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The Effects of Communication Strategies and Situational Contexts on Army Leaders' Willingness to be Inclusive with their Soldiers

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The U.S. Army seeks to foster climates for inclusion to facilitate force readiness and enhance force capabilities. Through the implementation of inclusive practices, the Army aims to leverage its broad diversity toward solving complex, multi-faceted mission objectives. The current research effort aimed to both investigate the effectiveness of various inclusion-based communications strategies and examine the situational contexts in which Army leaders are likely to foster inclusion within their units. Results indicate that communications highlighting the benefits of inclusion does not increase Army leaders' willingness to be inclusive compared to communications that merely define inclusion in the Army. Findings did indicate, however, that situational context and type of inclusive action does influence Army leaders' willingness to be inclusive. These findings provide insight about the boundary conditions of inclusion in the Army and add to the burgeoning empirical research on inclusion, more broadly.

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THE EFFECTS OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND SITUATIONAL CONTEXTS ON ARMY LEADERS' WILLINGNESS TO BE INCLUSIVE WITH THEIR SOLDIERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research Requirement:

Integrating values of dignity, respect and inclusion into the culture and climate of the Army at all levels supports and builds the resilience and readiness of our military forces. Leaders play a pivotal role in developing the culture in an organization (e.g., Schein, 2010; Wasserman, Gallegos, & Ferdman, 2008) and facilitate the development of shared perceptions of an organization's climate. Moreover, establishing a positive climate is codified in Army doctrinal and policy regulations for leaders (see Department of the Army, 2012b, 2014, 2017). Because leaders have such a strong role in defining culture and climate, it is important to understand the impact of their actions on developing a climate for inclusion. This research examined the communications strategies that may promote inclusive leader actions and the situational contexts in which leaders are likely to act inclusively (including the boundary conditions of inclusion). In addition, this research developed a self-assessment measure for counter-productive leadership styles that may influence actions of inclusion in Army contexts.

Procedure:

Data were collected from Soldiers across five Army installations through surveys. Surveys were developed using a mixed design with between-participant and within-participant factors. First, two communications strategies were experimentally manipulated between-participants to assess their effectiveness at promoting inclusive leader actions. These communications strategies consisted of short reading passages that either defined inclusion or, in addition to this definition, provided a real-world historical account highlighting the benefits of inclusion. Second, 12 scenarios representing various Army contexts (e.g., location, task type) were presented on a within-participants basis to participants. In addition, the survey measured the typical degree of inclusion of various social groups in the Army (e.g., enlisted, combat support Soldiers) and the counter-productive leadership styles of Army leaders.

Findings:

A total of 269 Soldiers from the U.S. Army were recruited to complete the survey. The results of a single experiment revealed several findings of interest to inclusion research in the Army. First, the experimental manipulation of communications strategy returned a null result; highlighting the benefits of inclusion (vs. a definitional control condition) did not seem to affect leaders' willingness to be inclusive across scenarios. This finding suggests that illustrating the benefits of inclusion in a reading passage story does not increase leader willingness to be inclusive beyond merely providing a definition of inclusion. Second, although expressed willingness to be inclusive was above the midpoint for each scenario, Army leaders did show variability in their willingness to be inclusive in certain contextual scenarios. Specifically, Army leaders were more willing to be inclusive in contexts such as a sensing session, social event planning, or positive After Action Review (AAR) compared to contexts describing scenarios about being in a combat zones or making tasking assignment decisions. Third, findings also

revealed that Army leaders preferred certain inclusive actions; leaders were more willing to allow Soldiers to speak up, express differing perspectives, and ask for unique input than they were to allow for open debate or ask 'why' decisions were being made. Lastly, Army leaders that self-reported themselves to possess greater counter-productive leadership styles were also less willing to be inclusive across scenarios.

Utilization and Dissemination of Findings:

This research informs the current efforts to foster inclusive climates in the U.S. Army. Findings from this research provide a foundational understanding of when and how leaders are likely to act inclusively with their Soldiers in their unit. Specifically, this research provides an understanding of the situational contexts that may provide barriers (i.e., boundary conditions) to inclusive action that are unique to the Army. Identifying situations that may inhibit inclusive practices can help the Army develop doctrine and training that can focus on breaking down potential barriers to inclusion (where appropriate). In addition, this research also identified a communications strategy that may not foster inclusion beyond a definition of inclusion. This finding could help the Army, in the future, narrow down effective strategies to communicate inclusion to Army leaders. Overall, understanding when and how Army leaders foster inclusion in their units provides insight that the Army can use toward their organizational goals of building and maintaining climates for inclusion.

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Introduction

Organizational effectiveness is often improved when the diverse perspectives, experiences, and ways of thinking of unit members are acknowledged and utilized. A climate for inclusion is one way organizations can manage and leverage their diversity. Inclusion is a practice within an organizational environment whereby members feel recognized, integrated, and valued for their contributions to the group via internal processes that occur as a part of daily organizational functioning (e.g., policies, practices, procedures, rewards/punishments; see Ferdman, 2014). In the Army, a climate for inclusion can be defined as "shared perceptions that all members of the team are valued and integrated into the team, and their capabilities are recognized and leveraged so that all are enabled to participate and contribute to the mission, to their full potential" (Jiménez-Rodríguez, Brown, Ratwani, & Key-Roberts, 2017; cf. Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2011). Of importance, creating positive climates is a core competency and requirement of leaders as codified in Army doctrinal and policy regulations for leaders (see Department of the Army, 2012b, 2014, 2017). Thus, leaders play an integral role in the establishment and maintenance of organizational climates.

The aim of this research is to examine the communication strategies and situational contexts in which Army leaders will likely foster inclusion in their units. Specifically, this research experimentally tests the utility of communicating inclusion benefits to Army leaders to promote inclusive actions. In addition, this research investigates the situational contexts or scenarios in which Army leaders are likely to act inclusively with their Soldiers. To help situate this research, the following literature review will expand on the concept of inclusion and, specifically, the importance that leaders play in facilitating inclusion within organizations.

The Practice and Process of Inclusion

Inclusion is a practice and a process aimed at integrating and leveraging the unique characteristics of people in groups. The experience of inclusion has been conceptualized as one in which people feel valued, respected, authentic to themselves, psychologically safe, involved in decision-making, and recognized for having a unique identity (Ferdman, 2014; Shore et al., 2011). By fostering inclusion, organizations allow group members to be fully themselves while, at the same time, encouraging members to engage collaboratively within the group towards collective goals (Ferdman, 2010). Of importance, inclusion has often been theorized by scholars as a means to leverage and reap the benefits of diversity within organizations (Cox & Blake, 1991; Stahl, Mäkelä, Zander, & Maznevski, 2010). From an information processing perspective, inclusion allows for diverse voices to be heard and utilized in decision-making which can facilitate improved organizational outcomes (Homan, van Kippenberg, van Kleef, & De Dreu, 2007; Reagans, Zukerman, & McEvily, 2004; van Knippenberg, & Schippers, 2007; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). More specifically, inclusive practices provide a framework from which diversity can be leveraged by providing decision-makers access to a larger pool of knowledge, skills, and experiences to apply to complex problems, resulting in greater effectiveness and innovation (Mitchell, Boyle, Parker, Giles, & Chiang, 2015).

The Vital Role of Leaders Fostering Inclusion

Research on inclusion suggests that leaders play an integral role in fostering inclusion within groups. Generally speaking, leaders act as the major drivers within organizations; leaders set specific goals and priorities, role model expected behavior that is rewarded and recognized, and enact initiatives that affect group dynamics and climate (e.g., Barling, Loughlin, & Kelloway, 2002; Ehrhart, Schneider, & Macey, 2014; Hong, Liao, & Jiang, 2013; Schein, 2010; Zohar & Luria, 2005). In the Army, doctrine stresses the important role of a leader's actions for fostering positive climates (Department of the Army, 2012b; 2015); specifically, leaders are instructed to encourage teamwork, fairness and inclusiveness, and open/candid communication—all important characteristics of inclusive environments. Generally speaking, leaders who foster inclusivity are those that focus on valuing and leveraging diversity through the practice of inviting and appreciating input of all members in decision-making processes (e.g., Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010; Hannum, McFeeters, & Booysen, 2010; Hollander, 2009; Mor Barak, 2011; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Leaders foster inclusivity when they engage others with sincere curiosity, have an open frame of mind, and seek out voices and experiences that might be missing from conversations and decision-making (Gallegos, 2014; Hannum et al., 2010). Furthermore, inclusive leadership requires leaders to relinquish a degree of power that has traditionally defined leadership; to be inclusive, leaders must move away from an entity-based leadership mindset (being solely directive and in control of decisions) to a more relational-based leadership mindset that emphasizes collective decision-making, where power is shared throughout the group (Booysen, 2014). Of importance, inclusive leadership has been linked to positive group outcomes; groups with inclusive leaders are more likely to feel psychologically safe (Carmeli et al., 2010; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006), be more engaged in work tasks (Carmeli et al., 2010), have less turnover (Nishii & Mayer, 2009), and have improved team performance (Mitchell et al., 2015).

Inclusion in an Army Context

The U.S. Army recognizes the importance of positive organizational climates characterized by inclusion and the primary role that leaders play in facilitating positive command climates. Given that the Army has progressively grown into a more diverse organization, understanding how to manage and capitalize on its diversity is important to ensure that the Army is operating to its full potential (Department of the Army, 2010). Going beyond surface-level demographic characteristics (e.g., age, sex, race), the Army defines diversity broadly as "the different attributes, experiences, and backgrounds of our Soldiers, Civilians, and Family Members that further enhance our global capabilities and contribute to an adaptive, culturally astute Army" (Department of the Army, 2010, p. 1). According to the Department of Defense's (DOD) 2012 Diversity and Strategic Plan, the DOD gains "a strategic advantage by leveraging the diversity of all members and creating an inclusive environment in which each member is valued and encouraged to provide ideas critical to innovation, optimization, and organizational mission success" (p. 3). Similarly, the Army Diversity Roadmap (Department of the Army, 2010) emphasizes the importance of inclusive climates which will (a) allow the Army to leverage its diversity to better accomplish its mission, (b) help mitigate negative social attitudes and problematic interpersonal behaviors that detract from accomplishing the mission, and (c)

increase retention of diverse talent which is becoming increasingly more relevant in order to effectively execute complex missions.

One institutional mechanism in which the Army applies an inclusion focus is the mission command philosophy found in Army doctrine. The Army's command philosophy of mission command provides a foundational basis for Army leaders to capitalize upon their subordinates by soliciting their input and providing them latitude to execute their orders within their expressed intent (Department of the Army, 2012a; see also, King, 2017). Based on mutual trust and shared understanding, under the mission command philosophy, commanders inform subordinates with their intent and purpose of a given mission (e.g., key tasks, desired end states). Understanding their commander's intent, subordinates then execute the mission in a manner that best fits the situation using disciplined initiative (Department of the Army, 2012a). This process allows commanders to accept risk, whereby commanders integrate input from staff, subordinates, and other stakeholders to help decide acceptable levels of risk to accomplish a mission. However, mission command is a dynamic process and is not without some boundary conditions depending on situational contexts; during certain situations (e.g., during active operations) where the tactical risk may be too great for the benefits gained, Army leaders may need to intervene to exert tighter control over their subordinates (Department of the Army, 2012a). In these situations, appropriate control is needed to ensure that risks are mitigated and that units can adapt to changing situations quickly. In sum, the mission command philosophy provides a process, codified in doctrine, which promotes Army leaders to be more inclusive with their Soldiers by creating a dialogue and loosening control over how tasks are accomplished (where appropriate). Moreover, this research seeks to understand the boundary conditions where leaders find inclusive action appropriate or inappropriate given varying situational contexts.

Empirical research on inclusion in military contexts is still largely in the nascent stages of study. The hierarchical structure, strict policy standards of behavior, nature of military operations, and visible discriminators of status in the military provide a unique setting to implement inclusive climates. However, despite these unique characteristics of the Army profession, the Army has recently begun to promote research on inclusion with the hopes that an inclusive and positive environment for Soldiers will improve key outcomes of interest to the Army such as readiness, performance, and unit effectiveness (Department of the Army, 2010; Department of Defense, 2012). For example, the Center for Army Leadership's (CAL) Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) has linked perceptions of trust of one's leader (an important aspect of inclusion; see Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006) with the effectiveness of leaders creating a positive environment (Riley, Cavanaugh, Fallesen, & Jones, 2016). Furthermore, in a program of research conducted by the U.S. Army Research Institute for Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI), research has focused on developing a conceptual understanding of what inclusion looks like in the Army (Lynn, Ratcliff, & Key-Roberts, 2017), developing assessments to measure a climate for inclusion in Army units (Jiménez-Rodríguez et al., 2017), and identifying leader actions that facilitate inclusive climates in the Army (Ratcliff, Jiménez-Rodríguez, Key-Roberts, 2017). For instance, research has indicated that perceptions of fair treatment, openness to differences, integration of members, leveraging of unique perspectives and expertise, and shared understanding of communication are all essential dimensions of a climate for inclusion in the Army (Jiménez-Rodríguez et al., 2017). However, research has yet to examine the practical applications of inclusion in the Army, especially in

terms of identifying communications strategies that promote inclusion for leaders and the situational contexts in which Army leaders are likely to be inclusive with their Soldiers.

Communication Strategies for Inclusion

There has been little empirical research focusing on how to communicate support for inclusion-based practices and climates to leaders. Most research has focused on strategies to improve acceptance of diversity rather than how to manage diversity via inclusion. Typically, diversity initiatives use strategies that appeal to the heart, head, and hand (see Hayles, 2014; Hayes & Russell, 1997). For instance, messages can be geared in a moral fashion that appeals to the heart (e.g., "diversity is the right thing to do"), appeal to the head (e.g., "diversity leads to innovation and performance gains"), and messages can appeal to actions and behavior, or the hand (e.g., "we are all similar to one another and are working toward a common goal"). Hayles (2014) notes that communication strategies for diversity and inclusion initiatives should be appropriate for the situation and the target audience; individuals can often differ in terms of their understanding and receptiveness to diversity topics which necessitates different strategies depending on the individual's level of understanding related to diversity. Communications about diversity and inclusion often must move past emphasizing the mere presence of diversity, which does not guarantee positive outcomes (Amabile & Khaire, 2008; Leung, Maddus, Galinsky, & Chiv, 2008), but rather, discuss how diversity facilitates better performance through processes such as inclusion. Indeed, the information-processing perspective or business case for diversity emphasizes that inclusive practices allow for diversity to be leveraged to reach maximal organizational effectiveness and performance (Cox, 1993; Homan et al., 2007; Reagans et al., 2004; van Dijk, Meyer, van Engen, & Loyd, 2017). Moreover, given that successful resolution of complex problems is a major focus within the military, an appeal to the information-processing benefits that groups might gain through inclusive practices is likely to resonate especially well with military leaders.

Contextual Boundary Conditions of Inclusion

To the authors' knowledge, there has been limited research investigating the situational contexts that inform on boundary conditions to the inclusive actions of leaders. Situational context can often be more influential in shaping behavior than the dispositions of leaders (Fiedler, 1967; Hanna, Uhl-Bien, Avolio, & Cavarretta, 2009; National Research Council, 2014; Ross & Nisbett, 1991). In military environments, situational context is a unique, and important factor that affects leader actions. Military leaders and their Soldiers may experience isolation, ambiguity, danger, and the need to make rapid decisions under extreme circumstances. Soldiers who are deployed in combat zones experience particularly high levels of uncertainty and unpredictability; adding to the stress is the potential for death, injury, or destruction associated with military operations. Even peace-keeping missions and stability operations can pose life-threatening dangers. Moreover, as the mission command philosophy explicates, being more open and communicative with your subordinates may not always be feasible or appropriate given certain situational constraints where the benefit to doing so may not outweigh the potential cost which could be life-threatening in certain circumstances (Department of the Army, 2012a). While leadership in military operational environments presents unique challenges, a large portion of a Soldier's career still occurs in garrison. Time in garrison is aimed at allowing Soldiers to

recuperate from deployment and reconnect with their families. Individual, institutional, and collective training are also a primary focus of garrison life, resulting in greater predictability and stability for Soldiers. Counter to combat operations, garrison environments offer relatively safe operating conditions in which ambiguity is generally low, information is readily accessible, more risks can be taken, and time for action is plentiful.

The situational contexts encountered by leaders provides informational cues regarding the appropriate times and strategies to manage and to lead their units (see National Research Council, 2014). Moreover, the Army seeks to develop *contextual leaders* who can "effectively interpret, assess, and mold the social interactions within the unit to influence the desired social context, capitalize on opportunities as they evolve, and ultimately enhance unit performance" (National Research Council, 2014). Thus, the Army strives to develop leaders who can adjust their actions based on situational factors (e.g., setting, the adversary, mission objectives, unit social dynamics, organizational policies) to best meet the situational needs for mission success (Department of the Army, 2012b). However, to date, it is unclear how various situational contexts in an Army environment will affect leaders' willingness to foster inclusion in their units.

Despite the lack of empirical research on situational contexts that affect inclusive practices, we believe that context should play an important role in how leaders promote inclusion. Given that inclusion is a process that requires more effort and resources to put into practice (e.g., soliciting input, ensuring others feel welcomed, getting to know the uniqueness of group members), under certain contexts, it may be more difficult to act inclusively due to situational constraints (e.g., lack of time, resources, environmental threats). For instance, in the Army, leaders are faced with tight time constraints and situations that require quick, decisive thinking (e.g., combat zones) which may make leaders reluctant to act inclusively. Therefore, situational contexts that make inclusion more difficult (or inappropriate) to practice such as certain locations (e.g., combat zones), tasks (e.g., mission planning), and mission performance cues (e.g., unit performing poorly) might all be factors that could potentially affect inclusive practices of Army leaders. The goal of this research is to understand these limits and determine what situations serve as a boundary condition to the inclusive actions of Army leaders.

Counter-Productive Leadership

Beyond contextual factors related to the situations leaders may find themselves in, it is possible that a leader's style of leadership, as manifest through their behavioral actions toward subordinates, could affect a willingness to be inclusive. Given that inclusive leadership is tied with a collective-focused form of leadership (see Booysen, 2014), we believed that a counter-productive leadership style, where leadership is more self-focused away from the needs of the group, would be an inhibiting factor to acting inclusively with Soldiers. As defined by CAL, counter-productive leadership consists of behaviors performed by a leader that are counter to productive results, processes, and attitudes of subordinates, the organization, and the mission (Riley et al., 2016). Moreover, counter-productive leadership behaviors fit on a continuum that range from general counter-productive work behaviors (e.g., does little to help team cohesion, setting misplaced priorities) to more egregious, "toxic" behaviors (e.g., uses others as scapegoats for their embarrassing actions, berates subordinates for small mistakes) that are destructive to

others and the overall climate of the organization (Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Riley et al., 2016). Although there is relatively a limited prevalence of counter-productive leadership behavior in the Army (≤ 20% of Soldiers report their leaders acting this way), when this type of behavior does occur, it has been documented to have detrimental effects on team cohesion, discipline, and trust among members of Army units (see Riley et al., 2016). Thus, we wanted to investigate whether the leader themselves could present a boundary to inclusion in their units due to their behaviors and/or style of their leadership.

Experiment Overview

The current research aims to examine three areas of interest regarding the fostering of inclusion in order to better understand the process of inclusion in the Army. Specifically, this research examines how varying communication strategies and contextual cues affect inclusive actions for Army leaders. First, we experimentally test the effectiveness of communications that detail the benefits of inclusion on Army leaders' willingness be inclusive with their Soldiers. Second, we examine whether the inclusive actions of Army leaders vary depending on the situational context they are placed in to test if there are boundary conditions to inclusion by leaders in the Army. Third, we also examine the potential that a counter-productive leadership style may be antithetical to inclusion by undermining a leader's willingness to act inclusively. Ultimately, understanding how leaders in military contexts foster inclusion with their subordinates is critical to leadership effectiveness and organizational success, and is fundamental to promoting inclusive climates characterized by dignity and respect.

Method

Participants and Design

An initial sample of 269 Soldiers from the U.S. Army were recruited for participation in the experiment. The participant sample consisted of Soldiers from varying organizational roles, ranks, ages, races, and sexes (see Table 1). Overall, approximately 16% of the participants in the sample had at least one missing data point on the dependent variables; therefore, depending on the analysis conducted, sample sizes and degrees of freedom for statistical tests may differ. The experiment used a mixed-model design with communication strategy as a between-participants variable, and both situational context and inclusion actions as within-participants variables.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from Army installations during umbrella week[1] data collections at FORSCOM (U.S. Army Forces Command) locations and by appointment at TRADOC (U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command) locations.[2] After providing informed consent, participants were asked to complete a 30-minute paper survey.

[1] Umbrella weeks are periods of time in which time is allocated at Army installations for the purposes of collecting data from Soldiers.

[2] FORSCOM locations are described, generally, as Army installations in which Soldiers are embedded in operational units. By Contrast, TRADOC locations are ones in which Soldiers are attending an Army school for career and educational advancement.

Communication strategy. Participants started the survey by reading a short passage. Participants were randomly assigned (depending on the form they received: 'A' or 'B') to one of two conditions. In the *control communications condition*, participants simply read the definition of inclusion developed by ARI (i.e., "A climate of inclusion can be defined as shared perceptions that all members of the team are valued and integrated into the team, and their capabilities are recognized and leveraged so that all are enabled to participate and contribute to the mission, to their full potential"; Jiménez-Rodríguez et al., 2017).[3] In the *inclusion benefits communications condition*, participants read the ARI definition of inclusion followed by a short vignette describing a historical anecdote that exemplified the benefits of inclusion in decision-making. Specifically, the vignette described a situation in which a naval Officer put together a diverse team of scientists, ocean experts, mathematicians, and salvage experts to get their input about where a lost submarine was located in the Atlantic.[4] Importantly, the vignette highlighted how the aggregate input solicited from the diverse team was vital to the success of the mission. For a full description of experimental materials, see Appendix A.

Situational context and inclusive actions. After reading the short passage, participants read all 12 scenarios that were grouped by a common category (location type, task ability, task type, after action review). Scenarios ranged in length from 3–5 sentences and were designed to reflect realistic Army situations that were broad enough for Soldiers from all ranks and organizational role to find relevance. All scenarios were reviewed by two Army subject matter experts (SMEs) to ensure clarity, face validity, and comprehensiveness of the different situational contexts. For a complete description of scenarios, please see Appendix B.

***Location type scenarios*.** Participants were asked to consider four scenarios that varied by location type. For each location, participants were asked to imagine having a discussion with their Soldiers that was relevant to that location (e.g., discussing tasking assignments, maneuvering options). The four locations included: (a) a training center, (b) in garrison, (c) a non-combat zone, and (d) a combat zone.

[3] In planning this research, the authors felt that presenting a 'true' control condition (i.e., the absence of a definition of inclusion) would not be possible since the criterion of indicating levels of inclusiveness required that Soldiers understand what the operational definition of inclusion was in the context of the ratings.

[4] The example of a naval Officer in the vignette was used for two reasons: (a) it was an accurate historical example of inclusion in a military context and (b) we wanted to avoid potential demand characteristics that might occur if the Officer of focus was in same branch of the military as participants (i.e., the Army).

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of total sample (N = 269)

Variable	Frequency (*n*)	Percentage
Rank		
E3–E4	20	7.4
E5–E9	147	54.6
O1–O3	91	33.8
O4–O6	4	1.5
Unknown	7	2.6
Organizational Role		
Combat Arms	60	22.3
Combat Support	111	41.3
Combat Service Support	92	34.2
Unknown	6	2.2
Sex		
Male	223	82.9
Female	39	14.5
Unknown	7	2.6
Race		
American Indian	16	5.9
Asian	19	7.1
Black	42	15.6
Hispanic	35	13.0
Native Hawaiian	11	4.1
White	173	64.3
Unknown	10	3.7
Education		
High School	26	9.7
Some College	90	33.5
Bachelor's	112	41.6
Master's	32	11.9
Doctoral/Professional	3	1.1
Unknown	6	2.2
Variable	Range	Mean (SD)
Age (in years)	19–50	32.39 (7.23)

Task ability scenarios. Participants were asked to consider two scenarios that varied by the participant's perceived strength or weakness on a personally-defined area of knowledge. For the *strength scenario*, participants were asked to write in an area of knowledge that they considered a strength of theirs in an Army training situation. After writing in a personally relevant strength, participants then considered a training situation in which they were performing a task that was directly related to the strength they had written in for themselves. For the *weakness scenario*, participants completed the same scenario as the strength except this time they wrote in a weakness of theirs and used that weakness as the reference point for the scenario.

Task type scenarios. Participants were asked to consider four scenarios that varied by task type. For each task, participants were asked to imagine engaging in that task with their Soldiers. The four tasks included: (a) tasking assignments, (b) sensing session, (c) mission planning, and (d) social event planning.

After action review (AAR) performance scenarios. Participants were asked to consider two scenarios in which an after action review (AAR) was conducted, either after performing above standard or below standard on a training exercise. For the *AAR above standard scenario*, participants were asked to imagine that they were conducting an AAR to discuss a training in which their unit had performed well *above* standard. For the *AAR below standard scenario*,

participants were asked to imagine that they were conducting an AAR to discuss a training in which their unit had performed well *below* standard.

For each scenario, participants were asked to indicate their willingness to be inclusive (7-point Likert scale: 1 = *Not at all willing*, 7 = *Very much willing*) in reference to the given scenario. Participants indicated their willingness across five inclusive actions: (a) encourage Soldiers to speak up if someone with useful information is being ignored; (b) encourage Soldiers to express ideas or perspectives that differ from your own; (c) allow Soldiers to engage in open debate; (d) ask Soldiers for their unique input and suggestions; and (e) encourage Soldiers to ask 'why' decisions or changes are being made. These inclusive actions were derived from past research which had identified important dimensions of inclusion within the Army (Jiménez-Rodríguez et al., 2017). Participants were instructed to read each scenario carefully and then provide an open and honest response in terms of what they thought they would do in such a situation. If unsure, participants were instructed to go with their 'gut' response.

Typical leader inclusion of social categories within the total force. Upon completing the scenarios, participants were asked to consider the typical degree of leader inclusion in the U.S. Army. Specifically, participants were asked to indicate, based on personal experiences/observations, the degree to which, on average, leaders in the Army seek input when making decisions from individuals representing different social categories. Participants considered 20 social categories representing various subgroups within the total force (i.e., Officers, NCOs, enlisted, previously deployed, not deployed, combat arms, combat support, combat service support, Christian, non-Christian, male, female, White, non-White, high school education, college education, reservist, national guard, PT profile, civilian). These specific categories were chosen because they represent categories of status differences (e.g., historical, numerical, functional) within the Army context (National Research Council, 2014). For each social category, participants indicated the likelihood that a member of a given social category would be included in decision-making using a 7-point Likert scale (0 = *0% Likely*, 6 = *100% Likely*).

Counter-productive leadership self-assessment. Participants were asked to complete a short inventory regarding their 'leadership style'. Unbeknownst to participants, this measure of leadership style was in fact designed to assess participants' own level of counter-productive leadership. Using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Not at all like me*, 7 = *Very much like me*), participants responded to 20 items reflecting different counter-productive leadership behaviors (e.g., "I admit my mistakes when I'm wrong", "I sometimes criticize subordinates in front of others", or "I sometimes belittle or embarrass subordinates").[5] The 20 items were derived from an unpublished dataset which assessed perceptions of behaviors that were considered counter-productive in Army leaders as identified by work conducted at the Center for Army Leadership (Steele, 2011; M. R. Wolfe, personal communication, 2015).

[5] Some readers may view these items as reflecting general counter-productive work behaviors (cf. Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002); however, it is our belief that behaviors take on a qualitatively different meaning when they are performed by someone in leadership role who has power over a group of individuals. Moreover, in the context of the survey, participants were asked to rate these behaviors in terms of their role as leaders.

Demographics. Lastly, participants responded to several questions related to their demographic characteristics. Participants were asked to report their current military rank (e.g., CPT), current job area (e.g., 11B), organizational role classification (e.g., combat arms, combat support, combat service support), age, sex, race/ethnicity, level of education, regional background (e.g., urban, suburban, rural), and their most recent leadership position. In addition, participants also indicated their agreement (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*) to two questions that were intended to serve as a manipulation check for the communications strategy reading manipulation (i.e., "Fostering inclusive climates is important to the U.S. Army", "Leveraging unique perspectives is beneficial to Army unit outcomes").

Data Analysis Plan

Prior to analyses, data were entered and cleaned for missing data. For the analyses of scenarios, a series of within- and mixed-model ANOVAs were conducted by communication strategy (control vs. benefit), scenario type (e.g., location: training center vs. in garrison vs. non-combat zone vs. combat zone), and inclusion action (speaking up vs. differing perspectives vs. open debate vs. unique input vs. why questions). Initial analyses revealed that communications strategy did not exert any significant effects and therefore, subsequent analyses reported in text were conducted collapsed across this variable. Also, if Mauchly's test of sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated ($p < .05$), a degrees of freedom correction was made using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates if $\varepsilon < 0.75$ or Huynh-Feldt estimates if $\varepsilon > 0.75$.

Results

Situational Contexts

Location type scenario (*n* = 264). Three significant effects emerged from a 4 (location type scenario: training center, in garrison, non-combat zone, combat zone) × 5 (inclusion action: speaking up, differing perspectives, open debate, unique input, why questions) within-participants ANOVA. First, there was a significant main effect of location scenario, $F(2.08, 542.56) = 85.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .246$, $\eta_G^2 = .066$; multiple comparisons revealed that leaders were relatively more willing to be inclusive at a training center location ($M = 5.96$, $SD = 0.94$), followed by in garrison ($M = 5.54$, $SD = 1.20$) or non-combat zone locations ($M = 5.54$, $SD = 1.17$), and less willing to be inclusive at a combat zone location ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 1.41$), see Table 2. Second, there was a significant main effect of inclusion action, $F(2.89, 760.97) = 250.02$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .487$, $\eta_G^2 = .178$; multiple comparisons revealed that leaders were relatively more willing to allows Soldiers to speak up ($M = 6.40$, $SD = 0.89$), followed by seeking differing perspectives ($M = 5.87$, $SD = 0.99$), followed by getting unique input ($M = 5.78$, $SD = 1.02$), and less willing to allow Soldiers to ask why questions ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.51$) or engage in open debate ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.46$), see Table 2. Third, these effects were qualified by an interaction between location type scenario and inclusion action, $F(7.99, 2100.85) = 29.13$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .100$, $\eta_G^2 = .017$; notably, open debate ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 2.03$, ps $< .001$, ds > 0.245) and asking

why questions (M = 3.78, SD = 2.15, ps < .001, ds > 0.490) in a combat zone were inclusive actions that leaders seemed to be relatively less willing to do in this scenario (see Figure 1).[6]

Table 2
Location type scenario and inclusion action comparisons (n = 264)

Comparison	M_{diff} (SD_{diff})	p	95% CI of M_{diff}	Cohen's d_{av} [95% CI]
Location Type Scenario				
TC vs. IG	0.42 (0.93)	< .001*	[0.306, 0.532]	0.389 [0.217, 0.561]
TC vs. NC	0.42 (0.84)	< .001*	[0.316, 0.522]	0.396 [0.224, 0.568]
TC vs. CZ	1.13 (1.38)	< .001*	[0.958, 1.294]	0.951 [0.771, 1.131]
IG vs. NC	−0.00 (0.76)	1.00	[−0.093, 0.093]	0.00 [−0.171, 0.171]
IG vs. CZ	0.71 (1.48)	< .001*	[0.527, 0.886]	0.538 [0.364, 0.712]
NC vs. CZ	0.71 (1.32)	< .001*	[0.547, 0.867]	0.546 [0.372, 0.719]
Inclusion Action				
SU vs. DP	0.53 (0.81)	< .001*	[0.431, 0.629]	0.560 [0.386, 0.734]
SU vs. OD	1.83 (1.36)	< .001*	[1.663, 1.992]	1.545 [1.351, 1.740]
SU vs. UI	0.62 (0.89)	< .001*	[0.511, 0.726]	0.643 [0.468, 0.817]
SU vs. WQ	1.69 (1.40)	< .001*	[1.523, 1.862]	1.400, [1.210, 1.591]
DP vs. OD	1.30 (1.17)	< .001*	[1.155, 1.439]	1.054 [0.872, 1.236]
DP vs. UI	0.09 (0.67)	.034	[0.007, 0.169]	1.283 [1.096, 1.471]
DP vs. WQ	1.16 (1.30)	< .001*	[1.005, 1.319]	0.924 [0.745, 1.104]
OD vs. UI	−1.21 (1.20)	< .001*	[−1.354, −1.064]	0.970 [0.790, 1.150]
OD vs. WQ	−0.14 (1.23)	.076	[−0.285, 0.014]	0.091 [−0.080, 0.261]
UI vs. WQ	1.07 (1.23)	< .001*	[0.924, 1.223]	0.844 [0.666, 1.022]

Note: TC = training Center, IG = in garrison, NC = non-combat zone, CZ = combat zone; SU = speak up, DP = differing perspectives, OD = open debate, UI = unique input, WQ = why questions. * p < .05 with Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Cohen's d_{av} calculated using Formula 10 from Laken (2013). Cohen's d effect size interpretation (Rosenthal, 1996): 0.20 (small), 0.50 (medium), 0.80 (large), 1.30 (very large).

[6] Cohen's ds reported in text reflect d_{av} estimates.

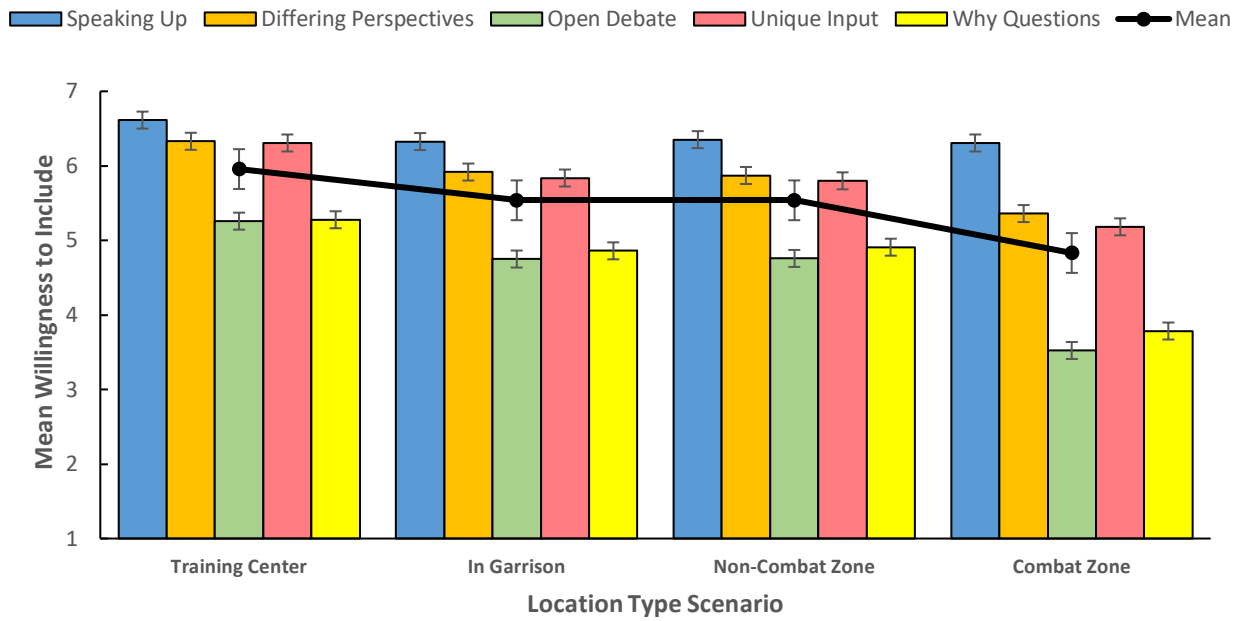

Figure 1. Mean willingness to include by location type scenario and inclusion action. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. *Note*. Masson and Loftus' (2003) procedure was followed for calculating within-participant confidence intervals.

Task ability scenario (*n* = 256). Three significant effects emerged from a 2 (task ability scenario: strength, weakness) × 5 (inclusion action: speaking up, differing perspectives, open debate, unique input, why questions) within-participants ANOVA. First, there was a significant main effect of task ability scenario, $F(1, 255) = 22.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .082$, $\eta_G^2 = .014$; Soldiers were more willing to be inclusive when the task was related to a perceived weakness of theirs ($M = 5.97$, $SD = 1.08$) compared to a perceived strength ($M = 5.63$, $SD = 1.20$). Second, there was a significant main effect of inclusion action, $F(2.90, 740.05) = 110.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .301$, $\eta_G^2 = .116$; multiple comparisons revealed that leaders were relatively more willing to allow Soldiers to speak up ($M = 6.46$, $SD = 0.86$), followed by seeking differing perspectives ($M = 6.07$, $SD = 1.01$) or getting unique input ($M = 6.07$, $SD = 1.04$), followed by allowing Soldiers to ask why questions ($M = 5.41$, $SD = 1.57$), and less willing to allow Soldiers to engage in open debate ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.63$), see Table 3. Third, these effects were qualified by an interaction between task ability scenario and inclusion action, $F(3.75, 955.13) = 4.62$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .018$, $\eta_G^2 = .002$; notably, open debate showed (relatively) the largest gap between strength ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.92$) and weakness ($M = 5.22$, $SD = 1.73$; $M_{diff} = -0.45$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.247$, 95% CI [0.073, 0.420]) whereas speaking up showed (relatively) the smallest gap between strength ($M = 6.38$, $SD = 1.02$) and weakness ($M = 6.54$, $SD = 1.01$; $M_{diff} = -0.15$, $p = .025$, $d = 0.158$, 95% CI [0.016, 0.331]) task ability (see Figure 2).

Table 3
Task ability scenario and inclusion action comparisons (n = 256)

Comparison	M_{diff} (SD_{diff})	*p*	95% CI of M_{diff}	Cohen's d_{av} [95% CI]
Task Ability Scenario				
TS vs. TW	−0.34 (1.14)	< .001*	[−0.479, −0.199]	0.301 [0.127, 0.476]
Inclusion Action				
SU vs. DP	0.39 (0.86)	< .001*	[0.280, 0.493]	0.415 [0.240, 0.371]
SU vs. OD	1.46 (1.55)	< .001*	[1.272, 1.654]	1.175 [0.988, 1.363]
SU vs. UI	0.39 (0.91)	< .001*	[0.277, 0.501]	0.408 [0.233, 0.583]
SU vs. WQ	1.05 (1.52)	< .001*	[0.858, 1.232]	0.862 [0.681, 1.043]
DP vs. OD	1.08 (1.30)	< .001*	[0.916, 1.237]	0.818 [0.638, 0.999]
DP vs. UI	0.00 (0.75)	.967	[−0.091, 0.095]	0.002 [−0.171, 0.175]
DP vs. WQ	0.66 (1.36)	< .001*	[0.490, 0.826]	0.513 [0.337, 0.689]
OD vs. UI	−1.07 (1.31)	< .001*	[−1.236, −0.913]	0.804 [0.624, 0.984]
OD vs. WQ	−0.42 (1.52)	< .001*	[−0.605, −0.231]	0.262 [0.088, 0.436]
UI vs. WQ	0.66 (1.25)	< .001*	[0.502, 0.810]	0.504 [0.328, 0.680]

Note: TS = task strength, TW = task weakness; SU = speak up, DP = differing perspectives, OD = open debate, UI = unique input, WQ = why questions. * $p < .05$ with Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Cohen's d_{av} calculated using Formula 10 from Laken (2013). Cohen's *d* effect size interpretation (Rosenthal, 1996): 0.20 (small), 0.50 (medium), 0.80 (large), 1.30 (very large).

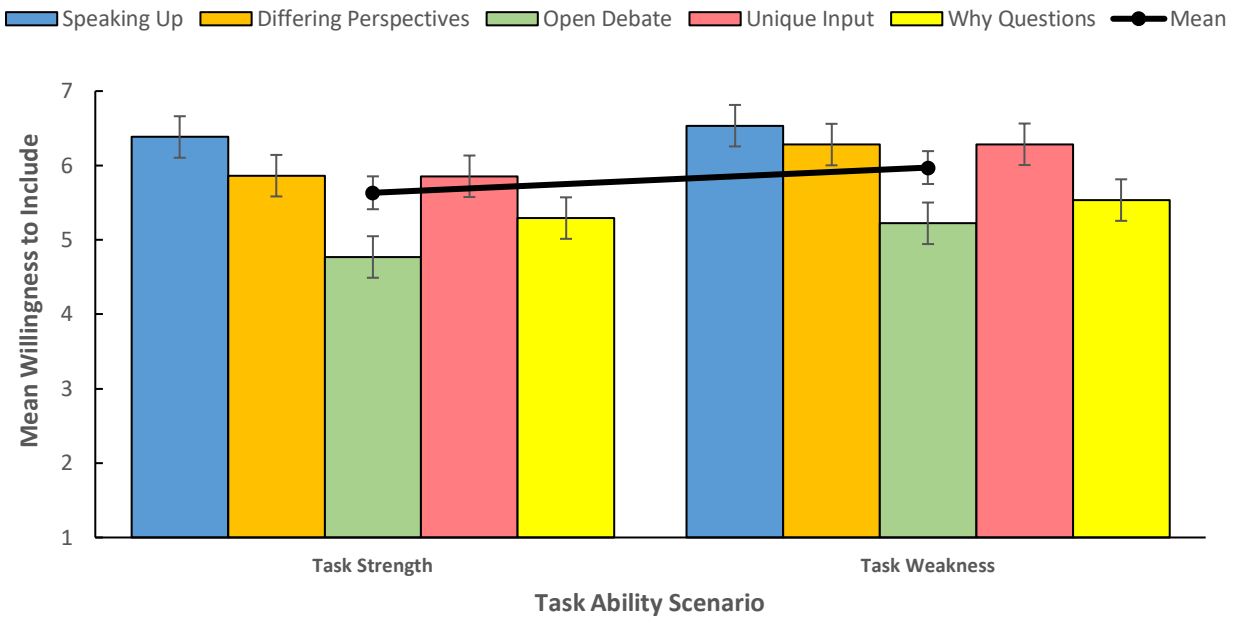

Figure 2. Mean willingness to include by task ability scenario and inclusion action. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. *Note*. Masson and Loftus' (2003) procedure was followed for calculating within-participant confidence intervals.

Task type scenario (*n* = 268). Three significant effects emerged from a 4 (task type scenario: tasking assignments, sensing session, mission planning, social even planning) × 5 (inclusion action: speaking up, differing perspectives, open debate, unique input, why questions)

within-participants ANOVA. First, there was a significant main effect of task type scenario, $F(2.54, 679.28) = 205.64$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .435$, $\eta_G^2 = .208$; multiple comparisons revealed that leaders were relatively more willing to be inclusive when conducting a sensing session (M = 6.63, SD = 0.70) or social event planning (M = 6.52, SD = 0.75), followed by mission planning (M = 5.80, SD = 1.18), and were less willing to be inclusive when conducting tasking assignments (M = 4.94, SD = 1.42), see Table 4. Second, there was a significant main effect of inclusion action, $F(3.04, 812.72) = 144.78$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .352$, $\eta_G^2 = .084$; multiple comparisons revealed that leaders were relatively more willing to allow Soldiers to speak up (M = 6.51, SD = 0.74), followed by seeking differing perspectives (M = 6.17, SD = 0.75) or getting unique input (M = 6.16, SD = 0.74), followed by allowing Soldiers to ask why questions (M = 5.62, SD = 1.10), and less willing to allow Soldiers to engage in open debate (M = 5.42, SD = 1.11), see Table 4. Third, these effects were qualified by an interaction between task type scenario and inclusion action, $F(8.02, 2139.89) = 43.78$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .141$, $\eta_G^2 = .030$; notably, open debate (M = 3.98, SD = 1.93, ps < .001, ds > 0.577) and asking why questions (M = 4.34, SD = 2.03, ps < .001, ds > 0.374) when conducting tasking assignments were inclusive actions that leaders seemed to be relatively unwilling to do in this scenario (see Figure 3).

Table 4
Task type scenario and inclusion action comparisons (n = 268)

Comparison	M_{diff} (SD_{diff})	p	95% CI of M_{diff}	Cohen's d_{av} [95% CI]
Task Type Scenario				
TA vs. SS	−1.69 (1.44)	< .001*	[−1.862, −1.514]	1.585 [1.391, 1.779]
TA vs. MP	−0.86 (1.34)	< .001*	[−1.024, −0.700]	0.664 [0.490, 0.837]
TA vs. SP	−1.58 (1.46)	< .001*	[−1.757, −1.406]	1.452 [1.262, 1.642]
SS vs. MP	0.83 (1.11)	< .001*	[0.692, 0.960]	0.874 [0.697, 1.051]
SS vs. SP	0.11 (0.93)	.064	[−0.006, 0.220]	0.145 [−0.024, 0.315]
MP vs. SP	−0.72 (1.16)	< .001*	[−0.860, −0.579]	0.742 [0.567, 0.918]
Inclusion Action				
SU vs. DP	0.33 (0.66)	< .001*	[0.254, 0.410]	0.444 [0.273, 0.616]
SU vs. OD	1.09 (1.03)	< .001*	[0.966, 1.215]	1.181 [0.998, 1.365]
SU vs. UI	0.34 (0.69)	< .001*	[0.261, 0.426]	0.464 [0.293, 0.636]
SU vs. WQ	0.89 (1.05)	< .001*	[0.765, 1.015]	0.966 [0.787, 1.144]
DP vs. OD	0.76 (0.84)	< .001*	[0.657, 0.860]	0.814 [0.638, 0.990]
DP vs. UI	0.01 (0.48)	.697	[−0.045, 0.068]	0.015 [−0.154, 0.184]
DP vs. WQ	0.56 (0.95)	< .001*	[0.445, 0.671]	0.600 [0.427, 0.773]
OD vs. UI	−0.75 (0.87)	< .001*	[−0.852, −0.642]	0.809 [0.633, 0.985]
OD vs. WQ	−0.20 (1.00)	< .001*	[−0.320, −0.081]	0.181 [0.012, 0.351]
UI vs. WQ	0.55 (0.88)	< .001*	[0.441, 0.653]	0.593 [0.420, 0.766]

Note: TA = tasking assignments, SS = sensing session, MP = mission planning, SP = social event planning; SU = speak up, DP = differing perspectives, OD = open debate, UI = unique input, WQ = why questions. * $p < .05$ with Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Cohen's d_{av} calculated using Formula 10 from Laken (2013). Cohen's d effect size interpretation (Rosenthal, 1996): 0.20 (small), 0.50 (medium), 0.80 (large), 1.30 (very large).

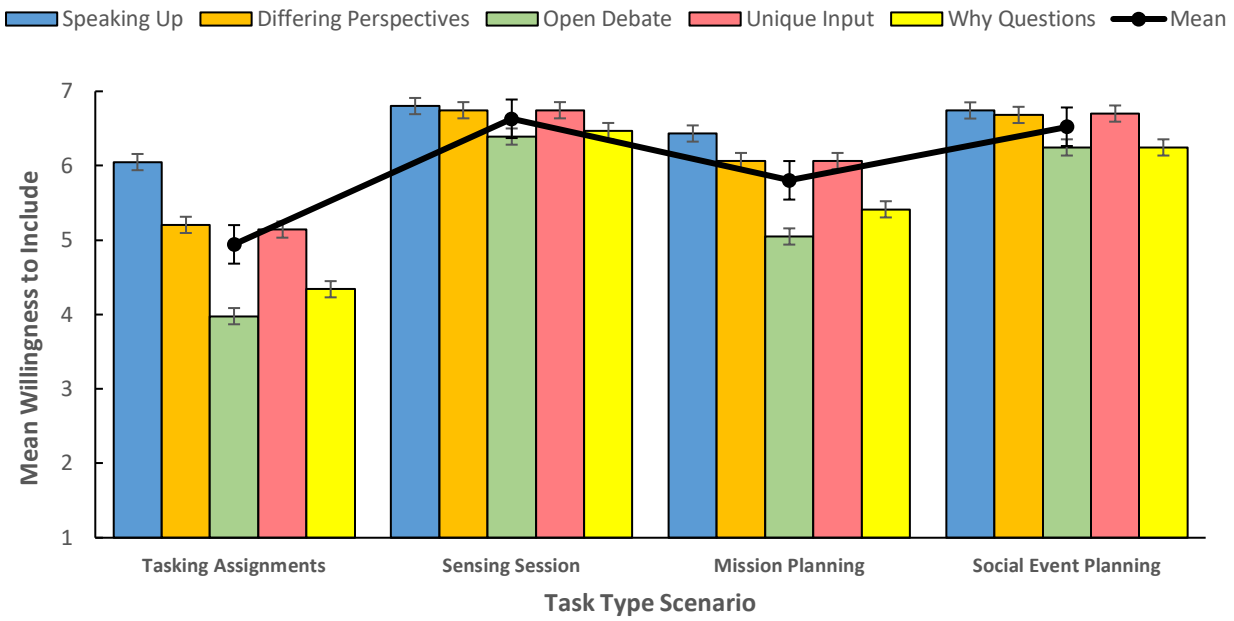

Figure 3. Mean willingness to include by task type scenario and inclusion action. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. *Note*. Masson and Loftus' (2003) procedure was followed for calculating within-participant confidence intervals.

AAR performance scenario (*n* = 268). Three significant effects emerged from a 2 (AAR performance scenario: above standard, below standard) × 5 (inclusion action: speaking up, differing perspectives, open debate, unique input, why questions) within-participants ANOVA. First, there was a significant main effect of AAR scenario, $F(1, 267) = 35.00$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .116$, $\eta_G^2 = .019$; leaders were more willing to be inclusive during an AAR when performing above standard ($M = 6.48$, $SD = 0.75$) than below standard ($M = 6.13$, $SD = 1.06$). Second, there was a significant main effect of inclusion action, $F(2.49, 664.53) = 68.40$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .204$, $\eta_G^2 = .079$; multiple comparisons revealed that leaders were relatively more willing to allow Soldiers to speak up ($M = 6.69$, $SD = 0.72$), followed by seeking differing perspectives ($M = 6.50$, $SD = 0.77$) or getting unique input ($M = 6.54$, $SD = 0.75$), followed by allowing Soldiers to ask why questions ($M = 6.10$, $SD = 1.31$), and less willing to allow Soldiers to engage in open debate ($M = 5.69$, $SD = 1.51$), see Table 5. Third, these effects were qualified by an interaction between AAR performance scenario and inclusion action, $F(3.13, 834.70) = 9.32$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .034$, $\eta_G^2 = .004$; notably, open debate showed the largest gap between above standard ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 1.54$) and below standard ($M = 5.39$, $SD = 1.88$; $M_{diff} = 0.60$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.357$, 95% CI [0.405, 0.804]) whereas speaking up showed the smallest gap between above standard ($M = 6.76$, $SD = 0.69$) and below standard ($M = 6.61$, $SD = 0.93$; $M_{diff} = 0.15$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.185$, 95% CI [0.064, 0.242]) task ability (see Figure 4).

Table 5
AAR performance scenario and inclusion action comparisons (n = 268)

Comparison	M_{diff} (SD_{diff})	*p*	95% CI of M_{diff}	Cohen's d_{av} [95% CI]
AAR Performance Scenario				
AS vs. BS	0.34 (0.95)	< .001*	[0.230, 0.459]	0.378 [0.207, 0.548]
Inclusion Action				
SU vs. DP	0.18 (0.64)	< .001*	[0.105, 0.260]	0.243 [0.073, 0.413]
SU vs. OD	0.99 (1.47)	< .001*	[0.814, 1.167]	0.884 [0.707, 1.062]
SU vs. UI	0.15 (0.72)	.001*	[0.061, 0.234]	0.200 [0.030, 0.370]
SU vs. WQ	0.59 (1.18)	< .001*	[0.447, 0.732]	0.578 [0.405, 0.750]
DP vs. OD	0.81 (1.39)	< .001*	[0.641, 0.975]	0.706 [0.532, 0.881]
DP vs. UI	−0.04 (0.61)	.335	[−0.108, 0.037]	0.047 [0.123, 0.216]
DP vs. WQ	0.41 (1.16)	< .001*	[0.268, 0.546]	0.389 [0.219, 0.560]
OD vs. UI	−0.84 (1.38)	< .001*	[−1.009, −0.678]	0.747 [0.572, 0.922]
OD vs. WQ	−0.40 (1.31)	< .001*	[−0.558, −0.244]	0.284 [0.114, 0.454]
UI vs. WQ	0.44 (1.05)	< .001*	[0.316, 0.569]	0.430 [0.258, 0.601]

Note: AS = AAR above standard, BS = AAR below standard; SU = speak up, DP = differing perspectives, OD = open debate, UI = unique input, WQ = why questions. * $p < .05$ with Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Cohen's d_{av} calculated using Formula 10 from Laken (2013). Cohen's *d* effect size interpretation (Rosenthal, 1996): 0.20 (small), 0.50 (medium), 0.80 (large), 1.30 (very large).

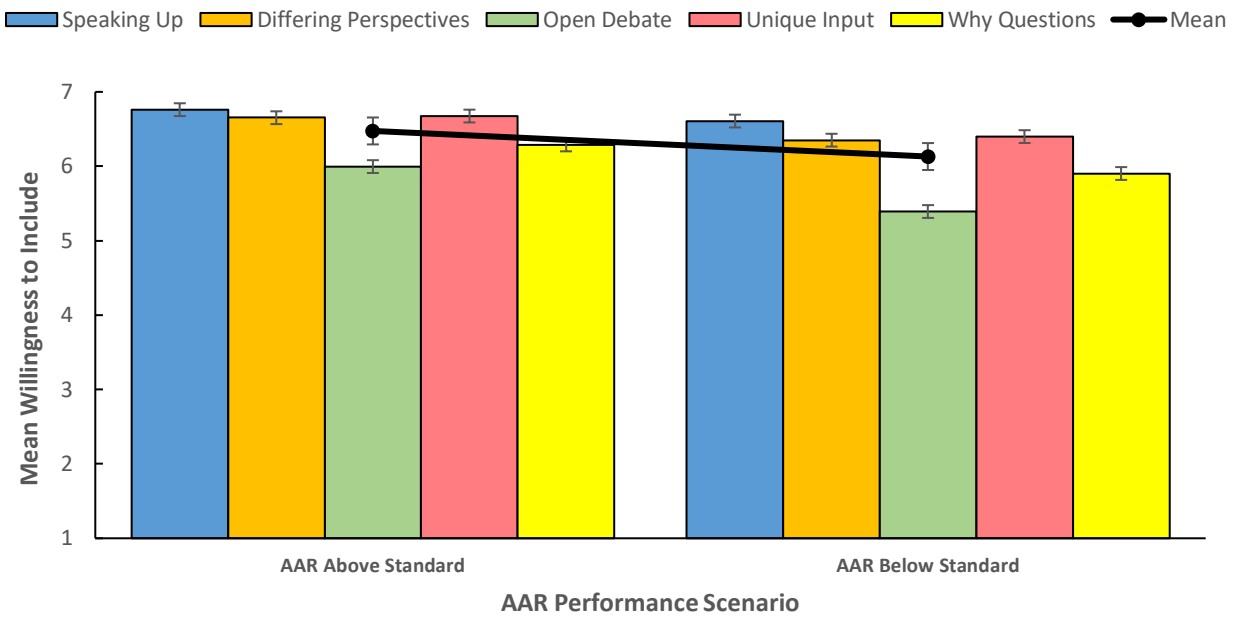

Figure 4. Mean willingness to include by AAR performance scenario and inclusion action. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. *Note*. Masson and Loftus' (2003) procedure was followed for calculating within-participant confidence intervals.

Scenarios overall (*n* = 253). For completeness, an analysis was also conducted examining all the scenarios together. Three significant effects emerged from a 12 (scenario type: training center, in garrison, non-combat zone, combat zone, task strength, task weakness, tasking assignments, sensing session, mission planning, social event planning, AAR above standard, AAR below standard) × 5 (inclusion action: speaking up, differing perspectives, open debate, unique input, why questions) within-participants ANOVA. First, there was a significant main effect of scenario type, $F(7.82, 1971.13) = 115.03$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .313$, $\eta_G^2 = .133$; notably, leaders were relatively more willing to be inclusive in a sensing session ($M = 6.62$, $SD = 0.73$) followed by social event planning scenario ($M = 6.47$, $SD = 0.76$) and less willing to be inclusive in a combat zone ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 1.43$) or tasking assignment scenario ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.42$), see Figure 5. Second, there was a significant main effect of inclusion action, $F(2.83, 713.27) = 215.33$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .461$, $\eta_G^2 = .122$; multiple comparisons revealed that leaders were relatively more willing to allow Soldiers to speak up ($M = 6.50$, $SD = 0.72$), followed by seeking differing perspectives ($M = 6.11$, $SD = 0.73$) or getting unique input ($M = 6.09$, $SD = 0.73$), followed by allowing Soldiers to ask why questions ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 1.16$), and less willing to allow Soldiers to engage in open debate ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.18$), see Figure 5. Third, these effects were qualified by an interaction between scenario type and inclusion action, $F(24.20, 6098.73) = 32.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .116$, $\eta_G^2 = .028$; differences within scenarios occurred mostly on the inclusive actions of open debate and why questions (see Figure 5).[7]

[7] An additional analysis was conducted to test differences between the scenario categories (i.e., location type, task ability, task type, and AAR performance), the results of this ANOVA revealed a main effect of scenario category ($p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .279$, $\eta_G^2 = .065$); multiple comparisons revealed that leaders were more willing to be inclusive in AAR performance scenarios ($M = 6.29$, $SD = 0.81$), followed by task type scenarios ($M = 5.97$, $SD = 0.73$), followed by task ability scenarios ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 0.97$), and less willing to be inclusive in location scenarios ($M = 5.47$, $SD = 0.97$).

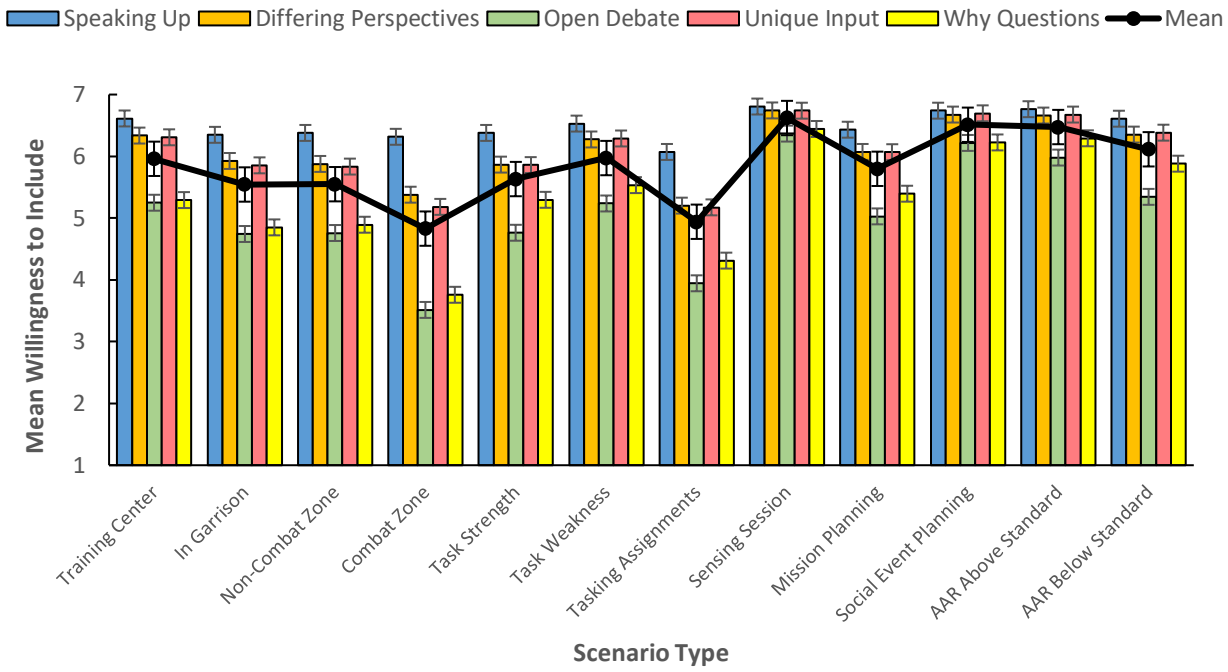

Figure 5. Mean willingness to include by scenario type and inclusion action. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. *Note*. Masson and Loftus' (2003) procedure was followed for calculating within-participant confidence intervals.

Typical Inclusion of Total Force

Observed leader inclusion of total force (*n* = 242). The typical degree of inclusion by Army leaders for varying social categories within the total force was assessed using a one-way within-participants ANOVA with 20 levels representing each social category. Results revealed that there was an overall effect of social category on typical leader inclusion, $F(8.20, 1976.23) = 25.18$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .095$, $\eta_G^2 = .064$; notably, Soldiers with a college education ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.15$), NCOs ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.29$), White Soldiers ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.21$), and male Soldiers ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.23$) were all observed to (comparatively) receive the highest levels of inclusion while Soldiers on PT profile ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.54$) and Civilians ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.60$) were observed to (comparatively) receive the lowest levels of inclusion (see Figure 6).[8]

[8] As noted in the subsequent individual differences sub-section, the demographic characteristics of the participant did not seem to significantly moderate perceptions of typical inclusion by Army leaders for the different social categories (for one exception between officer and enlisted Soldiers, see the individual differences sub-section). Likewise, when controlling for participant demographic characteristics (i.e., age, race/ethnicity, sex, organizational role category, and rank) results similar in pattern and significance are observed to those reported here in text. This may suggest that these findings are perceived more generally across Soldiers and not a mere in-group versus out-group phenomenon.

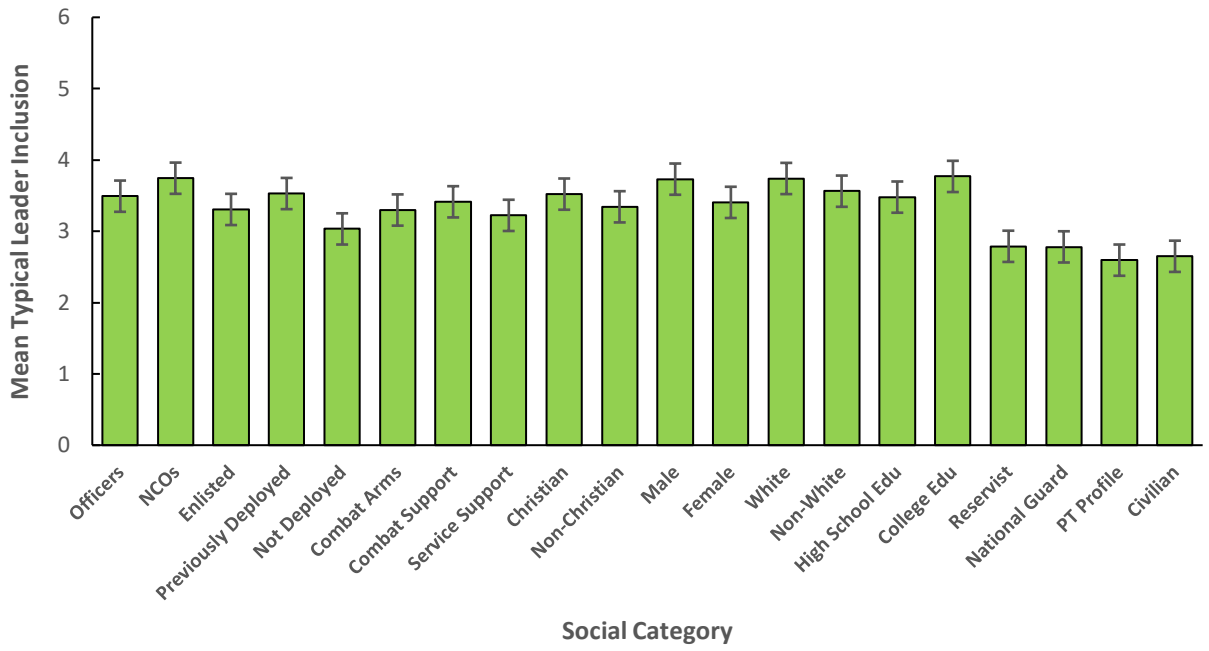

Figure 6. Mean typical leader inclusion perceptions by social category. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. *Note*. Masson and Loftus' (2003) procedure was followed for calculating within-participant confidence intervals.

Counter-Productive Leadership Self-Assessment Scale

Scale development and item selection (*n* = 260). A series of exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were conducted on the pool of 20 counter-productive leadership items. First, an EFA was conducted on the items with factor extraction based on Egien values > 1. This first analysis revealed a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy greater than 0.6 (KMO = .769) and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant [$\chi^2(190) = 1120.92$, $p < .001$], indicating that the data were adequate for the factor analysis. Upon examining the total variances explained by factor number and a scree plot, it appeared that a two-factor solution most adequately represented the data (cumulative variance explained = 31.67%). Second, we re-ran the EFA limiting the number of factors to be extracted to two. This analysis revealed that the second factor (n = 10) was predominately composed of the all the reverse-coded items from the scale (n = 5). It was determined that the two-factor solution for the data was merely an artifact of the way in which items were measured and, therefore, items were combined into a single factor. Third, combining the 20 items into a single factor, a reliability analysis was conducted. Items whose corrected-total correlation < .30, were excluded from the scale through an iterative process. Six items were removed under these conditions leaving a final item count of 14 (Cronbach's α = .788). These 14 items were then averaged for a single measure of counter-productive leadership style (M = 2.04, SD = 0.71, skewness = .916, kurtosis = 1.18, range = 3.86 [1.00, 4.86]), see Figure 7 for a frequency diagram of the scale. For a final list of 14 items, see Appendix C.

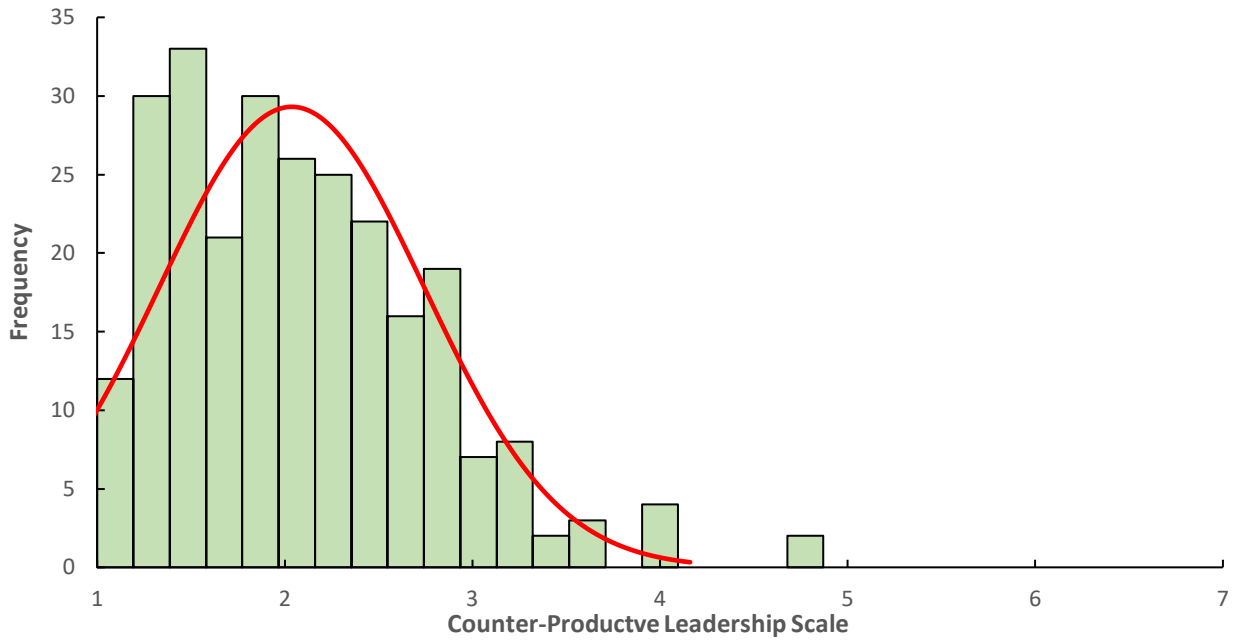

Figure 7. Frequency distribution of final counter-productive leader scale. Red curved line represents normal distribution.

Individual Differences

Counter-productive leadership self-assessment scale. The counter-productive leadership self-assessment scale (CLSAS) was negatively correlated with the overall inclusion of participants (collapsed across scenarios and inclusion actions), $r = -.181$, $p = .004$, $n = 247$. Specifically, leaders who reported a greater degree of counter-productive leadership styles were less likely to be inclusive across all the scenarios. Similarly, the CLSAS was negatively correlated with the overall observations of total force inclusion by leaders (collapsed across social categories within the total force and averaged to form a single composite measure of typical total force inclusion), $r = -.224$, $p < .001$, $n = 222$.

Rank type (officer vs. enlisted). Only an interaction between rank type and typical leader inclusion of total force was observed, $F(8.08, 1907.12) = 2.47$, $p = .011$, $\eta_p^2 = .010$, $\eta_G^2 = .007$; notably, enlisted Soldiers ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.59$) observed more leader inclusion of previously deployed Soldiers than Officers ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 2.05$), $t(236) = 3.10$, $p = .002$, $d = 0.286$, 95% CI [0.188, 0.844].

Discussion

Summary of Findings

The aim of this work was to develop an understanding of inclusion in an Army context by examining how communications related to inclusion affected Army leaders' willingness to be inclusive across different Army contexts. The results of a single experiment revealed several

findings of interest to inclusion research in the Army. First, the experimental manipulation of communications strategy returned a null result; highlighting the benefits of inclusion (vs. a definitional control condition) did not seem to affect leaders' willingness to be inclusive across scenarios. Second, although expressed willingness to be inclusive was above the midpoint for each scenario, Army leaders did show variability in their willingness to be inclusive in certain situational contexts. Specifically, Army leaders were more willing to be inclusive in contexts such as a sensing session, social event planning, or an AAR for good performance compared to contexts such as combat zones or making tasking assignment decisions. Third, findings also revealed that Army leaders preferred certain inclusive actions; leaders were more willing to allow Soldiers to speak up, express differing perspectives, and ask for unique input than they were to allow for open debate or encourage Soldiers to ask 'why' decisions were being made. Lastly, Army leaders that self-reported to possess greater counter-productive leadership styles were also less willing to be inclusive across situational contexts.

The findings of the current research effort seem to suggest that situational context (cf. National Research Council, 2014) does influence the potential inclusive actions of Army leaders. Generally consistent with mission command doctrine (see Department of the Army, 2012a), the findings seem to suggest that Army leaders express a greater willingness to seek feedback and input in contexts that are perceived to be learning-focused and less consequential (e.g., training centers, social event planning) compared to more consequential contexts where Soldiers are expected to follow directive orders, which may be more appropriate for the situation (e.g., life and death combat situations). Whether or not these results reflect the right approach to inclusivity in various Army contexts is unclear and should be studied further, especially in terms of how an understanding or interpretation of mission command doctrine may influence inclusive practices across contexts. We note, however, that even in situations in which inclusion might be more difficult to practice (e.g., deployed down range), it might be important to provide appropriate opportunities for inclusion such as seeking diverse perspectives. The success of female engagement teams (FETs) in Afghanistan is one example of inclusion being effectively enacted in combat environments (Holliday, 2012; McNierney, 2015; but see also, Coll, 2012).

The current findings also suggest that certain inclusive actions were favored less than others. Specifically, leaders were less willing to encourage open debate and asking of 'why' questions than the other inclusive actions. We suspect that the action of encouraging open debate may have been misinterpreted; Army leaders may have been more resistant to open debate because they interpreted this action to mean allowing Soldiers to be openly argumentative and disruptive rather than being simply open to various perspectives like we intended. However, the resistance to encouraging Soldiers to ask 'why' questions is an important finding in regards to Soldier development. While asking 'why' is often perceived negatively by senior leaders, the ability to ask 'why' questions may be important to the development of younger Soldiers as they learn and prepare for career advancement. The results suggest a potential area for senior leader development—specifically, these actions on the part of junior leaders/Soldiers could be reframed as an opportunity for senior leaders to impart institutional knowledge, and to connect individual actions to the strategic goals of the organization. Finally, it is also worth noting that the perception that leaders are less willing to be inclusive with Civilians, Reservists, and National Guard Soldiers runs counter to the current emphasis on total force, and the need to utilize all Soldiers/Civilians to accomplish the mission (Secretary of the Army, 2012).

Limitations and Future Directions

Future research should address a few limitations of the current research and explore additional avenues of inquiry related to inclusion in the Army.

First, the null communications strategy manipulation result was unexpected. We predicted that the addition of information regarding the benefits of inclusion would promote the concept of inclusion, beyond its mere definition (i.e., the control condition), in a way that Soldiers would be able to better understand the tangible, task-related advantages to engaging in inclusive processes. However, in hindsight, it is possible that the lack of differences between the control condition and benefits condition could be due to similarity in framing.[9] For instance, the control condition's definition was framed in a way that is positive to inclusion and hints at functional benefits that inclusion may have on mission outcomes. Therefore, the control condition's definition of inclusion may have already been conveying sufficient information regarding the benefits of inclusion that the benefits condition did not significantly build upon. Future research should utilize a more neutral control condition to better assess the differential effects of a communication strategy that emphasizes the benefits of inclusion. Furthermore, future research may want to examine the differences between different elements of inclusion in communications. For example, Soldiers may be more receptive to inclusive communications when framed as a process for task-based, functional benefits compared to a framing that emphasizes feelings of worth, understanding, and social identity expression. In addition, examining other means to communicate inclusion using more active, participatory approaches would also be worth exploring in future research. For instance, instead of passively reading a story about inclusion, perhaps writing about one's own personal experience of being included or excluded (e.g., write about a time when you or someone else was not included in a group) might affect how willing individuals are to be inclusive.

Second, future research could further investigate scenarios that might bear upon inclusive actions in the Army. Although the scenarios used in the current research were purposefully designed to be relevant to Soldiers of many backgrounds, this level of broadness may overlook potential nuances that occur in different situations and contexts. More work is needed to fully understand the different contextual factors that might impact the inclusive actions of Army leaders; additional factors such as time constraints (e.g., decisions need to be made quickly vs. not), availability of resources (e.g., access to information to provide Soldiers is available vs. not), and the composition of the unit (e.g., heterogeneous vs. homogenous unit) could all potentially influence a leader's willingness to act inclusively. A more nuanced analysis of the situations that promote or inhibit inclusion could better refine our understanding of the areas that might limit inclusive action by leaders.

Third, in addition to situational contexts, research should also investigate how various (and potentially competing) expressions of individual identities within a unit affects inclusive

[9] Another possible explanation for the null finding could be that participants simply did not read the longer inclusion benefits vignette. In the experiment, a reading or attention check was not conducted to ensure that participants had read the entirety of the story. Therefore, it is recommend that, in future research, some sort of reading check should be conducted to ensure complete reading comprehension.

practices. Besides the information-processing aspects of inclusion (e.g., leveraging unique perspectives), the conceptual framework of inclusion is grounded with elements pertaining to integrating and valuing the unique identities of unit members so that they feel a sense of belonging within the group and are able to freely express their individual social identities (see Shore et al., 2011). However, despite the retention of uniqueness that inclusion promotes, there are likely limits to the free expression of identity within organizational units (especially in a highly structured military organization with firmly delineated standards); unfettered expression of individual identities potentially creates situations in which a person's identity is in direct conflict with others or organizational policies and values. For example, an individual might find it consistent with their individual identity to use profanity in their communications, while others find it, according to their own values and identities, highly offensive and unprofessional. From a purely inclusion-based approach or philosophy, conflicts like this are not easily resolved because inclusion espouses that, to feel included, individuals are able to bring their full selves to work. Within the Army context individuals are expressly encouraged to adopt the Army values and ethics; and without any degree of assimilation, concerns exist regarding conflicts in communications, application of policies, and competing interests (see Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2017). Future research should examine what aspects of unit member identity expression should be encouraged by Army leaders and what aspects of the group or organization should be assimilated to by unit members. This research may find that assimilation to certain fundamental aspects of the organization is a necessity for proper group functioning (e.g., having a common language in communications, common application of rules that are followed by all) while other aspects of unit member identities should be valued and leveraged for the benefit of the group (e.g., utilizing unique perspectives in decision-making, allowing different communication styles).

Fourth, another limitation to the current findings is their ability to clearly identify the source of the observed differences between Army contexts. It remains an open question whether contexts within the military are objectively not suitable for inclusion (see mission command doctrine, Department of the Army, 2012a), or whether these findings are a product of the current culture of the military. For instance, if Army leaders have not experienced an environment with much inclusive behavior then it may be difficult for them to envision one in which inclusive actions could be applied in all contexts of Army life. Thus, the classic chicken and egg problem arises; should research rely on what Army leaders perceive to be practical limits of inclusion based on current Army culture or should the Army look to change and be driven by what inclusion could look like in the Army based on its successful application in other industries and environments? Perhaps research efforts examining Civilians or individuals who have not yet joined the military (e.g., ROTC) might shed some light on whether these perceptions are universally held or are a byproduct of the Army culture.

Lastly, future research should further examine how Army leadership styles affect inclusive actions. The counter-productive leadership scale was developed in the current research to assess whether an Army leader's leadership style affected their willingness to act inclusively. The results of scale development analyses suggested that the items from the final scale achieved requisite scale reliability criteria and, importantly, were found to be related to an Army leader's willingness to act inclusively across hypothetical scenarios. In the future, however, given that most Army leaders tended to score at the bottom end of the scale (with only a few surpassing the

midpoint), the counter-productive leadership scale should be modified so that responses fall along a more normal distribution, covering the full range of the scale. This could be accomplished by modifying some of the items to be less explicitly extreme. For instance, the language of "I might sabotage someone to get ahead" could be softened to be "I sometimes might "accidentally" disrupt someone's work to make myself look better." In addition, the Likert scale labels could also be modified from a bipolar scale format (not like me vs. like me) to a unipolar scale format (progressively more like me). These suggested changes should help to increase variability for the scale in future research.

Broader Implications and Conclusion

The findings from the current research have broader implications for inclusion in the academic literature and for the U.S. Army's efforts to foster inclusive climates.

Given the lack of empirical research on inclusion, much of the literature on inclusion remains in a nascent stage with many open areas for empirical inquiry. The current research adds to the growing understanding of inclusion in two important ways. First, this research helps provide some evidence towards the utility (or lack thereof) of inclusion communications that emphasize benefits. The current findings suggests that highlighting the benefits of inclusion in a true story does not significantly increase inclusive actions compared to merely providing the definition of inclusion to individuals. Second, this research explores the potential boundary conditions of inclusive action in different situational contexts. To date, no research has explored when leaders are more or less likely to act inclusively with their subordinates. This work finds that context can be an influential factor in whether leaders are willing to act inclusively.

This research also informs the current efforts to foster inclusive climates in the U.S. Army. Findings from this research provide a foundational understanding of when and how leaders are likely to act inclusively with their Soldiers in their unit. Specifically, this research provides an understanding of the situational contexts that may affect the prevalence of inclusive action in the Army. Identifying situations that may unreasonably inhibit inclusive practices can help the Army develop doctrine and training that can focus on breaking down potential barriers to inclusion. In addition, this research also identified a communications strategy that may not foster inclusion beyond a definition of inclusion. This finding could help the Army, in the future, narrow down effective strategies to communicate inclusion to Army leaders. Overall, understanding when and how Army leaders foster inclusion in their units provides insight that the Army can use toward their organizational goals of building and maintaining climates for inclusion.

In conclusion, this research adds to the growing body of research on inclusion by helping to identify potential boundary conditions of its practice in military units. By fostering inclusion within organizations, such as the Army, leaders are better able to utilize and manage the diversity of their subordinate members, which ultimately contributes to better individual and organizational outcomes.

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Appendix A

Reading Passages for Communications Strategy Independent Variable

Control Condition:

A climate of inclusion can be defined as shared perceptions that all members of the team are valued and integrated into the team, and their capabilities are recognized and leveraged so that all are enabled to participate and contribute to the mission, to their full potential.

Inclusion Communications Benefits Condition:

A climate of inclusion can be defined as shared perceptions that all members of the team are valued and integrated into the team, and their capabilities are recognized and leveraged so that all are enabled to participate and contribute to the mission, to their full potential.

To demonstrate how inclusion is beneficial to units, please consider the following real-world example:

In May 1968, the U.S. submarine *Scorpion* disappeared on its way back to Newport News after a tour of duty in the North Atlantic. Although the navy knew the sub's last reported location, it had no idea what had happened to the *Scorpion* after it had last made radio contact (an area twenty miles in diameter and many thousands of feet deep).

To undergo this difficult search task, a naval officer named John Craven had a unique plan. First, Craven concocted a series of scenarios—alternative explanations for what might have happened to the *Scorpion*. Next, Craven could have used a team of all submarine and ocean current experts but instead opted to assemble a diverse team of people with a wide range of knowledge, including mathematicians, submarine specialists, and salvage personnel. Instead of asking them to consult with each other to come up with an answer, Craven asked each of them to independently offer their best guess about how likely each of the scenarios were.

Needless to say, no one person could tell Craven where the *Scorpion* was. So Craven constructed a possible location of the sub using the group's collective insight rather than a spot that any individual member of the group had guessed. In the end, five months after the *Scorpion* disappeared, a navy ship found it. It was merely 220 yards from where Craven's group had said it would be.

What's astonishing about this story is that the evidence that the group was relying on in this case amounted to almost nothing. It was really just tiny scraps of data. No one knew why the submarine sank, no one had any idea how fast it was traveling, or how steeply it fell to the ocean floor. And yet even though no single individual in the group knew any of these things, the group as a whole collectively came to a fairly accurate decision.

In sum, no one person has all the relevant expertise or information required to solve the many complex problems facing the Army. To accomplish the mission, Army leaders should strive to foster a more inclusive climate in their units. As leaders, being inclusive with your unit can increase mission effectiveness and encourage members of your unit to be involved and committed to the mission. By collecting input and utilizing diverse perspectives of your unit, you can improve unit function and ultimately, increase its performance.

Appendix B

Scenarios

Location Type Scenarios

Training center. "Imagine that, while undergoing a challenging training exercise at **a training center**, you are discussing with your Soldiers how to approach the mission. As the leader, it is your job to make sure your Soldiers complete the training successfully. How willing would you be to engage in the following behaviors with your unit in this scenario?"

In garrison. "Imagine that, while **in garrison**, you are discussing the daily taskings with your Soldiers. As the leader, it is your responsibility that the taskings are completed and done correctly. How willing would you be to engage in the following behaviors with your unit in this scenario?"

Non-combat zone. "Imagine that, while deployed down range in **a non-combat zone (e.g., Kuwait)**, you are discussing the daily taskings with your Soldiers. As the leader, it is your responsibility that the taskings are completed and done correctly. How willing would you be to engage in the following behaviors with your unit in this scenario?"

Combat zone. "Imagine that, while deployed down range in **an active combat zone (e.g., Afghanistan)**, you are out on a mission with your Soldiers discussing alternative options on how best to maneuver to another installation. Just 30 minutes prior, another unit ahead was attacked along the same route your unit had originally set out to take (2 casualties were reported). As the leader, it is your job to make sure your Soldiers complete the mission successfully and safely. How willing would you be to engage in the following behaviors with your unit in this scenario?"

Task Ability Scenarios

Task strength. Write down an area of knowledge that you consider to be a **strength of yours** in Army training situations: (Please write legibly on the line below). "Now, imagine that you are in a training situation performing a task with your Soldiers that is **related to [your strength noted above]**. As the leader, it is your responsibility that the task is completed and done correctly. How willing would you be to engage in the following behaviors with your unit in this scenario?"

Task weakness. Write down an area of knowledge that you consider to be a **weakness of yours** in Army training situations: (Please write legibly on the line below). "Now, imagine that you are in a training situation performing a task with your Soldiers that is **related to [your weakness noted above]**. As the leader, it is your responsibility that the task is completed and done correctly. How willing would you be to engage in the following behaviors with your unit in this scenario?"

Task Type Scenarios

Tasking assignments. "Imagine that you are in garrison, speaking to your Soldiers about **tasking assignments**. How willing would you be to engage in the following behaviors with your unit in this scenario?"

Sensing session. "Imagine that you are in garrison speaking to your Soldiers at a **sensing session** about the current climate and morale within your unit. How willing would you be to engage in the following behaviors with your unit in this scenario?"

Mission planning. "Imagine that you are in garrison speaking to your Soldiers about **planning for an upcoming unit mission**. How willing would you be to engage in the following behaviors with your unit in this scenario?"

Social event planning. "Imagine that you are in garrison speaking to your Soldiers about **planning an upcoming social event (e.g., BBQ)** with your unit. How willing would you be to engage in the following behaviors with your unit in this scenario?"

AAR Performance Scenarios

AAR above standard. "Imagine that you and your Soldiers have just completed a difficult training exercise. You learn from your senior leadership that your unit's performance on the training was **well *above* the standard**. In an after action review (AAR), you discuss with your Soldiers the training exercise and your team's performance. How willing would you be to engage in the following behaviors with your unit in this scenario?"

AAR below standard. "Imagine that you and your Soldiers have just completed a difficult training exercise. You learn from your senior leadership that your unit's performance on the training was **well *below* the standard**. In an after action review (AAR), you discuss with your Soldiers the training exercise and your team's performance. How willing would you be to engage in the following behaviors with your unit in this scenario?"

Appendix C

Counter-productive Leadership Self-Assessment Scale (CLSAS; 14 items)

1. I have a need to always be right and resist compromise with others even on non-critical issues.
2. I take credit sometimes when it's not due.
3. I sometimes can become defensive and argumentative when others have differing or opposing perspectives.
4. When others have differing opinions than me, I sometimes feel that I am being personally attacked.
5. I am flexible and do not need to continue along my own initial path to accomplish tasks, especially when demands/situations change. (reverse coded)
6. I sometimes hold grudges against those who disagree or have a differing perspective than me.
7. I sometimes criticize subordinates in front of others.
8. I sometimes belittle or embarrass subordinates.
9. I am sometimes verbally abusive to anyone who has an opposing viewpoint or perspective.
10. I sometimes use authority or my position for personal goals.
11. I always make sure my own interests are being met.
12. I might sometimes sabotage someone else to get ahead.
13. I sometimes publicly put down or criticize ideas I do not agree with.
14. I sometimes brag about my own capabilities.