

Beyond belonging and identification: Towards organizational models of change supporting inclusion and social equality

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Research in organizational change has increasingly emphasized its micro-processes or micro-foundations, theorizing the importance of multi-level actors, those ‘on the ground’, to the prospects for change. Local actors’ practice and discourse is central within strategy-as-practice approaches, and in notions of ‘institutional work’ and embedded agency. Such perspectives arguably have much to share with progressive theories of leadership as collective, situated, and emergent. In this project, I apply these concepts to the study of leading organizational change in the domain of social equality and inclusion. To date the literature has examined inclusion largely as an individual-level phenomenon, referring to an individual’s need for belongingness, perceived distinctiveness relative to others, or tendency to socially identify with a particular group. Relatively little is known about the processes through which inclusion might be present more broadly in an organization, reflect a change in material practices, or *be developed* at an organizational level of analysis. I will present a theoretical framework and emerging qualitative data focused on efforts of a range of actors in a large law enforcement organization to effect change in this domain. I will also discuss findings from the second report of the ‘Diversity Leads/DiversitéEnTête Montréal’ study, concerning demographic diversity among senior leaders across six sectors of employment.

