



# Stories of Inclusion?: Power, Privilege, and Difference in a Peace and Justice Network

*Deborah A. Piatelli*

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Why are some white, middle-class activists experiencing difficulty creating alliances across racial and class differences? What are the obstacles and what is being done to overcome them? What type of movement structures, cultures, and practices can best facilitate inter-racial, inter-class solidarity? *Stories of Inclusion?* explores these questions through an ethnographic study of a predominately white, middle-class contemporary peace and justice network that is working to create a racially and class diverse community of activists. Addressing a very significant and greatly under researched topic, *Stories of Inclusion?* raises important and critical questions for the peace movement as well as larger society.

In accessible prose, this study bridges the literatures of social movement theory, critical race studies, and feminist theory, and offers new insight into how power and privilege can affect the process of creating inclusive communities. Drawing on data the author collected through in-depth interviews, interpretive focus groups, and over two years of participant observation, this study explores how white, middle-class privilege influences political analyses, definitions of peace work, and approaches to alliance building. The findings are compelling and reveal that even those who have developed an oppositional political consciousness and have pledged to work across racial and class divides can still foster exclusive organizing practices. This study also offers examples on how some activists are acknowledging privilege, transforming their worldviews, and beginning to establish fruitful relationships across differences. This important work emphasizes the continuing importance of race for those collective actors attempting to construct inclusive movements across diverse groups, while also offering important practical solutions on how to bridge differences. The conclusion offers a framework for building a new agenda for the peace and justice movement.

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