

**CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES
IN EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION: STRATEGIC AND
TECHNOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES**

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON EQUALITY,
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION VOLUME 9

**CONTEMPORARY
APPROACHES IN
EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND
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AND TECHNOLOGICAL
PERSPECTIVES**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

I dedicate this book to my parents, and to everyone who has contributed to my life.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AR	Augmented Reality
BcHRMS	Blockchain-based Human Resources Management System
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EBS	Edinburgh Business School
EDI	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
EU	European Union
GVC	Global Value Chain
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICA	Internal Change Agents
IoT	Internet of Things
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, and Others
LMX	Leader–Member Exchange
MBIs	Mindfulness-based Interventions
MBSR	Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction
ML	Machine Learning
NLP	Natural Language Processing
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
R&D	Research and Development
SERP	Search Engine Results Page
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
UK	United Kingdom
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
VILT	Virtual Instructor-led Training
VR	Virtual Reality
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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PREFACE

Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is a complex domain that must be integrated across all organisational areas since these concepts nurture organisational activities at different levels. Considering the fundamentals of these concepts and managing them effectively in the workplace contribute significantly to organisational performance. Indeed, as including and managing diverse talent is a strategic move in competitiveness, organisations need to have strong human resources to achieve effectiveness and dynamism in their processes. In this sense, when diversity is successfully managed in organisations, employee productivity can be enhanced and employee satisfaction can be increased, which in turn, can lead to improved organisational performance. Accordingly, given these arguments, it becomes evident that the concept of EDI cannot be discussed without incorporating strategic organisational factors, especially in the compelling new business order. From this point forth, in today's ever-growing digitalised and competitive business world, organisations strive to pay attention to their EDI approaches from different perspectives (i.e. technological and strategic).

With the recent changes brought by both Industry 4.0 on the technology side and the COVID-19 pandemic at the social end, how the EDI concept is approached in the workplace have remained vague since the primary focus of organisations has mainly been on the ways of surviving in profit. Under these circumstances, organisations have largely failed to fully integrate their strategic and technological developments relying on the principles of the EDI and, as such stunt the comprehension of the transformation of the EDI concept by means of contemporary approaches. In this respect, this book sets out to bridge the spread of disciplines in examining traditional and contemporary approaches in EDI from strategic and technological perspectives and aims to provide novel insights into the extant knowledge and practices in today's digitalised business world.

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CHAPTER 1

INSIGHTS INTO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Mustafa F. Özbilgin and Cihat Erbil

ABSTRACT

Introducing the concepts of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), the chapter provides an overview of frameworks and approaches used to manage workforce diversity. First, the authors introduce the notion of the old deal based on the uneven relationship between human diversity, nature, and technological innovation. The chapter then explores the new deal between humans, nature, and technology. The authors are providing cases from the EU, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Iceland to show the emergence of the new deal in managing diversity.

Keywords: Equality; diversity; inclusion; discrimination; the new deal of EDI; algorithmic governance

INTRODUCTION

EDI are commonly used terms to refer to the way different societies and workplaces regulate socio-material relations between individuals from different socio-demographic backgrounds. In this chapter, we first define the key concepts in the field of EDI at work. We discuss academic discourses and practical implications of these concepts to provide novel insights into the fields of EDI. In particular, we explain the old and the new deal of EDI in the workforce in its relationship with technology and nature. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the interplay between human diversity, new technology and nature with a focus on how the new deal in this tripartite relationship could be sustained.

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Defining a social concept is a political act. By defining a social concept, we identify its parameters, priorities, rules of engagement, and the lines of responsibility for its mobilisation (Lombardo, Meier, & Verloo, 2009; Tatli, Vassilopoulou, Ariss, & Özbilgin, 2012). In this chapter, we define the conceptual universe of EDI with this political awareness in mind. Politically, we define the terms associated with EDI in line with the emancipatory social movements that gave these the terms such as discrimination, equity, inequity, equality, inequality, diversity, inclusion, and exclusion their original meaning and commitment to a path to foster EDI and to bring an end to discrimination, inequity, inequality, and exclusion.

Diversity is a field that investigates the differences between living organisms and the ways of living together with their differences in biological science, social science, and medicine. Diversity in the social sciences deals with people's biological, social, and cultural characteristics. Diversity is a research and application field that covers the existence of individuals with their characteristics and differences. Sub-branches of social sciences regard diversity from various perspectives. Psychology studies diversity as individual differences. Sociology interprets diversity as a social phenomenon through interaction between levels, such as micro-individual, meso-organisational, and macro-national levels. Management scholars tend to frame diversity as a social resource; they focus on mobilising diversity with management techniques that increase efficiency and effectiveness in working groups and organisations and as a means to combat unfair and unlawful practices (Özbilgin & Tatli, 2011).

In this chapter, we outline the development of discourses of discrimination, equality, equity, diversity, inclusion, and diversity management in their respective historical context. In addition, we have presented alternative frames by which each concept is researched and practised. We also illuminate the innately political nature of the field of EDI. We examine how EDI ensures individuals from diverse backgrounds can participate, contribute to, and have a voice as equals in teams, systems, and processes in organisations, discussing the aspects of inclusion in organisations and how organisations may view inclusion differently. Finally, we examine the new deal in EDI, which is a shift away from the historical assumption of human dominance over nature and technology. Considering the global challenges, the new deal recognises the interdependence and co-existence of humans, technology, and nature. Furthermore, we also provide illustrative cases that demonstrate how the new deal between humans, technology, and nature could potentially alter our ways of approaching EDI. These cases include civil initiatives at the global level that voice societal expectations and concerns about extinction of species, global warming, governance of artificial intelligence and algorithms with examples from the EU, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Iceland.

FROM DISCRIMINATION TO INCLUSION: THE INSPIRATIONAL STATES OF DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND EQUITY

The conceptual repertoire of studies that explore discrimination, diversity, equality, equity, and inclusion are sometimes called EDI studies and in some cases as EDI.

EDI studies in the social sciences deal with demands for equality and the visible and invisible differences between people and workplace consequences of how these differences are treated (Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2011). EDI studies gained momentum with social movements, which emerged to eliminate historical inequalities. Social movements such as feminist movements and women's movements, anti-racist movements, LGBTQ+ movement, and the movement of individuals with disabilities, made it possible for equality demands to be considered socially, economically, and politically (Özbilgin & Erbil, 2021a).

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is a highly emotive term, which covers a wide range of assessments that an individual make. The New Oxford Shorter English Dictionary (Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 689) offers four definitions of the term:

First, discrimination is the action or an act of discriminating or distinguishing; the fact or condition of being discriminated against or distinguished; a distinction made. Second, discrimination is defined as the practice or an instance of discrimination against people on grounds of race, colour, sex, social status, age, etc.; an unjust or prejudicial discrimination. Third, discrimination is the perception of a difference between two stimuli, especially as evidenced by a different reaction to each. Last, discrimination is also the faculty of discriminating marks; the ability to observe accurately and make fine distinctions; perceptiveness, good judgement or taste.

Discrimination could be about making assessment and refined judgements with learned criteria (see Fig. 1.1). For example, when assessing exams or work performance, assessors discriminate against individuals in terms of their performance. Such forms of discrimination are considered legitimate and lawful. They are even endorsed and praised for good judgement and robust decision-making practices. However, discrimination becomes unacceptable when arbitrary criteria such as a gender, ethnicity or another demographic category are used (Cohn, 2019). For example, an individual unfairly discriminated, if the discrimination is based on ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or other demographic attributes. There are laws to protect individuals against unfair discrimination based on such arbitrary criteria.

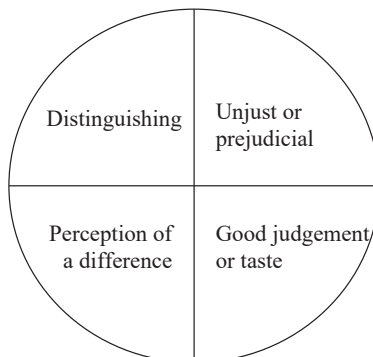


Fig. 1.1. Definitions of Discrimination.

When we examine the history of discrimination, we see that social movements have given meaning and moral definition to what constitutes unfair and unlawful forms of discrimination (Özbilgin & Erbil, 2021a). For example, the feminist movement has pushed for eliminating discrimination on the basis of sex and gender identity (Winslow, 2020). The anti-racist, anti-slavery and postcolonial social movements have pushed for social, political, economic, and legal changes to combat discrimination based on race and ethnicity (Bell, Berry, Leopold, & Nkomo, 2021). Disability movement has pushed for eliminating discrimination based on disability (Carling-Jenkins, 2016). These three forms of discrimination, i.e. gender, ethnic and disability are targeted by three distinct conventions at the level of the United Nations. Broader range of social movements exist today that seek to eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation, social and economic class, age, migration and refugee status, belief and faith, among others (Staggenborg, 2016). What drives social movements is often a desire to end discrimination and foster equality, equity, and inclusion among diverse groups of individuals (Özbilgin & Erbil, 2021a). In the next section, we explore equality and equity at work. As we explain below, equality, equity, and inclusion are aspirational states which have not been achieved yet. There is a long march for organisations and nation states to achieve equality, equity, and inclusion, considering the slow pace of change in these fields. Yet, if we take a long-term view, there has been considerable progress in societies internationally with abolishing of slavery, women's emancipation with citizenship rights, and decriminalisation of LGBT+ identity.

EQUALITY AND EQUITY AT WORK

The terms equality and equity are now used interchangeably. There are some false assumptions about the difference between the two concepts. While equity is misguidedly associated with accommodating differences, equality is unwisely reduced to treating everyone equally without recognising their different needs and circumstances. There is a popular misconception which alludes to such a difference between the terms. However, the distinction between the two terms requires refinement beyond populist use. It is worrying to see how comfortably some scholars have moved away from 'equality' to embrace the term 'equity'. This change of term is not innocuous. Equity originates from ethics and fairness discourses (Crane, Matten, Glozer, & Spence, 2019).

Although equity efforts are sensitive to differences, such sensitivity is not often enshrined in laws and regulatory frameworks. However, equality is founded on the universal declaration of human rights and is supported by social movements that demand an end to inequalities. Equity and equality distinction diverts attention from regulatory and governance issues and undermines efforts to end inequalities (Facio & Morgan, 2009). In the case of Britain, there are no equity laws and regulations. All governance structures refer to equality, not equity, in the UK. However, some countries, such as Canada, have equity laws. The turn to equity in countries where the legal frameworks refer to equality is a risk of diverting from systematic efforts to end inequality. It is critical to ask in the case of equity, whose

sense of justice and fairness informs equity decisions. What one group considers another group may contest as unjust and inequitable. While equity arguments may be used to support humanisation and fairness for all, they have also been used to dehumanise and limit access of certain groups to justice and fairness (Atkins, 2019). Equity arguments emanate from ethics and justice, and this discipline of study is dominated by typical academics who are white, heterosexual, religious, middle/upper-class, and able-bodied males.

In contrast, equality literature draws on scholars from atypical backgrounds and connects with disadvantaged communities, social movements, regulations, governance, and laws against discrimination. Both concepts could be used interchangeably. However, we see that privileged voices are corroding equality work with arbitrary fairness arguments that have been used to justify segregation, apartheid, and violence against disadvantaged groups. Thus in the hands of the powerful, equity could result in injustice for disenfranchised communities (Erbil & Özbilgin, 2023). Therefore, we adopt equality in this chapter to refer to efforts to end systemic and institutional forms of inequality. We use the term equity in its universal emancipatory sense as a guiding ethical principle for equality.

Equity in the workplace means the organisation provides employees with fair opportunities to access opportunities and demonstrate their abilities. Definitions of equality in the workplace also emphasise that employees are not discriminated against based on their specific traits, such as sexual orientation, identity, race or age. In this sense, equality refers to efforts against inequalities (Ozbilgin, Tatli, & Jonsen, 2015). The scope of equality in the workplace includes four aspects (see Fig. 1.2). The degree to which organisations and leaders are committed to universal human rights and the scope of legislation can focus workplaces on specific aspects of equality (Sen, 1992). The first of these aspects is related to equality standards. Some organisations assume that standards for access to opportunities are set as the first or possibly the only step towards equality in the workplace. For example, companies consider that defining career paths for positions and tying them to objective criteria for career advancement offers all employees the

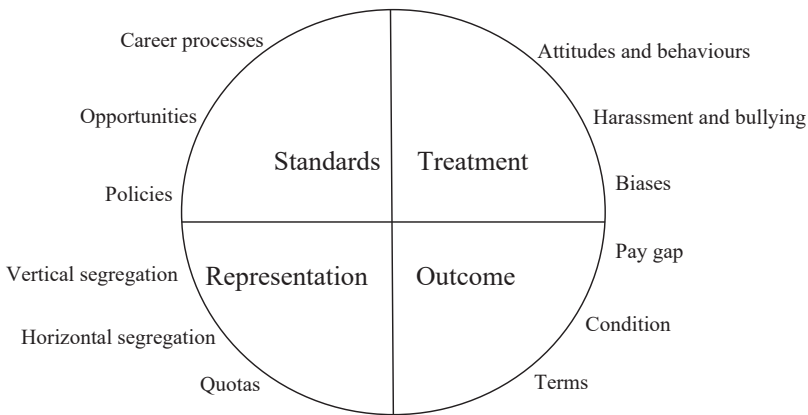


Fig. 1.2. Definitions of Equality.

opportunity to progress reasonably in their professions. However, it is often ineffective to set principles or policies that ignore the historical injustices and systematic discrimination faced by individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Organisations should make it possible to be fair in treatments along with standards of equality. Although there are principles, the approaches of privileged positions within the organisation can continue to produce inequalities. Biased decisions of leaders limit the ability of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to access opportunities or resources (Chang & Milkman, 2020). Besides, organisations can also focus on representation to achieve equality in the workplace and thus gain legitimacy. Equal representation means placing individuals from diverse backgrounds in critical positions (Ozbilgin & Erbil, 2023a). Organisations may combat vertical and horizontal segregation for equality in representation. Vertical segregation is placing individuals from privileged groups at the top of the occupational hierarchy without objectively assessing their qualifications. Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds stay at the bottom of the hierarchy, and their advancement in the hierarchy is either impossible or highly restricted. Horizontal segregation refers to the concentration of individuals from certain groups in various professions or sectors, independent of objective criteria and professional requirements. The phenomenon of horizontal segregation is exemplified in the financial sector by the dominance of male employees (Kessler, 2021). Similarly, the concentration of women in fulfilling allied health services serves as another illustration of horizontal segregation (Erbil, 2021).

Some organisations design their equality management system as outcome-oriented. The primary motivation of these organisations is that individuals who make equal efforts can achieve similar results. Legal regulations also have a significant impact on the motivation of organisations in this direction. Iceland's Equal Pay Standard, which we consider an exemplary case, is one of them. Iceland urges companies to offer equal pay to equal work to stop the gender pay gap. Some organisations turn the starting point of the working process to ensure equality. Equality of conditions is based on the belief that it will eliminate systematic barriers to individuals' actualisation of their potential (Miller, 1996). Affirmative action policies are an example of equality of conditions.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Diversity is studied across all fields of science. It means different things across scientific disciplines including differences between living organisms and the ways of living together with their differences in biological science, social science, and medicine. Diversity in the social sciences deals with people's biological, social, and cultural characteristics. Diversity is a research and application field that covers the existence of individuals with their characteristics and differences. Sub-branches of social sciences regard diversity from various perspectives. Psychology studies diversity as individual differences. Sociology interprets diversity as a social phenomenon through interaction between levels, micro-individual, meso-organisational, and macro-national. Management assumes diversity more as a social resource; it focusses on mobilising diversity with management techniques that increase efficiency and effectiveness in working groups (Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2011).

In this chapter, we focus on workforce diversity which is framed in four different ways (See Fig 1.3). Diversity is framed as a burden by populist media in particular. The impact of atypical individuals, and newcomers to organisational life such as female and minority ethnic LGBTQ+ individuals could be considered a burden or a threat (Özbilgin et al., 2023a). Although well intentioned, yet similarly negative framing of diversity manifests as a burden. Atypical individuals that make a workforce diverse are considered incomplete projects that need to be trained further to integrate. Much of the burden approach focusses on shaping atypical individuals to the norms of the dominant groups in the workforce. The third frame of diversity is around rights. This aspect focusses on what rights atypical individuals have at work. Human rights and legal rights dominate this frame. The final frame is about the potential of atypical individuals and what they can contribute to the economic, social, and political life in societies and workplaces. Each frame has its own unique set of discourses and interventions.

Organisations that see diversity as a burden have an essentialist approach. Organisations that accept diversity as a burden assume that individuals have some innate characteristics and that these characteristics will not change. Such essentialist assumptions drive organisations to view diversity as bipolar. While organisations consider some atypical individuals reasonable, they may see others from specific diverse backgrounds as problematic (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000). For example, although individuals with disabilities are considered a diverse group in Turkey, companies recruit these individuals within the framework of unsupportive legal employment quotas and give them a salary but do not invite them to work. For this reason, individuals with disabilities are defined as ‘ATM workers’, and companies regard these workers as a burden (Ozbilgin, Erbil, & Odabaşı, 2023b).

The view that evaluates diversity within the rights framework also includes an essentialist interpretation but positively. Legal frameworks are essential in ensuring progress for diversity. In this sense, recognising the historical injustices and systematic discrimination faced by individuals from diverse backgrounds and taking legal measures to prevent them plays a critical role in protecting the

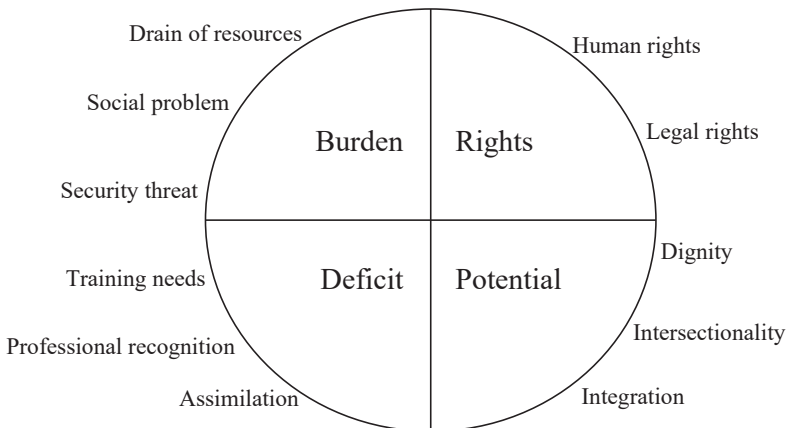


Fig. 1.3. Workforce Diversity.

rights of individuals. The fact that legal regulations and rights have the power to influence the policies of organisations shape inclusion at work (Küskü, Aracı, & Özbilgin, 2021).

Also, organisations have rampant views parallel with the deficit point of view towards diversity. Organisations may perceive diversity as social, personal or political constructions and assume that individuals from diverse backgrounds lack intellectual and cultural capital (Kamasak, Özbilgin, Yavuz, & Akalin, 2019). Organisations with a deficit approach, for example, engage in diversity management efforts by organising training programs or by preparing programs where information and experience are transferred only to diverse individuals instead of mutual learning (Baykut, Erbil, Özbilgin, Kamasak, & Bağlama, 2022). It is possible to see more extreme examples of the deficit approach, such as assimilation, as in the practices of factories in China forcing Uyghur workers to learn Mandarin Chinese.

Some organisations are aware that the talent pool is predominantly made up of individuals from diverse backgrounds and want to unleash the talents of these individuals. Organisations with this approach notice diversity as a potential. Organisations examine and rebuild their structures, procedures, and systems to integrate diverse individuals. Unlike organisations that see diversity as a deficit, the potentiality approach is concentrated on learning from diverse individuals and transforming organisational structures and procedures.

Universal categories of diversity such as gender, race, sexual orientation, and disability emerged. These universally recognised categories are called etic categories of diversity. They can be studied across time and place. EDI policies in organisations often aim at protecting individuals against discrimination across these etic categories and try to foster climates and cultures of inclusion and equality. With social movements, diversity has become a symbol of freedom as a precursor to equality; The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international organisations such as the EU provide normative pressure for nation states and organisations to consider ending discrimination and promoting diversity and inclusion.

Alongside the etic categories of diversity, there are also emic categories. Emic diversity categories are not universal categories. Locally meaningful distinctions and forms of discrimination are not always universally applicable. For example, tribal ties in some countries, faith-based distinctions, familial ties could form emic (local) categories of diversity. For example, the north south divide in Britain is a local form of diversity, which forms subtle forms of association, sense of belonging and otherness among people. Similarly, the concept of hemsehri (people who are born in the same town) in Turkey is one of those emic diversity categories (Tatlı & Özbilgin, 2012). Individuals in Turkey are obliged to grant some privileges to their hemsehri. Hemsehri may become a category of diversity that conflicts with competence when institutions exclude non-hemsehri. Similarly, the caste system in India, the business and familial ties in China, and the tribal ties in some African countries could be considered as emic diversity categories (Xu, Cave, Leibold, Munro, & Ruser, 2020).