

## CONFRONTING THE APORIAS OF THE INCLUSION PRACTICE

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**ABSTRACT:** The article offers a critique of the current practice on inclusion. Several principal concerns arise in connection with this practice. The fact that it has its roots in the European Enlightenment tradition makes it culturally specific and largely reflective of Western values that are not universally shared. Also, as a result of the selective application of this practice, it actually involves exclusion, which makes this practice contradictory. Finally, its objectivist approach underestimates the role of subjective factors (values, norms, and cultural traditions). These concerns indicate the need for a new inclusion practice. The article outlines a new approach toward inclusion. This approach emerges from a better understanding of what inclusion actually is and what it involves. The article demonstrates the connection between inclusion and the process of creation. This close relationship suggests that the new practice of inclusion should use the process of creation as its main organizing principle.

**KEYWORDS:** Inclusion; The Practice of Inclusion; Conservation; Difference; The Process of Creation

### INTRODUCTION

Conflicts and divisions in our society have preoccupied a great deal of our public discourse over the past few decades. They played a very prominent role in the last presidential elections. The inequities that drive them continue to figure very prominently in the current political crisis in America and have produced some of the most acute political clashes in recent American history.

Many see exclusion as the principal problem that creates inequities leading to tensions and conflicts. Politics of inclusion is the most widely accepted solution

of this problem. The Democratic Party and the American left in general have made inclusion one of the central issues of the political agenda that they have been pursuing for quite some time. However, despite decades of hard work and many victories, the politics of inclusion has yet to achieve its goal—the elimination of exclusion and domination that lead to inequities. Moreover, its progress has significantly slowed down in recent years. Its appeal has declined. It no longer represents a dominant consensus in American politics. The current politics of inclusion is deeply conflicted and controversial. Instead of unifying American society it has become a source of tensions and divisions.

Several critics have charged that the politics of inclusion as practiced by progressive liberals is controversial and ineffective. Instead of bringing society together and healing divisions, it has become a major source of contentions and rivalries. In his book *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics* David Goodhart, for example, suggests that by simply cramming different cultural groups together with little consideration for complex psychological and sociological implications of such practice enables racism and ethnic hatred (Goodhart 2017). French historian Georges Bensoussan has also disparaged the politics of inclusion for aggravating the relations among different ethnic and cultural groups and creating what he calls ‘a multi-conflict society’ (‘The Multi-Cultural Society’ 2018). In his book *The Time of Tribes* another French historian Michel Maffesoli laments the reversion to tribalism dominated by primitive archetypes, fear, and aggressive behavior that he sees in the modern world (Maffesoli 1996). John Milbank and Adrian Pabst blame liberal policies for the current state of ‘war of all against all’ (Milbank and Pabst 2016; Blond 2017).

Why is the politics of inclusion in its present form failing? The article explores the problems that plague the current practice of inclusion and offers a critique of this practice. It also outlines a new approach toward inclusion that provides a constructive alternative to the current practice.

#### CRITIQUE OF THE CURRENT PRACTICE OF INCLUSION

Over the years liberals have pursued a number of causes that seek to address exclusion and domination. Whether these causes were about equal rights for women, justice for racial, ethnic and other minorities, or the interests of the disadvantaged, their goal ultimately was the same: to end exclusion and

domination in whatever form they may occur. The list of solutions that liberal reformers have proposed is long. It includes pluralism, multiculturalism, identity politics, diversity politics, politics of difference, and others. As varied as these solutions may be, they are all about inclusion. Their practical approaches are also similar. They seek to empower groups viewed as oppressed and disadvantaged. They promote legislation that benefits these groups, offer them political support, advocate their interests in the media and public forums, and last but not least, they seek to reallocate resources so as to address the existing inequities in our society and to benefit those who are regarded as historically oppressed and disadvantaged.

The current inclusion practice focuses on changing the objective conditions that lead to or result from exclusion. By changing objective conditions, liberal reformers hope to change attitudes and the culture of exclusion. They act primarily through legislatures, government agencies, courts, educational institutions, and the media (Lilla 2017; Rauch 2017).

As one can see, the current inclusion practice rests on the fundamental assumption that objective conditions (laws and institutions), not subjective factors (beliefs and culture), are of primary importance. This assumption serves as the organizing principle of the inclusion practice that, understandably, sets its priorities on changing objective conditions.

The assumption of the primacy of objective conditions, or the object, is not unproblematic. The proponents of the current practice offer no rational justification for making such assumption. The lack of justification makes this assumption arbitrary, subjective, and irrational, which places the practice on a rather shaky foundation and makes it vulnerable to criticism.

The prioritization of objective conditions underestimates the resilience of subjective factors. The latter have a high degree of autonomy. They can persist against and even subvert objective conditions. There is much evidence indicating that simply eliminating barriers among various groups to bring them close together may actually exacerbate tensions and hostility among them. Squashing different ethnic groups with different cultural traditions together exposes them to each other's values and norms that may be incommensurable and conflicting. Such exposure often creates confusion that in turn leads to fear and aggression, thus increasing a possibility of conflict. Some of the most radical opponents of the West are often those who have been educated in the West and have been

exposed to Western values and norms. The hostility toward the West in the Islamic world has actually grown since contacts between these cultures increased. There are many other examples, both from the United States and from European countries, showing that merely removing barriers between different cultural and ethnic groups is not enough; such practice tends to increase tensions and conflict.

There is another major problem with the current inclusion practice. This practice has its roots in the Enlightenment tradition that in many ways has shaped it. The distinct feature of the Enlightenment tradition—one that makes it different from many other intellectual traditions—is the claim that assigns ontological primacy to reason and rationality. The ontological primacy of reason and rationality serves as the main principle that organizes the intellectual and scientific practice of the Enlightenment tradition, its moral system and aesthetic values, its political and social institutions. As important as this principle is, however, the Enlightenment tradition offers no rational justification or empirical verification for adopting reason and rationality as its organizing principle. The lack of rational justification means that this principle is arbitrary, subjective, and ultimately irrational, which puts the entire tradition and the practices that emerge from it on a very shaky foundation. It makes the Enlightenment tradition culturally specific and undermines its universalist claims.

To give just one example, Kant—one of the great thinkers of the Enlightenment—used reason and rationality as the foundational premise for his universal guide to moral behavior—his famous categorical imperative (Kant 2002). For Kant, the only true moral law is one that emerges from a ‘formal recovery of the rational grounds that make life moral’ (Hunter 2002: 909). In other words, Kant tells us that those cultures that do not perform such ‘formal recovery of rational grounds’ cannot lead a truly moral life. In his insightful essay ‘The Morals of Metaphysics: Kant’s Groundwork as Intellectual Paideia’ Ian Hunter rightly observes that this view reveals aggressive intellectual and moral sectarianism. The belief in reason and rationality as ontological principles that Kant upholds is the source of this sectarianism (Hunter 2002: 919 and 929).

It has become commonplace to critique the Enlightenment tradition. Numerous detractors have disparaged it for its insensitivity to the plight of the poor and underprivileged, its unrestrained search for gratification, for the ravages of merciless exploitation of people and nature, for its acceptance of the oppression

of women and ethnic minorities, for its racial inequality, its imperialist expansionism and indignity of colonial domination, its disregard of human rights, and for intolerance. Even devoted advocates of the Enlightenment have expressed doubts about its universality and the capacity to emancipate humanity. In his contribution 'Modernity: An Unfinished Project' Jürgen Habermas, one of the most important modern thinkers in the Enlightenment tradition, concludes that the prospects for the fulfillment of the Enlightenment promise 'are not very encouraging' (Habermas 1997).

Critics of the Enlightenment tradition, such as Hannah Arendt or Zygmunt Bauman, trace its problems to the very conception of reason and rationality that this tradition uses as its organizing principles. They see, for example, violence as instrumental to the Enlightenment conception of reason and view it as a direct outcome of the Enlightenment tradition—an inevitable consequence of its efforts to control and compartmentalize human life in the name of putative progress, technocratic efficiency, and governmental bureaucratic logic (Arendt 1970; Bauman 1989). As Gianni Vattimo summarized:

The discovery that the rationalization of the world turns against reason and its ends of perfection and emancipation, and does so not by error, accident, or a chance distortion, but precisely to the extent that it is more and more perfectly accomplished (Vattimo 1992; Stone 1999: 375).

The Enlightenment tradition associates rationality with the capacity for logical reasoning. Logical operations are essentially equilibrating procedures. They establish correspondences between our mental constructs. Therefore, the exercise of reason involves equilibration. By assigning ontological primacy to reason the Enlightenment tradition in fact recognizes equilibration as the principal mental operation.

The emergence of the capacity for rational thought was a revolutionary development. It was a dramatic leap in the evolution, or what Stephen Gould called the punctuated evolution. This change was destabilizing; it disrupted the balance that existed prior to its emergence. Therefore, reason as the capacity for rational thought is also associated with the production of disequilibrium, not just equilibration.

Considering this fact, there is no justification for the assumption that equilibration is ontologically primary to the production of disequilibrium and

adopt it as the main principle for organizing our knowledge and practice. Such assumption is arbitrary, irrational, and subjective. It is obviously vulnerable to challenges and is unreliable in practice. Using such arbitrary assumption as the main organizing principle of the Enlightenment tradition puts this tradition and its practices on a very shaky foundation. By arbitrarily assuming the primacy of equilibration, the Enlightenment tradition diminishes—without any justification, one should add—the importance of the production of disequilibrium. It is a one-sided approach and is, therefore, exclusive. The adoption of such one-sided approach has led to contradictions and paradoxes. Despite the claims of promoting inclusion, the practice shaped by this approach is actually exclusionary. Its exclusive character opens the path for exclusion and domination to creep into its practice and our culture.

The roots of the current progressive politics of inclusion are entirely in one cultural tradition—that of the European Enlightenment. There are many cultures that do not consider reason and rationality to be so fundamental as to be regarded as ontologically primary. Other cultures may consider non-rational factors—for example, faith—to be more fundamental than reason. The values, norms, and beliefs of these cultural groups in many cases differ from those espoused by the Enlightenment tradition. Yet, the logic of the current culture-specific inclusion practice is such that included groups have to accept and even give priority to values and norms that are different from their own, which means that their values and norms, or their differences, are not conserved.

The black community in America, for example, largely supports the principle of the sanctity of life and is generally opposed to abortion. Both the black community and the Muslim community are very religious. In their view, religion has a legitimate and important place in public life. They object to the notion that religion belongs exclusively to the private sphere. However, according to the logic of the current inclusion practice they have to recognize and embrace values and norms that may be diametrically different from and even in conflict with values and norms of their own. The inclusion practice that is rooted in one cultural tradition may be just as prejudicial as the prejudices it seeks to eradicate. It cannot and does not end exclusion; on the contrary, it merely transforms and perpetuates exclusion in less visible and, therefore, more insidious forms.

Finally, there is yet another aspect of the current inclusion practice that raises

serious concerns regarding its claims to universality. Progressive reformers make a strong argument for a selective application of this practice to groups that have historically been oppressed and disadvantaged, such as racial and ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, and women. They are perfectly aware that such selective application violates the principle of equality, but their contention is that, given the history of injustice and oppression, there is no other way to redress the inequities this history produced. A violation of the principle of equality is, in their view, inevitable and completely justified.

Iris Marion Young is one of the most eloquent and persuasive advocates of such selective application of inclusion. In her book *Justice and the Politics of Difference* she argues that the practice of inclusion ‘requires different treatment for oppressed or disadvantaged groups’ (Young 1990: 158). She offers an elaborate argument that neutral rules and principles applied in the context of inequality that results from historical oppression may mask, and consequently leave in place, structural dimensions of oppression and domination (Young 1990: 18, 21-22).

The practice of inclusion advocated by Young—one that progressive reformers have eventually adopted—contains a number of unresolved paradoxes. For example, Young’s contention that redressing the conditions arising from historical injustice requires unequal treatment effectively separates justice from equality. As Martha Ackelsberg and Mary Shanley elaborate in their article on Young’s contribution:

There is a difference between giving all equal rights and equal opportunity within the existing (and oppressive) system (i.e., distributive justice), and altering the conditions under which the inequality or oppression arises (i.e., social justice) (Ackelsberg and Shanley 2008: 330).

What Young advocates and progressive reformers accept is a selective application of inclusion. Such selective approach involves exclusion. Mark Lilla in his critique of identity politics rightly points out that as soon as one starts highlighting some identities deserving attention, the list of those not mentioned is endless (Lilla 2017).

There is an obvious contradiction in the logic of the approach that seeks to attain inclusion and empowerment by practicing exclusion and disempowerment—a contradiction that its proponents, including Young, simply explain away at best, but do not resolve. The selective application undermines

and subverts any claim to universality. Such practice, in fact, does not extend universal rights to the included group. All it offers is a paternalistic privilege. Privilege, by its very nature, cannot empower; it merely affirms the dominant position of those who grant it.

All those progressive-minded politicians, lawyers, judges, experts, scholars, and activists, including Young, are simply blind to the fact that empowerment always involves the affirmation of the self. It works only if it affirms the self; that is, if it is self-affirmation, or self-empowerment. Privilege does not empower. Granting privilege is a special prerogative that belongs to those who are in the position to grant it. The very act of granting privilege affirms their position of dominance that allows them to grant privileges.

As one can see, the current practice of inclusion does not involve self-empowerment. Only self-empowerment can conserve difference; and if self-empowerment is not involved, difference is not conserved. In other words, this practice does not deliver what it claims to deliver: it does not empower and does not conserve difference, which is one important reason why this practice generates controversy even among those who are supposed to be its beneficiaries (Vasquez Heilig et al. 2012).

The inconsistencies and contradictions of the current inclusion practice discussed in this section make this practice a source of controversy. Rather than bring people together and foster integration, this practice generates divisions and tensions. As has been argued in this section, the main reason why the results of this practice are so different from what it intends to achieve is that despite its claims to the contrary, this practice is exclusive.

The cultural specificity of this practice, its selective application, and its failure to recognize equal validity of objective and subjective factors turn the current practice of inclusion into a disguised form of exclusion; and exclusion always leads to domination. Symptomatically, the two most consistent champions of difference Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe—the proponents of the so-called agonistic perspective—argue that domination is intrinsic to social and political practice and can never be completely eliminated (Laclau and Mouffe 2001).

The current inclusion practice cannot conserve differences. As Laclau and Mouffe recognize, it cannot eliminate exclusion and domination and achieve emancipation. It can only lead to a perpetual ‘war of all against all.’



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## TOWARD A NEW INCLUSION PRACTICE: CONSERVATION, INCLUSION, AND THE PROCESS OF CREATION

The above critique of the current inclusion practice shows its inadequacy. It is culturally specific, arbitrary, inconsistent, and contradictory. But most importantly, it does not achieve its goal: it does not empower those it seeks to empower; it does not conserve differences they represent. What should a truly inclusive and empowering practice be like? Answering this question should start with the understanding of what inclusion actually is.

There are two principal ways of understanding inclusion. According to one, the basis for inclusion is commonality. As has been indicated earlier, reason is the common denominator for the entire tradition of the Enlightenment. Therefore, the approach toward inclusion based on commonality involves a search for a rational consensus.

Jurgen Habermas, the famous German philosopher and sociologist, is perhaps the most influential thinker who articulates such understanding. His approach to inclusion emphasizes what he calls ‘communicative action’—the concept he borrows from Hannah Arendt but considerably rethinks—and communicative reason that embodies the logic of such action as the principal tools of inclusion. Habermas's communicative reason is oriented away from the self and towards understanding the other, rather than towards pursuing subjective interests and realizing particularist goals (Habermas 1984; 1987). Communicative rationality permeates intersubjective relations in what Habermas calls the lifeworld, or the public sphere of interactions among equals (Kellner 2000). It is here in the lifeworld that ‘subjectless forms of communication’ based on rules and norms of rational discourse operate. These forms of communication serve as the basis for inclusion. They enable ‘rational opinion and political will-formation’ that, in Habermas’s view, are essential in creating a rational consensus (Habermas 1996).

Many critics have challenged Habermas’s understanding of inclusion. They charge that the exceptional importance that Habermas attributes to rational consensus puts the emphasis on commonalities at the expense of differences. Despite his acknowledgement of race, class, gender, and minorities issues for constituting more equal and autonomous relations, Habermas tends to downplay if not outright diminish their role in the sphere of communicative action as guided

by the logic of instrumental subject-oriented action. Many feminists, for example, criticized Habermas for paying too little attention to gender differences (Pajnik 2006; Dietz 1996). Jean Cohen, an observer undoubtedly sympathetic to Habermas, reproached him for his ‘peculiar blindness to gender issues’ (Cohen 1995: 57). Many researchers have expressed their skepticism about Habermas’s ‘confidence in abstract reason’ as one-fits-all cure to address social and political issues particularly relevant to gender, race, and ethnicity (Flyvbjerg 2000: 12; Ryan 1992: 262; Fraser 1987; Eley 1992; Simpson 1986; Allen 2012).

Habermas offers very little to dispel this skepticism.<sup>1</sup> He is hardly oblivious to the fact of these exclusions from his analysis but insists that they can only be discussed in ‘the light of declared standards [of communicative reason],’ thus reducing them to precisely the abstract rationality that the proponents of these issues criticize and doubt. According to Habermas, one can assess the oppression of ethnic, cultural, gender, and other groups only ‘in the light of this one basic standard’ (Habermas 1992: 466-67).

As has already been mentioned, there is another and very different way of understanding inclusion. According to this understanding, commonalities are not about inclusion. They actually exclude and suppress differences; and exclusion opens the path to domination. Therefore, the proponents of this view argue, the practice of inclusion based on commonalities is just another and more insidious way of reasserting the relationship of dependency, oppression, and domination. They contend that there are structural inequities in our society that are due to race, class, or gender. Inclusion must necessarily involve a recognition and respect for these differences, not their obfuscation and obliteration. Inclusion, they maintain, is primarily about these differences.

These two ways of understanding inclusion are diametrically opposed to each other: one emphasizes commonality and the other differences. Despite their fundamental disagreement, however, the two have something in common. They both see difference and commonality as diametrically opposed to each other and

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<sup>1</sup> Flyvbjerg cites a characteristic episode at a conference on the occasion of the publication of the English translation of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* when Nancy Fraser asked Habermas if the basic condition for communicative rationality was not a utopian society with ‘economic equality—the end of class structure and the end of gender inequality.’ Habermas essentially avoided answering this question (Flyvbjerg 2000: 12).

mutually exclusive: one emphasizes commonalities at the expense of differences, and the other sees the need to reject commonalities in order to preserve differences.

However, are differences and commonalities indeed diametrically opposed to each other? Are they so mutually exclusive? One can find numerous examples when differences come together to form a common structure. In such structures, differences sustain the whole, while the whole optimizes and conserves differences. This symbiotic relationship between the whole and its constituent parts suggests that conservation is a very important reason for creating such mutual bonds.

The fact that conservation plays an important role in bringing differences together hardly comes as a surprise. There is hardly anything more fundamental to reality than conservation. We find conservation everywhere: in some of the smallest and the largest structures in our universe, in biological organisms, and in social systems. Conservation has its roots in the very nature of our universe: its uniqueness. Our universe is all there is. Nothing can come into it from outside and nothing can disappear from it because there is nowhere to disappear. Everything, consequently, must be conserved. The law of conservation is perhaps the most ubiquitous law in our universe. It is an essential aspect of the evolution. So, how does conservation work and why does it involve inclusion?

In order to be conserved, a functional entity—a system or an organism—has to be active. The more active a system is, the better it is conserved. In order to stay active, a system needs triggering signals that bring it into action and thus serve as resources that sustain its activity. Since all systems are finite, they have a finite number of triggers and finite resources. Therefore, conservational success ultimately depends on the capacity of a system to expand its range of triggers and resources. Systems can dramatically expand their range of possibilities by combining with other systems and forming a new structural whole in which they are component parts, which allows systems to share both triggers and resources. For example, when a child forms a stable connection between the visual and the audio function, audio signals begin to activate visual function and vice versa. As a result, each function is activated twice as often. When systems combine, they acquire new properties, increase their range of possibilities and, consequently, are conserved better. The creation of new levels of organization as a result of

combinations is an evolutionary process. Thus conservation leads to evolution.

Systems combine with each other by using their regulatory operation. Regulation is an operation that coordinates and optimizes interactions among the subsystems. Since it is a global operation, it is more powerful in the combinatorial sense than each subsystem in the system it regulates and their sum total. Due to its power, regulation has a capacity to transcend the boundaries of self-referentiality and establish connections with operations that regulate other systems. Again, the main reason for establishing such connections is conservation. If a regulatory operation is not conserved, it cannot perform its function. The result is the disruption of interactions among subsystems of the system and its disintegration. A regulatory operation stabilizes and conserves itself by establishing connections with other regulatory operations. Establishing such connections involves mutual assimilation and adaptation, which is the essence of inclusion. Thus conservation requires the creation of new and more powerful levels of organization, which leads to evolution. A system that does not evolve begins to disintegrate. Creating new and more powerful levels of organization involves mutual inclusion.

As the above description makes clear, there is a connection between conservation, inclusion, and the creation of new and more powerful levels of organization, i.e. evolution. Conservation, inclusion, and creation constitute the links of one chain closely bound together. Their interrelationship is at the heart of the evolution that led to the emergence of the human world. Conservation, inclusion, and creation are just as important for the evolution of human society as they are for the evolution of life forms and the universe as a whole.

The interdependence of conservation, inclusion, and creation sustains them. Just as creation requires inclusion, inclusion is not possible without creation. This dependency suggests that the practice of inclusion must necessarily involve creation and vice versa. In fact, the practice of inclusion should have the process of creation as its main organizing principle. A society based on slavery cannot in principle create new levels of organization by virtue of its exclusionary practice and, therefore, cannot conserve itself. All societies based on exclusion and domination cannot survive and eventually fail.

The process of creation appears in different guises (the process of emergence or the construction process) in a variety of theoretical perspectives: systems

theory, theory of emergence, complexity theory, theory of self-organization, creativity studies, and others (Prigogine and Stengers 1984; Kauffman 2008; Kauffman 2016; Shkliarevsky 2017). Different researchers define this process in different ways. The definition that in the view of this author fits best is the following: the process of creation is an operation that generates new levels and forms of organization of reality. The distinct feature of such created forms of organization is their irreducibility. We cannot reduce them. That is to say, we cannot establish linear causal relations between the new form that has emerged and the level of organization of reality from which it has emerged. We cannot reduce life, for example, to chemical elements. We cannot reduce consciousness to biological processes that, according to the theory of evolution, gave rise to it. We cannot explain the behavior of insects that have clear signs of intelligence present. We cannot reduce order to the chaos that has preceded it.

Unlike the assumption about the ontological primacy of objective conditions that organizes the current inclusion practice, the adoption of the process of creation as the main organizing principle is not arbitrary, subjective, or irrational. It passes the test of rational justification. We simply cannot imagine reality without it because the very process of imagining is a process that involves creation. Without creation, we would not be able to know anything about reality—reality simply would not exist for us. Our capacity to perceive reality and its objects is due entirely to the ability of our brain to create internal mental constructs that make such perception possible. This justification—i.e., showing that we cannot imagine a possibility that this process does not exist—is so powerful that it even stands the test of negation; in other words, it includes its negation as its own justification. Indeed, one can make an argument that the process of creation does not exist and is merely a product of one's subjective and profoundly flawed imagination, but this argument is just another way to prove that the process of creation exists, since that is what this argument says.

The process of creation also passes the test of empirical verification. Our universe and all objects we observe in it are vivid examples of the workings of the process of creation. One can see many marvelous products of this process in the richness and diversity of all that exists in our universe—from particles and atoms, to life, intellect, society and civilization. Many wonderful creations of the human spirit are a very vivid proof of the existence of the process of creation.

Inclusion is essential for the process of creation. Creation thrives on inclusion. The more differences are included the more powerful the new level of organization is going to be, the more it empowers those involved in its creation, and the better the included differences are conserved. The process of creation is incompatible with exclusion. Exclusion of differences narrows the available range of possibilities. The exclusion of any difference results in a loss of power since exclusion and empowerment are incompatible.

As has been explained, only creation conserves differences. Since the process of creation does not play any vital role in the current inclusions practice, this practice cannot conserve differences. Most of the current approaches toward inclusion (pluralism, multiculturalism, politics of difference, diversity, identity politics, and others) do not go beyond the advocacy of mutual tolerance and coexistence. Mere tolerance and coexistence do not conserve differences. In this practice differences do not create new and more powerful levels of organization. They do not evolve, and what does not evolve cannot be conserved.

There is no question that we should embrace differences. Differences are an important source of progress. The current inclusion practice recognizes the importance of differences. However, since it does not embrace the process of creation, it is not capable of conserving differences. Conservation of differences requires establishing connections among differences, combining them, transcending their individual limitations, and creating new and more powerful levels of organization. Only the inclusion practice that uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle is capable of conserving differences.

Such inclusion practice has other important and beneficial aspects. The more powerful is the level of our mental organization, the greater is our capacity to discern new properties in nature—that is, our capacity to produce knowledge. Therefore, the new inclusion practice promotes the growth of knowledge.

Inclusion also requires the recognition of autonomy. Such recognition is the basis of morality. The process of creation can only work on universal inclusion. Universal morality that recognizes autonomy of all that exists is intrinsic to the new inclusion practice. Thus the new practice will contribute to our moral development.

The unique feature of the human race is our capacity to perform symbolic operations. Creating symbolic mental constructs is our most essential function—

one that sustains us as human beings. By creating new and more powerful levels of symbolic organization, we exercise our most essential function. In other words, we gratify this function.

Gratification is the source of pleasure. The emotional gratification we experience in an act of creation is the source of aesthetic sentiment and aesthetic values. By engaging in the process of creation we conserve and gratify our most essential function, which brings us a very unique, human kind of satisfaction, happiness, and joy. The happiness and joy we experience in an act of creation make a very good foundation on which we can and should build our life, both as individuals and social beings.

As the above makes clear, the practice of inclusion that uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle is the only way to end exclusion and domination. Unlike the current assumption of ontological primacy of reason, this principle passes the test of rational justification and empirical verification, which makes the new inclusion practice invulnerable to subjective and arbitrary challenges. By focusing on creating new and more powerful levels and forms of organization—the proven path toward conservation—this practice ensures the conservation of all differences as particular cases of increasingly more comprehensive and powerful totalities. This practice is truly universal since all cultures in one way or another recognize the importance of creation. The adoption of this process as the main organizing principle does not favor any particular cultural tradition. As a result, the new practice is not culturally specific; it is culturally neutral and universal in its appeal. There is also another sense in which this practice is universal. It is not selective in its application. As universally inclusive, it offers no ground for exclusion and domination that otherwise may in some benign looking form insinuate themselves into our society and its institutions. Working against all forms of exclusion and domination, the new practice will help to achieve the only true form of emancipation—the emancipation for all.

## CONCLUSION

Politics of inclusion has been in the center of public life in America for more than several decades. Its longevity proves that it is more than a mere fad. The continued prominence of the problem of inclusion is a good indication that

inclusion has a fundamental value in the social universe.

As this paper has explained, the roots of inclusion originate well beyond the human world in the very nature of our universe. Inclusion has been central to the evolution: from tiny particles, to galaxies, stars, and planets, to life forms, intelligence, human society and civilization. The connection between inclusion and evolution is what makes inclusion so central to our existence. Humanity is a product of this evolution and has, as a result, inherited all its basic features. Inclusion is an essential aspect of the process of creation that drives the evolution. This fact may very well explain why the issue of inclusion--or its inverse, exclusion--has been central to every major transition period in human history that involved a fundamental rethinking of social forms and institutions.

Our civilization is currently in such period of transition. Its survival is once again at stake. As in the past, the issue of inclusion/exclusion is one of the principal challenges we face. In the drumbeat of today's political clashes one hears a persistent call that reflects a widespread belief that the elimination of exclusion and domination is very important for the continued evolution of our civilization.

This article has shown that the current practice of inclusion is profoundly flawed, which explains why it has been unsuccessful and has, in fact, become a source of divisions and conflicts in our society. It is based on an arbitrary, subjective, and ultimately irrational assumption. It is culturally specific and, therefore, cannot be universal in its appeal. This practice is blind to the fact that true empowerment is always self-empowerment. The practice that does not recognize this fact can only be elitist and paternalistic; such practice cannot empower anyone. Finally, the current inclusion practice has a profound inner contradiction. Despite its claims to the contrary, it cannot in principle conserve differences.

As has been argued, inclusion is an essential aspect of the process of creation. Just like creation cannot work without inclusion, inclusion will not work without creation. Therefore, the process of creation must be an integral part of the new inclusion practice. The recognition of the importance of the process of creation is not specific to a particular culture, which makes the new inclusion practice universal in its character. As the foundational principle for the new inclusion practice, the process of creation successfully passes the test of rational justification



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and empirical verification. It is a source of our knowledge and has a vital moral and aesthetic dimension. These considerations speak very much in favor of adopting the process of creation as the main organizing principle of the new practice of inclusion.

Any practice is ultimately a collective endeavor. In order to exist, it must involve many people. The new inclusion practice is no exception. In fact, it can only function as a collective endeavor of equal partners. The very understanding of inclusion, as universal inclusion, and empowerment, as self-empowerment, is inimical to any expression of elitism and paternalism. The new practice sees inclusion precisely in terms of interactions among equals—both groups and individuals—who in the process of their interactions create new and more powerful levels and forms of organization that include all differences as its particular cases. The success of the new practice, perhaps more than the success of any other practice of inclusion, vitally depends on creative interactions among participants; and not just on inputs of their ideas and solutions. Creative interactions are the very essence of the new practice.

Throughout history the emancipation of humanity has been one of the most important goals pursued by our civilization. The elimination of exclusion and domination is an important part of this pursuit. The politics of inclusion desperately needs new ideas and approaches. Efforts to stimulate and broaden the discussion of the politics of inclusion are very important particularly at this day and age. This contribution is not the first and certainly not the last in the long line of such efforts. Despite differences and disagreements, they all have the same motivation and the objective: to eliminate exclusion and domination and, ultimately, to fulfill the promise of human emancipation.

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