Introduction to the special issue

IB offers a fertile disciplinary environment for the advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) research, due to its strong focus on “foreignness” and “distance” (Lumineau, Hanisch and Wurtz, 2021). These two underlying tenants of IB, closely related to DEI issues and challenges, make up two sides of the same IB coin (Doh, 2021). However, IB scholars, managers and policymakers are yet to fully leverage the IB discipline’s toolkit, as well as the research, managerial and policy experience gained across markets, societies, groups and organizations. IB scholarship has so far explored DEI rather selectively, mainly within the scope of gender (e.g., Kovesnikov, Tienari and Piekkari, 2019; Michailova and Hutchings, 2016), cultural diversity (e.g., Stahl and Maznevski, 2021; Minbaeva, Fitzsimmons and Brewster, 2021) and/or language (e.g., Tenzer, Terjesen and Harzing, 2017; Boussebaa and Tienari, 2021). Several DEI aspects and areas of research such as “age,” “gender identity,” “sexual orientation,” “disability” and “indigenous status” have been under-researched and/or lack sufficient intersectionality (Köllen, 2021).

For example, discrimination against older workers is estimated to cost the US economy over $850 billion (Suh, 2021). Research on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) inclusion has shown that an eight-point increase in the Global Index on Legal Recognition of Homosexual Orientation (GILRHO) is associated with a $2,000 higher GDP per capita on a country level (Badgett, Waaldijk and van der Meulen Rodgers, 2019). According to the OECD, the global economic cost of gender-based discrimination surpassed $12 trillion already in 2016. Addressing it, could boost the global GDP by as much as 0.6 percentage points (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016). Similarly, the World Bank reports that there are between 370 and 500 million indigenous peoples around the world. Making up less than 5 percent of the global population, they represent 15 per cent of the extremely poor (World Bank, 2021).

The IB discipline has become more open to a critical management studies lens applied to a variety of IB phenomena, for example, related to questions on the role multinational enterprises (MNEs) play with regards to global inequality (e.g., Zhao, Gooderham, Harzing and Papanastassiou, 2021), as well as becoming more sensitive to marginalized voices and perspectives (e.g., Prasad and Durepos, 2016). It has also become more interested in issues surrounding social identity (e.g., Rašković and Takacs Haynes, 2021; Rašković, 2021) and the politics of identity, which are important lenses to examine DEI phenomena. Such interest, however, has been mostly confined to organizational contexts (Vaara, Tienari and Koveshnikov, 2021) and with limited understanding of MNEs as, for example, neo-colonial spaces (Boussebaa and Morgan, 2014), or the need to decolonize management theory (Banarjee, 2021) and IB (Boussebaa, 2021).

A fault-based approach has so far dominated the IB research agenda when it comes to DEI issues, seeing DEI as a challenge to be managed (Stahl, Tung, Kostova and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2016), or at best, a double-edged sword for MNEs (Minbaeva et al., 2021). It has motivated research, practice and policy aimed at demonstrating a strong business case for DEI (Ely and Thomas, 2020), but often overlooking the fact that DEI is a means to an end, not an end (Anderson, 2004). DEI is as much a moral imperative, as it is a sound and socially responsible business approach (Köllen, 2021). Yet, beyond the ideational and strategic approaches to DEI also lies the performative nature of diversity and inclusion, which is yet to be fully understood and examined. We believe it is time for the IB discipline, practice and policy to step up and take the lead on advancing our understanding of the changing nature, role and future of DEI in the context of a more socially nuanced and dynamic global environment (Dörrenbächer et al., 2021). For example, facing the same COVID-19 storm, different groups have found themselves in very different boats with those at the fringes struggling a strong business case (Gammelgaard, 2019) and with limited understanding of MNEs as “global fault lines” (Dörrenbächer et al., 2021).

With this special issue, we aim to contribute to a growing body of research within management studies (e.g., Post, Muzio, Sarala, Wei and Faems, 2021; Kraus, Onyeador, Ozgumus, Portocarrero, Rattan, Torrez and Hollie, 2021) and contextualize DEI research in IB settings to advance the field of DEI-related research, practice and policy within the IB domain. In doing so, we want to go beyond looking at the diffusion of DEI practices across environments and/or the impact of institutional environments on them (Köllen, 2021).

This special issue seeks to apply a critical management scholarship lens (Boussebaa, 2021; Dörrenbächer and Gammelgaard, 2019; Carr, 2006), particularly in a post-Covid-19 world (e.g., Dörrenbächer et al., 2021). We welcome review, theoretical, conceptual and empirical papers on a range of DEI topics which cover the intersection between DEI and IB across various levels of study (i.e., individuals, groups, organizations, collectives and societies, and/or places – both virtual and physical). We are especially interested in, but not limited to the following areas and questions:

- What are the macro and micro mechanisms of DEI practices and what IB-relevant “ends” do they serve at various levels (i.e., individual, group, organizational, societal)?
- What are the performative effects of DEI in a global context and international organizations?
• What role do IB actors – especially MNEs, governments and NGOs – play as spaces where DEI issues play out, as actors that make use, uphold and/or challenge institutions related to DEI, or as actors engaging in processes of social change and social movements?
• What opportunities and challenges does DEI pose for international managers, IB policymakers and IB educators in a new kind of IB landscape (i.e., VUCA conditions)?
• What unique DEI practices and/or challenges have emerged in specific national, regional and/or socio-cultural contexts, especially at the margins of global markets and/or society?
• How do MNEs, groups and individuals transfer DEI practices across geographies, different kinds of distances, physical and virtual environments, cultures?
• How can we incorporate the concepts of origin and ancestry into IB research connected to DEI?
• How can we advance our understanding of IB implications of various forms of discrimination and acknowledge the exclusion and exploitation of certain marginalized groups?
• How can the IB discipline incorporate DEI principles in its own disciplinary thinking and practices? For example, through leveraging methodological innovation to foreground previously marginalized groups.
• How can informal institutions in diverse environments influence managerial practices of businesses operating across borders (i.e., by leveraging diversity as a source of competitive advantage, link between diversity and resilience)?
• (How) do DEI initiatives and practices fit within responsible business (i.e., CSR or UN SDGs)?

Submission process and deadlines

**Key dates**

- **April 14, 2022** - First preliminary one-page project proposal submission deadline, via [http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cpoib](http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cpoib)
- **April 30, 2022** - Initial feedback on one-page proposals
- **June 15, 2022** - Working paper submission for online PDW
- **July 4/5, 2022 (TBC)** - Online PDW pre-AIB conference event
- **July 6-9, 2022 (TBC)** - Special cpoib DEI panel at AIB 2022 Miami
- **October 10, 2022** - Full paper submission deadline
- **December 19, 2022** - First review round feedback
- **March 1, 2023** - Revision submission deadline
- **End of 2023** - Final decisions
- **2024** - Publication

**Guidelines for submission**

Authors should refer to the cpoib website and the instructions on submitting a paper. For author guidelines and more information see: [https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/journal/cpoib#author-guidelines](https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/journal/cpoib#author-guidelines).

Submissions to cpoib are made using ScholarOne Manuscripts: [http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cpoib](http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cpoib). All papers will be subjected to double-blind peer review and papers will be reviewed in accordance with cpoib guidelines.

The guest editors welcome informal enquiries related to proposed topics.
We intend to accelerate the publication of papers in 2022, papers that do not meet the tight deadlines, may be considered for publication in regular issues.

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**References**


