

International Perspectives of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Research in Social Issues in Management

Edited by
Eden King
Quinetta Roberson
Mikki Hebl

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Series Editors

Eden King, Quinetta Roberson, and Mikki Hebl

The Research in Social Issues in Management series highlights a wide range of timely and critical societal concerns for managers, organizations, and management scholars. Two overarching themes have emerged in this series: the first theme addresses concerns about justice and morality while the second theme brings to light emerging issues in diversity, equity, and inclusion. The volumes in this series synthesize and inspire important questions about these critical social issues, thereby offering important directions for management science and practice.

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International Perspectives of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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PREFACE

Growing scholarship on the topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has expanded to include a wide variety of identities, contexts, and strategies. Yet, despite this expansion, much of the scholarly conversation surrounding remains centered on organizations within the US context. This focus is limiting because DEI is not a monolithic concept; its meaning, implications, and outcomes vary greatly across national boundaries, shaped by each country's unique cultural, economic, and political landscape. The predominance of US-centric perspectives risks overlooking the complexities and nuances that emerge when DEI is considered from a global standpoint. Such perspectives overlook the distinct histories, cultural dynamics, and challenges that shape inequities globally as well as the unique struggles faced by marginalized groups in different countries. This narrow focus also may lead to the development of strategies that are not only ineffective but potentially harmful when applied indiscriminately in non-U.S. contexts.

In this volume of *Research in Social Issues in Management*, a collection of contributions from around the globe sheds new light on the challenges and opportunities of global research on DEI. We curated this collection to highlight and amplify diverse voices and contexts, offering insights that extend beyond the US.-focused research that dominates the field. We sought to provide a platform for researchers from around the globe—across six continents—to contribute their unique perspectives. The resulting collection features the work of 13 researchers, each offering invaluable insights from regions as varied as South Korea, England, Ireland, Puerto Rico, Norway, Australia, Germany, Malaysia, Japan, Canada, France, India, Belgium, and Sweden. Through these contributions, the volume broadens the scope of DEI scholarship by incorporating diverse cultural perspectives, historical legacies, and socio-political contexts. Each chapter addresses a distinctive facet of diversity in organizations, from underexplored aspects of identity to context-specific dynamics that shape inclusion and exclusion. The contributions not only extend what is typically studied and published in

predominantly US-focused journals but also challenge prevailing assumptions and expand the theoretical and practical boundaries of the field. This work provides actionable strategies, offering researchers and practitioners new resources for approaching DEI in more culturally sensitive and globally relevant ways.

These ideas begin (in author's alphabetical order) with Beauregard's description of her work on authenticity, particularly among transgender workers and highlights how socio-historical processes shape patterns of advantage and disadvantage. Coombs and Okimoto offer a critical rethinking of inclusion by introducing the concepts of positionality and relationality from an Aboriginal perspective in Australia, illustrating the need for localized frameworks of understanding. Fischer's reflections on the experience of working in Germany after being raised in the US present a compelling narrative about unearned privilege, particularly in language, and how it influences research on people with disabilities. Meanwhile, Fujimoto and Wai's case study on a collaborative effort between a multinational corporation and an environmental entrepreneur underscores the intersections of environmental challenges and global inequities, offering a novel perspective on addressing DEI on a global scale.

Kinias explores the pursuit of eudaimonic well-being through her work to repair inequities across three continents. Kulkarni examines the lived experiences of gig workers in India, revealing the vulnerabilities inherent in their employment conditions through rich qualitative data. Matos shares how his Puerto Rican heritage has shaped both his personal life and his scholarship on Latinx families, offering a deeply personal narrative. In a similarly personal piece, Myeong reflects on how her North Korean refugee grandparents' experiences have informed her research and life. Reichel and Bosak similarly engage with cross-cultural experiences of parenthood, linking policy, practice, and scholarship in a way that bridges personal and professional worlds. Sekiguchi, Ikeda, and Liu explore the cultural roots of seniority-based hierarchies in Japan, highlighting how these systems promote employment stability while potentially hindering DEI progress. Toma and Krings engage in a dialog that reflects their distinctive scholarly journeys throughout Europe. Uman and Hellerstedt discuss and advocate for the expansion of DEI research into public sectors, non-profit organizations, and developing countries. Villeseche then closes the volume by advocating for the exploration of "contextually bound yet globally relevant" phenomena to build a more comprehensive understanding of DEI.

This volume offers more than just a collection of academic contributions; it represents a call to action. Through the exchange of ideas, evidence, and experiences, we hope to inspire a shift in the field toward a more globally informed perspective on DEI. These exchanges are vital for addressing shared challenges and deepening our collective understanding

of diverse contexts. We also seek to promote cross-cultural collaborations and innovation across the fields that comprise DEI research. By acknowledging, highlighting, and understanding the varied lenses through which people from different countries and cultures experience and examine DEI, we may better identify strategies that foster greater diversity, equity and inclusion worldwide. Ultimately, this collection encourages readers to move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach and embrace the complexity and richness of DEI across the world's diverse cultural landscape.

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CHAPTER 1

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTEXT IN DIVERSITY- RELATED RESEARCH

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RECENT RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND BACKSTORY

The diversity-related scholarship I engage with is largely grounded in the concept of authenticity and “bringing your whole self to work”. Recently, this has manifested itself in writing about inclusion for LGBTQ+ individuals, with a focus on transgender workers; the workplace and work-life experiences of migrant and/or minoritized workers in the UK; and the variation in work-life interface management across different countries and cultures. Other research questions I am interested in pursuing center on disclosure among workers with invisible disabilities and/or other stigmatized identities, and how accommodations for particular worker needs can be mainstreamed into work processes and job design for all workers to use.

My diversity research initially grew out of my interest in how working parents—primarily mothers—managed the often-competing demands of paid work and family life. My involvement in work-life interface research gradually led me toward an interest in global diversity scholarship because so much of the work-life scholarship at the time was (and, let’s face it, still is) Western-centric. Living and working as I do in a very diverse city,

where nearly 41% of the population is foreign-born and 46% identifies as a visible minority, with a further 17% identifying as a white ethnic minority (ONS, 2022a, 2022b), even the most casual conversations with friends or work colleagues demonstrated that work and family demands and resources can vary considerably across countries. Through these conversations and observations, it also became evident that not all migrants had similar experiences or outcomes at work in their host country and broad diversity categorizations could not capture these differences.

As a migrant graduate student (and then worker) myself, from a mixed-ethnic and migrant family background, I had some awareness early on of the role of identity in shaping our own and others' values, expectations and behaviors. Learning about intersectionality later in life was like a puzzle piece slotting into place, a sort of lightbulb “aha” moment. The multifaceted, nuanced nature of self-identification and other-categorization is slowly revealing itself to me and enriching my understanding of all sorts of phenomena. As global mobility continues and many parts of the world become more demographically “mixed,” it's clear to me that the relevance of intersectionality to diversity-related scholarship will only increase.

KEY FINDINGS THAT SHED LIGHT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A MORE GLOBAL STUDY OF DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP

I know many scholars who plan their research trajectory, who want to build a body of knowledge in a specific area or answer specific questions and who purposefully design their research activities to meet those goals. I admire these people, but I am not one of them. My approach to research has been scattershot and frequently opportunistic, and while there are certainly links between my outputs and sometimes even a “golden thread” running through them, these only become evident to me once I am forced to assemble a summary of my work for promotion or performance review purposes. However unconscious my strategy, however, I have had the good fortune to connect with graduate students and colleagues who have invited me to collaborate on projects that have opened my eyes and expanded my boundaries. Of recent works, I am particularly proud of two that I will review briefly here.

The first is a qualitative study published in *Human Relations* that explored Chinese, Japanese and South Korean migrant women's work experiences in the UK (Hwang & Beauregard, 2022). The participants experienced discrimination and gendered ethnic stereotyping at work, but also perceived instances of contextualized privilege. Seonyoung Hwang and I categorized these as relative privilege (e.g., participants feeling privileged in

comparison to reference groups in their home country), assigned privilege (e.g., employers valuing participants' language skills and cultural understanding of their home country), and ambiguous privilege (e.g., ethnic stereotypes of East Asian women as polite and hardworking as a double-edged sword that pigeonholed them as subservient but also enabled them to benefit reputationally with little work effort required).

This study is special to me because analyzing this dataset was my first experience of really grappling with intersectionality and it was a steep learning curve, aided immeasurably by [Holvino's \(2010\)](#) and [Rodriguez et al.'s \(2016\)](#) work and the patient and generous guidance of the associate editor assigned to our paper, Helena Liu. The experience brought home to me the relational nature of both privilege and disadvantage and how the cognitive framing of an experience, informed by an understanding of wider contextualized social processes, plays a key role in determining the impact of that experience on an individual. As suggested by [Rebughini \(2021\)](#), we were able to employ the lens of intersectionality to examine how social actors construct their agency to cope with forms of domination and employ social categorizations for their own purposes. We were also able to see how various levels of context intersected to produce outcomes for our participants and how fluid their positionality could be due to the shifting nature of some contextual attributes, such as the pre-eminence of East Asian markets as business targets for some employers. Rather than being either privileged or disadvantaged, our research participants were both, and their status was dynamic rather than static.

The second study that is especially important to me is a qualitative study published in *Community, Work and Family* on how women in Nigeria working as lawyers, magistrates and judges manage the boundaries between their work and home lives ([Beauregard & Adisa, 2023](#)). Some of the themes identified in the data were similar to those featured in studies conducted among professional women in Western contexts, such as workplace gender discrimination and gendered social role expectations that place a disproportionate burden of unpaid caregiving on women. The intensity of these processes may have been greater given the more strongly patriarchal culture in which they took place, but they were not unfamiliar. Other experiences recounted by the study participants were more context-specific; for example, many participants reported being publicly harassed and subjected to physical assault by individuals they had previously prosecuted, or those individuals' family members. These assaults took place at church, at the gym, and at weddings, and in response women restricted their movements to home and work only. A significant proportion of the study participants also spoke about the impact of nonconsensual polygamy on their work-life balance, with supplementary wives performing the majority of household labour and in some cases, assisting the female legal professionals with work tasks.

This study is meaningful to me for two reasons. One, it hints at the importance of a systems approach in work-family and diversity research, both of which literatures often approach inclusion from a very individualist perspective. The findings of this study are a good reminder that individual agency is negotiated within context-specific institutional and social systems, and organizational interventions that fail to take these into account may be less successful than anticipated. Two, the findings of this study further reinforce the utility of an intersectional lens. While the high socioeconomic status of the research participants confers privilege on the one hand, the strongly patriarchal gender norms of their context confer disadvantage on the other. Overall, the findings of this study help to emphasize the huge variation in what can be considered the “status quo” across contexts and the varied forms of differentiation, power and inequality within them.

MAKING DIVERSITY-RELATED RESEARCH MORE INTERNATIONALLY INCLUSIVE

Discourses around diversity and workforce diversity itself are very different in different cultural contexts. To make diversity-related research more internationally inclusive, it would be helpful to have more acknowledgment of and focus upon different geopolitical contexts, especially—for Western and particularly Anglo researchers—those outside the Western sphere that are typically addressed in English-language scholarship. Many nations grapple with different strands of diversity and power relations; knowing more about attitudes and approaches toward workforce diversity and inclusion in this broader range of contexts would help paint a broader, more complete picture of how workplaces deal with difference. Given the many researchers working in their own languages, translating more of this international scholarship into English would help researchers who work exclusively or predominantly in English to be more knowledgeable and develop a more global outlook on diversity and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). A greater emphasis on social class in diversity research would also be useful, as this is a profoundly significant strand of diversity in many cultures and often intersects with other facets of identity to produce patterns of advantage and/or disadvantage (see [Doshi, 2021](#); [Romani et al., 2021](#)).

There are perhaps some discipline-specific blinkers when it comes to diversity scholarship. Psychology in particular often fails to contextualise itself, with many published articles clearly situated in an American conceptualization of diversity and marginalization but never presenting themselves explicitly as such (possibly assuming a predominantly American readership). I am reluctant here to cite any examples because my purpose is not to criticize diversity scholars, but to highlight the absence of

contextualization in the literature more broadly. The findings of diversity research can rarely be considered “default” or widely generalisable. Much of the micro-OB and psychology-based DEI research is narrowly focused on the individual or workplace level without taking into consideration wider socio-historical processes that have shaped patterns of advantage and disadvantage. To account for the forest and not just the trees, we need to pay more attention to understanding these processes, how colonialism, slavery and migration have shaped power dynamics in many regions and how this plays out in workplaces. This might be accomplished through employing a postcolonialist feminist lens (e.g., [Kerner, 2017](#)) and/or greater use of multi-level analyses of context, connecting the power dynamics between country context, occupational and organizational contexts, and individual workplace experiences (e.g., [Pringle & Ryan, 2015](#)).

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF DIVERSITY RESEARCHERS

To the next generation of diversity scholars (and indeed the current one!), I would advise reading widely and beyond their own discipline. There is a great deal of diversity-related research taking place in, for instance, cultural studies, migration studies, and linguistics; these are the search results we filter out or ignore when searching databases for relevant literature but once we decide to leave them in and have a look, the world really opens up. Those of us situated within business and management studies who are reading only the diversity scholarship in management and organization journals are missing out on a lot. For example, Eastern Europe has a sizable Roma population that has historically been disadvantaged and there are many ongoing efforts, often funded by the European Union, to improve outcomes for and change prejudices toward this group (see [European Commission, 2024](#)). Understanding what works, and why, could aid in applying these learnings in contexts with other marginalized and in some cases stateless populations who experience workplace discrimination, such as Kurds in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria and Palestinians in Jordan, Lebanon and Israel. Related to this, much of the DEI scholarship focuses predominantly on minoritized groups, “outgroups,” with little attention paid to how majority groups’ investment in the status quo can be shifted. We need knowledge and tools to combat this.

I would also suggest that as a field, we need more attention paid to indigenous populations, along with more targeted investigations into the commonalities and distinctions among the workplace experiences of and outcomes for these populations, those of migrant workers, and those of (non-indigenous) minoritized ethnic nationals. Different marginalized groups have

different histories that often necessitate different state policies or interventions to counteract workplace inequalities; for example, affirmative action for Malaysia's ethnic majority Malay population (Montesino, 2012). Work organizations typically have one set of DEI practices that apply across the board, however, and their impact may not be equivalent across all minoritized groups due to nuanced variations in their positioning within intersectional frameworks of privilege and disadvantage.

There has been a more pronounced emphasis on researcher reflexivity in recent years and this is only for the good. It is important to consider our positionality vis a vis our research participants, as “researcher experiences [are] riddled with both privilege and disadvantage, where both researchers and participants have power and invoke particular intersectional identities to reposition themselves and each other in their interactions” (Rodriguez & Ridgway, 2023, p. 1273). Equally, the move toward amplifying and prioritizing own voices and members of groups that have historically been marginalized and silenced is a positive one. At the same time, there is a benefit to be gained in supporting all researchers to expand their boundaries and learn about the experiences and expectations of groups to which they do not belong, alongside and guided by those who do.

Debate around the legitimacy of conducting research among minoritized groups with which one does not identify as a member is appropriate and often constructive. Clearly, out-group or majority views should not be imposed on members of the in-group or minority, and it is unquestionably in poor taste for anyone to jump on a research bandwagon for personal gain. On the other hand, there can be significant drawbacks to research taking place in demographic siloes. This practice risks isolating minoritized researchers in specific areas of enquiry regardless of their broader interests and expertise, to the potential detriment of their career development and the bodies of literature to which they would otherwise be contributing. It also risks signaling that diversity research—and DEI more broadly—is not directly relevant to those who do not identify as belonging to a minoritized group.

Working with people whose expertise, skills and/or lived experience are complementary to one's own can be a win-win situation and a valuable learning opportunity for the entire team. Diverse research or authorship teams are therefore to be encouraged and supported as they can enable greater reflexive intra-team dialogue and debate that may produce more thoughtful and nuanced analysis and discussion. Putting together a diverse team can be as simple as sourcing interested parties at diversity-related conferences or workshops, especially those hosting research incubators designed to bring about collaborations. Another route is to approach colleagues who work in adjacent areas but who may have relevant methodological expertise

or experience of publishing in particular outlets, and who are open to expanding their repertoire. It can also be useful to think beyond the usual suspects and form collectives with, for example, professional services colleagues and students ([Chatrakul Na Ayudhya et al., 2023, 2024](#)) or alumni who are now diversity practitioners with an interest in research.

FUTURE “HOT TOPICS” FOR DIVERSITY RESEARCH

Neurodiversity at work has been an increasingly popular topic of late and the importance of workplace neuroinclusion will likely continue to grow. To date, there is a sizable body of neurodiversity literature related to education but relatively little centered on the next life stage in most career models, employment. An interesting debate is ongoing regarding how neurodivergence is and should be positioned. Use of the medical model of disability has been rightfully criticized by the neurodiversity movement for emphasizing the negative repercussions of neurodivergence and ignoring potential benefits with regard to cognitive functioning in education and at work. However, framing neurodivergence as a “superpower” that confers advantages in the workplace (e.g., [Dennis-Tiwary, 2024](#)) can be argued to be simplistic and patronizing, ignoring the genuine challenges faced by neurodivergent workers both in terms of their conditions and the treatment they receive from others (see, for example, [Doyle et al., 2022](#)). I would like to see more nuanced explorations of neurodiversity that avoid a dichotomous “advantage vs disadvantage” approach; as we know from the intersectionality literature, both privilege and disadvantage can co-exist. While it may be difficult for workplace policies and interventions to reflect the nuance inherent in intersectionality because they are designed to apply to wide swathes of individuals, better understanding of nuance can only help researchers, managers and workers “on the ground.”

Finally, surely no discussion of work-related research can be complete without reference to artificial intelligence (AI). It has become clear that large language models frequently have bias baked into them because they are trained on materials produced by humans, and this source material often contains bias ([Anthis et al., 2024](#); [Lucy & Bamman, 2021](#)). This is obviously an important issue to tackle. However, there are other research questions to pursue as AI becomes increasingly influential in the workplace. Can an intersectional lens be used to examine the interconnectedness of human and AI entities? How do technologies like AI intersect with social identities and experiences of privilege and disadvantage? Can AI be harnessed to level the playing field for underrepresented and/or disadvantaged groups? The interaction of human and nonhuman identities is an intriguing future avenue for diversity research.

CONCLUSIONS

The world of work continues to evolve at a rapid pace, reinforcing the significance of taking context into consideration as deeply as possible when conducting diversity-related research. Against a backdrop of ongoing globalization processes and advances in technology, it becomes increasingly important for diversity researchers to account for both the relational and dynamic nature of both privilege and disadvantage. To do so requires “zooming out” to capture the institutional and social systems within which individual processes operate, and both an intersectional lens and diverse research teams can be useful in this regard. Also helpful in expanding our research perspective is widening our collective scholarly scope to more frequently access research published in other languages and in other disciplines. Interdisciplinary research collaborations can help to accomplish this, but too often scholars are disincentivised from engaging in interdisciplinary research collaborations because the publication outlets prioritized by one discipline “don’t count” toward career advancement in another. Overcoming structural barriers such as these may be a slow process, but ultimately we and our field of study will undoubtedly benefit.

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