Conversations about inclusion in an AIAEE Context: A Review of
Radical Inclusion: What the Post-9/11 world should have taught us about leadership

Glen C. Shinn
Professor Emeritus
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas USA
g-shinn@tamu.edu

R. Kirby Barrick
Professor Emeritus
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida USA
kbarrick@ufl.edu

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Martin Dempsey, U.S. Army Ret. and Rubenstein Fellow at Duke University, and Ori Brafman, a Distinguished Teaching Fellow at UC Berkeley with research in distributed networks, have analyzed today's leadership landscape. Popular press reviews of the 2017 book, *Radical Inclusion,* report broad implications for corporate leadership and organizational improvement. This review compares and contrasts Dempsey and Brafman's leadership principles with implications and applications for international agricultural and extension education networks.

The Operating Environment

The central feature of part 1 is the effects of operating environments, and that culture and context are crucial in decision-making processes. Listening and collaboration have always been essential elements but are more critical in today's education and training environments.
The authors argue that emerging leadership principles mutate from the core DNA of our culture. Identities based on communities (contexts) shape our identities, our sense of security, and create order.

As a point of reference, 9/11 marked a dramatic cultural change. During the rapid change, instincts called for more control—but these instincts proved wrong! During the 9/11 chaos, "brotherhood" became more inclusive but at the exclusion of others. Facts became less reliable due to digital echoes—a recurring expression of the rapid transmission of information but information that became significantly distorted in the communication.
Dempsey and Brafman present six leadership tools for today's operating environment—"give them memories; make it matter; learn to imagine; develop a bias for action; co-create context; (and) relinquish control" (p. xiii). Simultaneously, Dempsey and Brafman identify valued

instincts as "listen; amplify, and include," They advise that the suite of nine tools and instincts be understood and practiced as a cohesive set—not à la carte.

The Operating Environment in Five Points
- Today's rapid change is due to media speed, technologies, and shifting organizational cultures.
- Recognize "facts vs. narratives" are clouds of unknown or distorted information.
- Digital echo narratives emerge from events, but often the echoes are incorrect.
- Communities spawn identities and narratives that become new faces of the organization.
- "Most interesting" often sways public acceptance rather than "validated facts."

Implications from The Operating Environment
- Distinguish between inclusion and decentralization and that "more of us—all of us" produces a synergy that is powerful and inclusive.
- Cognitive biases affect the speed of recognition and the authenticity of the story.
- Bridge communities and distill the fog that exists.
- Compelling, emotional, and repeated narratives often channel acceptance and public perception.
- Use the 80/20 principle to identify and focus on the 20 percent of the "echo" that really counts.

Applications from The Operating Environment
- Embrace feature narratives that describe the value and impact of the agricultural and extension education

networks as a larger interconnected organization.

- Develop a campaign based on compelling, emotional, repeated narratives.
- Address the inclusion of multiple actors and strategies that engage the organization.
- Develop narratives that become the face of the organization and that match the culture and the context of the professional society.
- Recognize and co-create bias for action that advances public good and increases shared situation awareness.

The Operating Environment of AIAEE

AIAEE was founded as an organization "for agricultural and extension educators who share a common goal of strengthening agricultural and extension education programs and institutions worldwide." In that regard, the organization should or must operate in an inclusive environment. Agricultural education, from a U.S. perspective, generally includes school-based educational programs that were created and are sustained in the career and technical (formerly vocational) arena, and extension education generally defines programs designed to prepare educators for the non-formal instructional roles associated with the USDA and U.S. colleges of agriculture and related sciences.

To be truly an "international" organization, AIAEE must operate beyond the US-centric definitions to include the preparation of educators in all disciplines of agriculture and non-formal educators under the auspices of agriculture ministries worldwide. An inclusive environment dictates that leadership within the organization should manifest itself in ensuring that agricultural and extension educators have opportunities to participate fully in the programs of the society

regardless of their homeland. Connecting with the local leaders is critical, including interactions with local advisory councils and others with a stake in creating an open environment for change.

Harnessing The Power of Inclusion

Part 2 examines economics and the power associated with inclusion. Chapter 3, dealing with the economics of inclusion, notes that a disconnected individual with interests and aspirations becomes more connected by showing passion and curiosity and through groups with similar interests.

Dempsey and Brafman discuss three central points to harness power including the cost of exclusion, bringing a cause to preexisting communities, and that inclusion is participating, personalizing, and purposeful. The point made that although you need to know a lot, you also need to know what you do not know. A more reliable set of facts and narratives is known when information is collected from the edge of the organization.

Drawing on his previous book, Brafman opined that decentralized organizations (starfish-like) are at a decided advantage when compared with centralized (spider-like) organizations.

Using social science research methods, Dempsey and Brafman show how efforts to democratize content by changing from organizational views to humanization makes a narrative emotionally salient. Paraphrasing George S. Patton, the authors advise leaders to describe what to accomplish (mission command) but allow flexibility in how to do it. Effective leaders provide an ideology and inspire the followers, but then let go of message control.

Using the human brain as an organizational metaphor, the authors describe the cost of control, the effects of mistakes, and the value of "surprise

neurons." The advantage value comes not from recognizing errors rather from diverse observers who provide "anomaly" data that do not conform to expected patterns.

In conclusion, Chapter 5 recognizes social science research and the power of belonging that contributes to identity, security, and order. Social exclusion, on the other hand, brings increased negative behaviors. The authors say, "The change in social fabric to today's society has made belongingness a little more complicated, especially for young people, whose experiences are dominated by the digital world" (p. 72). They recognize new social networks and that "we must commit…to ensuring that people feel a sense of belonging in our organization" (p. 78).

Implications from Harnessing The Power of Inclusion
- Personalized belonging brings a sense of power and purpose, and consequently, organizations become more active.
- Communicated purpose, shared goals, community, perceived order, and predictability increase inclusion.
- Transform research findings into compelling narratives.
- Connecting evidence-based practice increases the impact when connected through community leaders using a decentralized approach.

Applications from Harnessing The Power of Inclusion
- A sense of belonging is crucial to organizational sustainability.
- Benefits come from increasing effort to include members from the "edge."
- Communicating through multiple channels brings the cause to the broader community.

- Using peripheral vision to gather data from the edge enhances the situational awareness of leaders.

The Inclusive Leader
The heart of Dempsey and Brafman's case for inclusion lies within the leader; a leader with more to do and less time to do it. Part 3 lays out six leadership principles that are foundational to inclusion and ultimately to success. In a complex, changing, and competing environment, leaders aspire for trust and confidence. To pass on confidence, Dempsey and Brafman advise to begin by revealing self, then promoting individual potential, and finally interconnecting within the team—large or small. Success or failure often hinges on actions that make people feel like they belong.

Dempsey opens with the importance of connecting effort with meaning. Attempts to "make it matter" requires explanations, encouragement, and inspiration. Imagination and listening are also fundamental skills. Dempsey and Brafman describe conditions of the leader as one who challenges assumptions and the status quo while accepting and connecting different thoughts and complexities. They warn of simplicity and that the first solution may not be the right answer.

Using a familiar 1871 classic, the Red Queen warns Alice that in Wonderland "to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that." Dempsey and Brafman contrast the 1871-2017 eras and underscore the need to develop a bias for action and to adapt and evolve quickly. They advise to include clarity of purpose, a unity of effort, shared power, constant communication, and trust. In short, to act, assess, and act again as you co-create context for the organization.

Analogizing Waze navigational software, the authors' highlight the need for

shared information from the edge of the organization. "What the public wants" creates and sustains change. By relinquishing control, using an instinct for inclusion, and building collaboration and trust, leaders can shape and sustain powerful organizations. The choice between "winner-take-all" vs. "collaborative space" is similar to a philosophy of scarcity vs. abundance. Order and inclusion exist in tension and reduces the "arc of instability." The goal is to increase organizational effectiveness and build a history of success. Part 3 closes with admonitions to listen, amplify, and include. Listening is a key to learning while amplification creates team expectations and inclusion empowers the membership. Using a football analogy, the authors advise to "go wide and deep."

Implications from The Inclusive Leader
- Operating environments define how relationships differ.
- Six principles and a "Waze-like" navigational system set a framework for leaders in dynamic environments.
- Responsibilities begin with the leader, spill out to individuals, and finally permeate the organization.
- Professional societies have different hierarchical structures than military or academic organizations. However, inclusion is a common thread.
- Rather than autocratic or laissez-faire, radical inclusion is an intentional action by the leaders. Adopting a philosophy of abundance fits a global perspective.

Applications from The Inclusive Leader
Leadership can hinder organizational efforts, especially in global environments. Foreign countries have not enjoyed the legislation and appropriations like the U.S. for public education in agriculture nor extension programs. In fact, in many

countries, school-based agricultural education exists minimally or not at all and non-formal education (training and visitation programs) has been privatized. Globally, then, the question arises regarding what federal agency can and should provide leadership for agricultural and extension education: education or agriculture. The answer, logically, is both. AIAEE can catalyze identifying and partnering with the appropriate leaders in agriculture and extension in providing direction and programming in support of domestic and international cooperation in agriculture and extension education. Inclusive leaders have experienced successes and failures and know what "right" looks like and what "wrong" looks like. They make it matter. Much like the scientific method, leaders find possible solutions and work cooperatively in finding the best fit rather than going with the first idea that arises. Determining the work and future of the organization hinges on listening, amplifying, and including others.

In Inclusion We Trust
Digital echo is a reoccurring and disturbing theme of the book. Dempsey and Brafman describe the echo "where information passes from individual to individual more quickly but in the process often becomes distorted" (p. xii). Two imperatives emerge; digital echo increases the need for inclusion, and leveraging inclusion gains better information and more effectively communicates the message. The authors' prescription for decreasing echo is increasing trust and confidence. Trust is an essential element in ensuring greater knowledge and better outcomes. Dempsey's advice is that "we are all scouts"—emissaries who provide critically, often disparate, facts and information to the organization. The organization relies on common metrics to measure progress and follows a pattern of learning, listening,

amplifying, and adapting. Repetition, re-emphasis, and reinforcement fill the book—perhaps as a stimulus for a response.

Chapter 14 matches negative forces—inequities, intolerances, biases, and manipulation—against positive forces—integrity, empathy, collaboration, and accountability. Dempsey and Brafman advocate leadership be best viewed with peripheral vision—the ability to see objects and movement outside of the direct line of sight. Unsaid, the reciprocal of peripheral vision is tunnel vision—perhaps a more common phenomenon for self-serving quasi-leaders. The authors close with a rejoinder that leadership is more critical and more difficult today than before. Moreover, that inclusion is a radical imperative.

Implications from "In Inclusion We Trust"

- Sustainability depends on harvesting, validating, and sharing of information throughout the organization—from the core to the edge.
- Success may hinge on "what right looks like" but that inclusion is not as a "feel-good movement." Rather, inclusion "has the power to change the world" (p. 168).
- Peripheral vision extends 200–220° horizontally from the line of sight. Collecting information from the edge is additive and contributory.

Applications from "In Inclusion We Trust"

Nearly three decades ago, the late Dr. Barnabas Dlamini, then Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Swaziland, made it clear to a research team of agricultural economics and agricultural education professionals working at his institution. "Don't tell us what to do; help us do what we have decided needs to be done." The trust factor was an important one. Simply sharing what and how it is done in the U.S. is not satisfactory. Instead, include

educators from both venues in deciding what is best for the local environment and provide inclusive leadership and planning in assisting the local entities in making needed progress. As Dempsey and Brafman conclude, the essence of leadership is building trust.

Conclusions

Leadership is a recurrent topic with an Amazon search revealing more than 30,000 titles from which to choose. Narrow the search to "organizational leadership" and the titles reduce to 6,000-plus. While Dempsey and Brafman's 2017 *Radical Inclusion* will not likely outlast or outsell Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* written in the 5th century, it is a remindful read. Tension exists between verifiable truths vs. foggy distortions and apathy. Moreover, a reminder that no one of us is as smart as all of us.

While AIAEE is celebrating its 35th year, JIAEE is celebrating its 25th anniversary, young and tiny when compared with many journals. During that quarter-century, dramatic changes have occurred in our operating environment—climate, demographics, foods, health, politics, population, social media, technologies, and terrorism. Nevertheless, "in the absence of verifiable truth, competing narratives will vie for allegiance," and fear of losing control promotes exclusion (p. 14).

Dempsey and Brafman stress the need for leaders at all levels to cultivate an environment of participation in which members "need not be a part of every meeting, but are you enabling them to participate in furthering the organization's overall goals" (p. 51)? A radical imperative for AIAEE: communicate the purpose, inspire participation, and stimulate personalization. A radical imperative for leaders: Read the book. Analyze the narratives. Act.