, and then dividing this score by the number of items comprising the scale. This brings the results back to a 6-point scale (1= strongly agree, 6= Strongly disagree), that can be interpreted more intuitively.

Statistical Methods

The Student's t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) followed by Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) test were used to compare visible and invisible diversity characteristics on the overall inclusion-exclusion scale. Three-way ANOVA's of gender, race/ethnicity, and age, and of management, exempt status, and education with and without interaction, were also performed. Factor analysis was used to identify the underlying factors of the inclusion-exclusion construct for both the Israeli and the Californian samples. First, the Barlett's Test of Sphericity was used to show that the correlation matrix of the 10 item questionnaire was not the identity matrix (Norusis, 1993). Second, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olim (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, and thus appropriateness of the factor analysis method, was applied (Kaiser, 1970). Varimax rotation was used in the factor analysis (Byrne, 1989). Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the internal consistency of the remaining variables. Factor scores for each factor were then calculated for each subject. Multiple regression analyses were used to test the study's overall model with commitment as the outcome variable and diversity, inclusion, fairness, stress and social support as it correlates. The model was tested for both samples.

Results: Diversity and Inclusion

In order to test Hypothesis 1, a number of t-tests and one way ANOVA's were conducted, examining the relationship between diversity characteristics (first visible, then invisible) and perception of inclusion-exclusion in each organization. With respect to the visible diversity characteristics (Hypotheses 1a-1c), t-test results revealed significant difference in level of inclusion between men (M = 4.36) and women (M = 3.99), (t = 3.39, p<.001) in the California sample. Similarly, in the Israel sample men reported a higher sense of inclusion than women (M=5.14 compared to M=4.64, respectively; t= 2.44, p<.01). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) testing the differences between the ethnic groups in the California sample revealed that Caucasians felt more included (M=4.32) than non-Caucasians (M=4.13) with t-test results approaching significance (t= 1.78 p<.07). However, no significant differences were found

between ethnic groups in the Israel sample. Given the age distribution in each company, the age variable was dichotomized differently, utilizing the respective median in each sample, to reflect the organizational environment unique to each company. We used 45 as the cut-off point for the California sample and 35 for the Israel sample. The results of the t-test analyses for both samples were statistically significant. In the California sample, older employees reported feeling more included (M=4.36) than younger employees (M=4.15) (t=2.03, p<.05) and similarly, in the Israel sample older employees reported higher levels of inclusion (M=5.29) compared to younger employees (M=4.87) (t=2.49, p<.01).

With respect to invisible diversity (hypotheses 1d-1f), Education was significantly related to inclusion in the California sample, but not in the Israel sample. For California employees, those who held college degrees (AA, BA, MA, Ph.D.) felt more included (M=4.35) than those who had no college degrees (M=3.88) (t=3.83, p<.001). Regarding job categories, in the California sample, exempt employees felt more included than non-exempt employees (M= 4.39 compared to M=3.80 respectively, with t=4.64 p<.001). The parallel job categories in the Israel sample, technical and non-technical, showed no significant differences regarding inclusion-exclusion.

The Inclusion-Exclusion Experience

To test hypothesis 2, that the experience of inclusion or exclusion would be resilient to cultural differences and that both populations would yield similar factors on this variable, we performed factor analysis on the 10 items of the diversity scale for each sample (Byrne, 1989, p.4). Two measures were used to test the fit between the data and the factor analysis to be performed. The first measure, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, examines the hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix (i.e., all diagonal terms are 1 and all off-diagonal terms are 0). The obtained value of the test statistic for sphericity in this data was large and the associated significance level was small for both the California and the Israel data (BTS=1342.30; p<.001, and BTS=406.72, p<.001, respectively). These results allow us to reject the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, and to conclude that factor analysis is an appropriate statistical method for this data (Norusis, 1993). The second measure, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olim (KMO) examines sampling adequacy by comparing the sum of the squared correlation coefficients and the squared partial correlation coefficients. The obtained statistic was .87 for the California study and .78 for the Israel study, indicating a good fit of the factor analytic method to the data (Kaiser, 1970). Both tests, therefore, indicate that factor analysis is an appropriate statistical method to be used for both data sets.

We used Principal Components analysis with Varimax rotation. After inspecting the scree plot, it appeared that two distinct factors emerged for both samples accounting for 65% of the variance in the Californian sample, and 67% of the variance in the Israeli sample. The Cronbach's Alpha for the overall scale was .87 for the California study and .82 for the Israel study, indicating excellent internal consistency. Table 1 provides loadings and eigenvalues for each factor. The factors established were: (I) Inclusion in work-related decisions and processes (with items such as "I am able to influence decisions that affect my organization", and "I have a significant say in the way important work is performed by my work group"); and (II) Inclusion

in work-related relationships (with items such as "I feel that I have the cooperation of the people in my work group", and a reverse-scored item "I feel isolated from my work group").

Table 1
Factor Analysis of the Inclusion-Exclusion Scale California and Israel Samples

Factors	California Sample		Israel Sample	
	I	II	I	II
Factor I: Inclusion in work-related decisions and processes				
I have usually been involved in choosing my job assignments	.79	.01	.82	.09
I am able to influence decisions that affect my organization	.83	.12	.65	.005
I have a significant say in the way important work is performed by my work group	.83	.28	.83	.19
I have input into the process of how my work group gets routine work done	.71	.36	.83	.07
I am usually consulted before being asked to be a part of a work group or task team	.64	.35	.55	.44
Factor II: Inclusion in work-related relationships				
I feel that I have the cooperation of the people in my work group	.33	.73	.42	.64
I can ask anyone in my work group to assist me with my tasks	.16	.80	.08	.88
I feel isolated from my work group ®*	.31	.73	.04	.77
My co-workers openly share work-related information with me	.01	.83	.05	.75
Eignevalue	4.51	1.38	3.77	1.80
Alpha	.86	.82	.82	.78

*® indicates a negative item where the scoring were reversed to make it consistent with the rest of the scale

Inclusion, fairness, stress, support and organizational commitment

In order to test hypothesis 3, means, standard deviations and a series of t-tests were produced for all the analytic variables in both samples. The results, presented in Table 2, indicate that employees of the Israeli organization feel more included, perceive the organization's policies and procedures as more fair and just, report less job-related stress, experience more social support, and feel more committed to the organization, compared to their Californian counterparts. All of the results are statistically significant at the .001 level. Additionally, we assessed the overall sense of inclusion-exclusion among both samples. The proportion of employees who reported feeling excluded (mean score of 3 or less on the scale) reached 30% in the Californian sample, compared to 20% in the Israeli sample. The results of the Z-test of difference between proportions were statistically significant (Z =2.0, p<.001) indicating that a higher proportion of employees in the Israeli organization feel included in the decision making process and in work-related relations compared to their Californian counterpart.

To further explore the relationships between the analytic variables, a correlation matrix was produced for each of the samples (Table 3). All correlations are statistically significant at the .001 level indicating significant correlations between all the analytic variables for each

sample. While all the correlations had the same direction in both samples (i.e., positive or negative) there were some differences in the strength of the relationships. Further analyses, utilizing a series of Z-tests indicated some significant differences between the correlations. Specifically, the positive correlation between inclusion and perception of fairness was stronger in the Californian sample (.58) compared to the Israeli sample (.45) (Z =1.64, p<.05); the correlation between inclusion and stress in the Californian sample (-.26) was stronger than that of the Israeli

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations and t-tests for the Analytic Variables:
California – Israel Comparison

Variable	California Sample			Israel Sample		
	Mean	S.D.		Mean	S.D.	T-test
1. Inclusion-Exclusion	4.24	.92		4.59	.81	-3.93***
2. Perception of Fairness	4.08	1.00		4.42	.79	-3.78***
3. Stress	3.47	.68		3.11	.84	4.50***
4. Social Support	3.19	.51		3.42	.43	-4.60***
5. Commitment	3.82	1.02		4.49	.77	-7.44***

***<.001, **<.01, *<.05
NS – Not Significant

sample (-.14) (Z = -1.15 p=NS); the correlation between inclusion and social support in the Californian sample (.45) was stronger compared to the Israeli sample (.17) (Z =2.88 p<.001); and, the correlation between stress and commitment was stronger in the Californian sample (-.38) compared to the Israeli sample (-.20) (Z =-1.82 p<.05). The differences between the populations regarding the other correlations were not statistically significant.

Table 3
Basic Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variable	California Sample					Israel Sample				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. Inclusion-exclusion	1.0					1.0				
2. Perception of Fairness	.58***	1.0				.45***	1.0			
3. Stress	-.26***	-.43***	1.0			-.14***	-.40***	1.0		
4. Social support	.45***	.54***	-.37***	1.0		.17***	.47***	-.39***	1.0	
5. Commitment	.55***	.52***	-.38***	.43***	1.0	.56***	.54***	-.20***	.46***	1.0

***<.001, **<.01, *<.05
NS – Not Significant

Diversity, inclusion, and organizational commitment

We now turn to examine Hypothesis 4 addressing the relationships between diversity characteristics, perception of inclusion-exclusion, perception of fairness, stress, social support, and organizational commitment. We produced a hierarchical regression model introducing the visible diversity characteristics (step 1), the invisible diversity characteristics (step 2), inclusion-exclusion (step 3), perception of Fairness (step 4), stress (step 5), and social support (step 6). The results for the California sample are reported in Table 4, and for the Israel sample in Table 5.

The results for the California data indicate that in the first step, visible diversity characteristics, ethnicity and age were significant correlates of organizational commitment while gender was not. Together, these variables accounted for 6.7% of the variance in the dependent variable. Adding the invisible diversity characteristics slightly increases the Adjusted R^2 to 8.4%, though none of these variables shows significance. The data from the Israeli organization indicate no statistically significant results for the individual diversity characteristics coefficients, but the R^2 for the first two steps 9.9%, is somewhat higher than the Californian results. Inspecting the b coefficients reveals stronger relationships between most of the diversity characteristics and the outcome variable in the Israel sample compared to those of the California sample that may explain this discrepancy, despite the fact that they did not reach significance (note, however, that the Israel sample was smaller than the California sample).

Table 4
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Organizational Commitment Based on Demographic Characteristics, Perception of Inclusion, Fairness, Stress, and Social Support—California

Variable	B	SE B	β	R Sq.	Sig.
Step 1				.067	
Gender (Male=1; Female=-1)	-.007	.540	-.008		.892
Ethnicity (Caucasian; Non-Caucasian)	1.292	.555	.143		.021*
Age (45 or Less; Over 45)	-1.671	.524	-.197		.002***
Step 2				.084	
Gender	-.255	.572	-.029		.656
Ethnicity	1.261	.561	.139		.026*
Age	-1.580	.526	-.186		.003**
Exempt Status	-.979	.776	-.099		.208
Education	.302	.762	.030		.692
Step 3				.360	
Gender	.002	.480	.002		.966
Ethnicity	.699	.473	.077		.141
Age	-1.202	.442	-.142		.007**
Management Status	-.270	.514	-.030		.600
Exempt Status	-1.328	.651	-.135		.042*
Education	.628	.639	.063		.326
Inclusion-Exclusion	.589	.057	.567		.001***
Step 4				.404	
Gender	-.289	.470	-.033		.539
Ethnicity	.656	.458	.072		.153
Age	-1.094	.428	-.129		.011**
Management Status	-.004	.500	-.004		.935
Exempt Status	-1.433	.630	-.145		.024*
Education	.560	.618	.056		.366
Inclusion-Exclusion	.423	.067	.408		.001***
Fairness	.152	.036	.261		.001***
Step 5				.415	
Gender	-.208	.468	-.024		.658
Ethnicity	.695	.455	.077		.128
Age	-1.050	.426	-.124		.014**
Management Status	.138	.504	.015		.785
Exempt Status	-1.294	.629	-.131		.041*
Education	.442	.616	.044		.474
Inclusion-Exclusion	.404	.068	.389		.001***
Fairness	.127	.037	.218		.001***
Stress	-.167	.079	-.119		.036*
Step 6				.422	
Gender	-.208	.466	-.024		.656
Ethnicity	.623	.455	.069		.172
Age	-1.041	.424	-.123		.015**
Management Status	.304	.510	.034		.551
Exempt Status	-1.173	.630	-.119		.064
Education	.490	.614	.049		.426
Inclusion-Exclusion	.376	.069	.362		.001***
Fairness	.107	.039	.185		.006**
Stress	-.151	.079	-.108		.058
Social Support	-.151	.085	.106		.078

*=p<.05, **= p<.01, ***=p<.001

83

Table 5
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Organizational Commitment Based on Demographic Characteristics, Perception of Inclusion, Fairness, Stress, and Social Support—Israel

Variable	B	SE B	β	R Sq.	Sig.
Step 1				.090	
Gender	-1.189	1.012	-.159		.246
Origin	-2.009	1.336	-.202		.139
Age (Less 35/More)	1.258	1.725	-.097		.469
Step 2				.099	
Gender	-.876	1.119	-.117		.437
Origin	-2.165	1.401	-.218		.128
Age	1.130	1.774	-.087		.527
Position	-.004	.900	-.007		.962
Education	-1.055	1.550	-.106		.499
Step 3				.351	
Gender	-.273	.970	-.036		.780
Origin	-1.454	1.212	-.146		.236
Age	.401	1.531	.031		.795
Position	-.575	.782	-.093		.465
Education	-.139	1.357	-.014		.919
Inclusion	.498	.114	.555		.001***
Step 4				.475	
Gender	-.523	.884	-.070		.557
Origin	-.991	1.110	-.100		.377
Age	-.003	1.397	-.003		.981
Position	-.924	.718	-.149		.204
Education	-.216	1.238	-.022		.862
Inclusion	.381	.109	.425		.001***
Fairness	.193	.057	.388		.001**
Step 5				.476	
Gender	-.484	.903	-.065		.594
Origin	-.966	1.124	-.097		.394
Age	-.001	1.412	-.001		.991
Position	-.900	.730	-.145		.224
Education	-.285	1.273	-.029		.824
Inclusion	.381	.110	.424		.001***
Fairness	.186	.063	.373		.005**
Stress	-.002	.095	-.034		.780
Step 6				.538	
Gender	-.411	.857	-.055		.634
Origin	-.795	1.068	-.080		.461
Age	.279	1.344	.022		.836
Position	-.605	.702	-.097		.393
Education	-.587	1.214	-.059		.631
Inclusion	.371	.105	.413		.001***
Fairness	.120	.066	.240		.074
Stress	.0001	.091	.002		.988
Social Support	.322	.129	.299		.016**

p=<.05, ** p=<.01, ***p=<.001

The addition of the inclusion variable in step 3 raises the R^2 to 36% in the California sample and to 35.1% in the Israel sample, indicating a highly significant and strong relationship between sense of inclusion and organizational commitment in both samples. The b coefficient is somewhat higher in the California sample -- .589 vs. .498 in the Israeli sample. Similarly, perception of fairness is positively and significantly related to organizational commitment in both samples, although the b coefficient is somewhat higher in the Israel sample -- .193 vs. .152 in the Californian sample. This difference is also reflected in the increase in the R^2 which is 40.4% for the California sample and 47.5% for the Israel sample at step 4.

Stress is a negative and significant correlate of organizational commitment in the California sample (step 5) while it is negative, but non-significant in the Israel sample. It does not make much of a difference in the R^2 value of either regression. The introduction of the social support variable in the final step generates very different results in the two models. While in the California data social support is not significant and produces minor change in the R^2 value (.7%), social support is positively and significantly related to organizational commitment in the Israeli data and increases the R^2 value by 6.2%. The overall model accounts for 42.2% of the variance in organizational commitment in the Californian data and 53.8% of the variance in organizational commitment in the Israel data.

Discussion

One of the most significant problems facing today's diverse workforce is that of inclusion, the sense of being an integral part of the organization. The aim of this study was to examine the experience of exclusion across cultures and to test the applicability of an overall model of diversity, inclusion and commitment utilizing two samples from California and Israel. Our findings provide support for the model and show similarities in the way employees experience exclusion and the relationship between inclusion and commitment, indicating that the model may transcend cultural differences.

The resilience of the inclusion/exclusion experience to cultural differences is an important finding. Previous research on U.S. samples indicates that individuals from diverse groups commonly find themselves excluded from networks of information and opportunity (Cox, 1994; Ibarra, 1993; Pettigrew and Martin, 1989). Prevalent perceptions and general sense of discomfort with those who are perceived as different can be the reason for their exclusion from important organizational processes and resources. People tend to feel more comfortable with others with whom they share important characteristics, strengthening in-group/out-group perceptions and creating exclusionary behaviors (Blau, 1977). More seriously, overt or covert racism, sexism, ageism as well as other forms of discrimination may be the motivation for exclusionary behaviors (Larkey, 1996, Bernstein and McRae, 1973; Gaertner and Dovidio, 1986). Additionally, economic self-interest can be the motivation for preventing access to power and economic resources from certain individuals or groups (Larkey, 1996). Such behaviors result in the continued job segregation of women and minorities, as well as the exclusion of these groups from development and promotion opportunities (Becker, 1957; Collinson et al., 1990; Feagin and Feagin, 1988; Reskin, 1984, 1988; Shulman and Darity, 1989; Morrison, 1992; Konrad and Cannings, 1997). Our findings suggest that, although specifics regarding visible and

invisible characteristics may vary across cultures, the factors related to the experience of inclusion/exclusion in the workplace may be similar across cultures.

We found significant differences in perception of inclusion in the gender and age variables in both samples, with ethnicity, education, and job category showing significance only in the California sample. The similarity between the samples with respect to gender differences is interesting. While there is accumulating evidence indicating women's sense of exclusion in the U.S. (Holahan, 1979; Kanter, 1977; Kirchmeyer, 1996; Konrad & Cannings, 1997), there is a mistaken perception that since Israeli women participate equally in national defense and in the economic production process they also share equally in social roles. In reviewing Israeli labor force statistics, Lewin-Epstein (1989) reports patterns of gender role differentiation similar to those found in Western Europe and the United States. On the other hand, age differences in both organizations may be related more to tenure with the organization and experience on the job than to general cultural trends (Tao, Takagi, Ishida, & Masuda, 1998). In other words, older workers (particularly in the Israeli company where even the oldest workers were younger than 50) are those who've been on the job and with this company longer and are, therefore, more experienced in the organization's inner workings and feel more included in its information networks and decision making processes.

Similar to gender differences, ethnic differences with respect to roles in the organization, promotions, and general sense of inclusion have been well documented in the literature (Kirchmeyer, 1996; Menahem & Spiro, 1999; Cox, 1994; Ibarra, 1993; Greenhaus, et al., 1990). While the relationships found in the California sample are in line with previous research, the no-difference findings in the Israel sample are baffling. Research has documented inter-ethnic differences between Arabs and Jews, and between immigrant groups and Israeli-born residents with respect to job status and job treatment factors (Wolkinson & Montemayor, 1998; Amir & Benjamin, 1997; Rosenhek, 1998; Schartz, Link, & Dohrenwend, 1991; Pelled, 1990). This finding may be explained, at least partially, by the limited diversity characterizing high tech companies in Israel. Many such companies in Israel produce defense-related products, in addition to commercial products, and as a result have to comply with strict security requirements which preclude Arab-Israeli citizens from employment with the company. The other possible explanation may be rooted in basic cultural differences. Although collectivistic cultures tend to associate primarily with the in-group, the broad definition of that group contributes to openness among subgroups within the larger culture. In Israel, a variety of groups share language and religion and constitute the larger in-group, and, based on the historical annihilation of Jews across Europe, they share a strong sense of national identity. Additionally, within the broader definition of in-group in collectivist cultures, the workplace may become an in-group within the emotional context (Guzley, Araki, & Chalmers, 1998).

Compared to the California-based sample, employees in Israel were found to experience a significantly greater sense of inclusion in decision making and work-related relationships, perceive the organization's policies and procedures as more fair and just, report less job-related stress, experience more social support from co-workers, supervisors and family, and feel more committed to their organization. Again, this is consistent with a collectivistic value base emphasizing self-definition as a function of mutuality and interdependence between the individual and the reference group (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Hofstede, 1991). It is

interesting to note that, by comparison, employees of the Israeli organization reported lower levels of job stress. Generally, due to frequent terrorist activities and military action at its boarders and a growing yet fragile economy, the daily experiences of Israelis might be considered highly stressful. One possible explanation may be the generally favorable work conditions in high tech industries in Israel compared to other sectors of the economy. Israeli high tech employees enjoy better salaries, expanded benefits and comfortable work environments and, as a result, may have more favorable views of their work conditions, including stress, compared to employees in other industries.

Finally, examining an overall model of the relationship between diversity, inclusion, fairness, stress, social support and commitment showed important similarities between the two samples, as hypothesized. The most important finding was that the model fit well both data sets and accounted for about half of the variance in the dependent variable in both the California and the Israel samples. This is in line with previous research suggesting important linkages between perceptions of fairness (Hendrix, Robbins, Miller, & Summers, 1998; Reiley & Singer, 1996)), stress (Tao, Takagi, Ishida, & Masuda, 1998; Flynn & Tannenbaum, 1993), and social support (Morris, Shinn, & DuMont, 1999; Schaubroeck & Fink, 1998).   Diversity characteristics were found to be a strong correlate of commitment in the California-based population only. Again, this may be another manifestation of the collectivist-individualist culture continuum discussed earlier (Chatman, Polzer, Barsade, & Neale, 1998; Earley, 1993; Chatman & Barsade, 1995). Although the context of diversity may change across cultures, the importance of inclusion in the workplace may be based on commonalities in human need for belonging and fair treatment.

Two interesting differences between the samples emerged in the overall model. The negative relationship between job stress and organizational commitment was significant in the California-based population only and the positive relationship between social support and organizational commitment was significant in the Israel population only. It is logical and consistent that in a collectivistic culture valuing relational attributes that social support from co-workers, supervisors and family will enhance commitment to the work organization. Further, in an individualistic culture in which status hold more importance than the transactional nature of the collective, it is also logical that job stress will have a stronger role with a significant and negative relationship to organizational commitment (Hofstede, 1997; Chao, Xiao-Ping, & Meindl, 1998).

Some limitations of the study are important to note. The sample size is a limiting factor, in particular in the case of the Israel sample, and it might have been the reason for our inability to uncover some important relationships between diversity and commitment. Additionally, in considering the significant cultural differences, caution is necessary. For purposes of comparison, employees from two well-established high tech companies were surveyed. However, it is difficult to decipher to what extent the differences and similarities between them are the result of general cultural differences or specific characteristics that are unique to each organization. This limits the study's external validity, or the ability to generalize its findings to other types of organizations or other cultures.

The study's practical implications stem from its contribution in proposing an overall model that connects diversity, perception of inclusion and organizational commitment. While

companies have put efforts and resources into recruiting women and minorities into their workforce, many are struggling with commitment and retention of these employees (Thomas, 1990). This article offers a conceptual link between interpersonal differences and organizational effectiveness through the connection it makes between diversity, exclusion, and organizational commitment. Employee commitment to the organization has been positively linked to such desirable outcomes as motivation (Mowday, Steers, and Porter, 1979), and attendance (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990) and negatively related to such outcomes as absenteeism and turnover (Clegg, 1983; Cotton and Tuttle, 1986). Utilizing the concept of inclusion, the model developed here creates a useful link between diversity and commitment that can serve companies as they develop interventions to improve retention among their diverse employees.

While many companies introduce diversity training programs at different levels of the organization, this article suggests that in order to initiate a real change in its culture, the organization needs to critically examine and change its policies and the way that they are carried out in the organization. This will ensure fair and inclusive treatment of women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups and other individuals who are different from the main stream. Changing the organization's culture from merely "diversity tolerant" to truly inclusive can be done through deliberate actions such as a strong mentorship programs that will bring the groups on the outside into the inner circles of the organization. Future research is needed to continue building a global understanding of inclusion in the workplace. Studies of inclusion across a range of both cultures and types of organizations are needed to further understand the delicate contextual nuances resulting in powerful organizational outcomes.

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