

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in International Business:
A Review and Research Agenda**

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Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in International Business: A Review and Research Agenda

ABSTRACT. To remain relevant IB research must address the increasing pressure being applied to multinational enterprises (MNEs) to address equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). In this first systematic review of EDI in international business (IB), we evaluate the extent to which IB research on EDI addresses current and future demands for global equality and social justice. Our text analysis of 1618 articles indicates that EDI research within IB focuses on similar diversity categories (e.g. gender) and rationales for addressing EDI (e.g. performance) as mainstream EDI research from outside IB, but that IB research does not leverage the global aspects of the MNE, and is slower to shift its goal from firm or team performance to the inclusion of underrepresented groups. Our subsequent narrative review of 101 articles within IB indicates that IB excels at theorizing mechanisms related to heterogeneity, but avoids moral arguments for EDI, and that findings are often blind to power or status differences, postcolonial legacies, and other inequalities. We call for more moral-based and power-laden analysis that could mitigate international resistance to EDI, while maintaining an interest in EDI's relationship to organizational performance. At the intersection of IB and EDI research, we see the opportunity to lead societal change.

INTRODUCTION

The moral landscape for equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is in flux. Global social movements such as #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, Women's marches, and Pride marches represent a societal push to treat individuals from disadvantaged groups fairly and equally. The worldwide spread of EDI-related social movements is increasing pressure on multinational enterprises (MNEs) to address social difference inequalities in their global operations (Özbilgin & Erbil, 2021). Additionally, the unique characteristics of the MNE allow it to have a range of influences on the informal institutions of society (e.g. Brandl, Moore, Meyer, & Doh, 2022). Unlike domestic firms, MNEs face environments in which addressing systematic inequalities is both more *relevant* and more *challenging*. Yet, MNEs are uniquely *capable* of reducing and addressing inequalities at a global scale.

MNEs are an especially relevant context for addressing and reducing systemic inequalities because of their complexity and political power. The defining quality of the MNE is that it actively manages assets and people across nations. Therefore, subsidiaries must contend with societal, legal, institutional, and demographic differences far greater than purely domestic organizations. For example, categories of diversity vary widely across countries, and collecting such data is required in some countries but unlawful in others (Karakas & Özbilgin, 2019).

MNEs are also particularly challenging environments in which to address EDI. Societal expectations around diversity are embedded locally and manifest differently across countries, often hindering global integration across subsidiaries (Peterson & Thomas, 2007). As a result, human resource policies – including those related to EDI – are usually tailored to local conditions (Rosenzweig, 2006), making them uneven across countries (Syed & Özbilgin, 2019). An MNE may provide fair gender representation in the boardroom in Scandinavian countries while exploiting female labor in Saudi Arabia, where well-educated women can be employed cheaply. However, MNEs that standardize EDI practices globally can experience performance gains by treating employees well in countries where domestic employers commonly marginalize them (Siegel, Pyun & Cheon, 2019).

MNEs also have unique capabilities to disseminate practices and understandings of EDI based on globally shared priorities. They can offer cross-fertilization of ideas and innovation to break the impasse on locally sensitive topics (Jonsen & Özbilgin, 2014). For example, Polish subsidiaries of MNEs were found to import policies and practices that support religious and ethnic diversity, even though both forms of diversity are usually ignored by local organizations (Hamza-Orlinska, 2017). Thus, the MNE can be an essential catalyst for positive change regarding EDI.

Considering the unique relevance, challenge, and capability to address EDI in MNEs, advancing knowledge about the ending systemic inequalities is critical to the future of international business research if it is to remain relevant (Buckley, Doh, & Benischke, 2017). However, there has been little research to empirically examine whether IB research is well-positioned to address this critical challenge. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate how well existing IB research on EDI addresses current and future demands for global equality and social justice. We do this by comparing EDI research within IB against mainstream EDI research, and examining the extent to which IB research on EDI has leveraged the unique characteristics of the MNE.

We conducted our review using a zoom-out and zoom-in approach. First, we zoomed out through a text analysis to compare the trajectories of past approaches to EDI within and outside of IB, which developed along disciplinary lines. Next, we zoomed in through a narrative review to analyze more deeply how EDI has been defined and theorized within the IB literature. Finally, we compare our findings from both reviews against EDI research outside of IB to critically analyze core aspects of EDI research within IB. From both reviews we conclude that EDI research within IB mostly conceptualizes social groups as static, rarely adopts moral or resistance arguments for EDI research, and largely ignores power imbalances between social groups or the influence of postcolonial relationships among nations. We propose a research agenda that can help MNEs proactively lead societal change towards diversity, equality and inclusion in the countries where they operate.

THEORETICAL BASIS OF EDI OUTSIDE OF IB

Mainstream EDI research has a 50-year history focused on understanding and combating exclusion and inequality in organizations based on social differences such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality (Nkomo, Bell, Roberts, Joshi & Thatcher, 2019). We drew on reviews to identify the core defining qualities and purpose of EDI research outside of IB as a basis for comparison with EDI research within IB (Gagnon, Augustin & Cukier, 2022; Janssens & Steyaert, 2019; Nkomo et al., 2019; Oswick & Noon, 2014; Roberson, Holmes & Perry, 2017; Roberson, Ryan, & Ragins, 2017; Roberson, 2019). These are summarized in the left column of Table 1, under our two guiding questions: What is EDI, and what is the purpose of EDI research? The remaining columns of Table 1 summarize our findings, which are presented in the results section.

What is EDI?

The conceptualization of EDI has evolved that reflects the historical movement of research on social differences and their impact on the workplace (Oswick & Noon, 2014). Equality, diversity, and inclusion represent different but interconnected approaches to incorporating excluded social identity groups. In this research tradition, diversity refers to the degree of representation of different sociodemographic categories in a unit. However, it does not include all attributes that differentiate individuals, such as regions of origin, personality, or educational majors. Instead, it refers to sociodemographic differences underpinned by historical, postcolonial, or power-based inequalities, such as gender, race, class, or physical abilities. Social identity groups are usually fluid, intersectional, and socially constructed (Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop & Nkomo, 2010).

Initially, the field's focus was on equality, referring to equal opportunities for racial/ethnic minorities and women in the workplace through compliance with anti-discrimination legislation (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995). Different national research traditions adopted the terms equity (mainly based on subjective fairness arguments) and equality (mainly based on objective distributive justice concerns) interchangeably, despite their distinctive features (Bronfenbrenner, 1973). Recognizing their complementarities, we adopt the term equality over equity because of its more objective basis when

referring to equality of outcomes, and its relative urgency internationally. In the 1990s, Cox and Blake's (1991) conclusion that managing diversity could create a competitive advantage helped to influence a paradigm shift to *diversity management* (Nkomo et al., 2019). This approach subsumed the focus on surface categories of social difference (i.e., race and gender) within a broader set of social differences that included and often prioritized deep-level differences such as attitudes, values, and knowledge (Harrison, Price & Bell, 1998). Valuing diversity replaced the compliance motive for increasing diverse identities in organizations (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Theoretical attention turned to linking diversity to business performance and effective work processes (Richard, 2000). *Deep-level* differences were often seen as more relevant for driving organizational performance, despite not being linked to discrimination or marginalization (Nkomo, et al., 2019). Diversity was also contextualized within its organizational climate, regional demographics, and historical relations (Roberson et al., 2017). More recently, inclusion was added to return to a focus on avoiding exclusion of social groups in the workplace (Roberson, 2006). The concept of inclusion focuses on the extent to which all groups of employees feel fully accepted and included in the workplace, as well as the subsequent implications for people from excluded groups.

Some organizational practices influence one of these constructs more than the others. For example, more diverse hiring practices will primarily improve diversity over inclusion or equality. Yet, EDI research is rarely divided into these components. Instead, they are usually aggregated as EDI to embrace the interdependence of equality, diversity, and inclusion. Thus, we do not distinguish between equality, diversity and inclusion when referring to how they are managed within organizations but address them as a collective.

What is the purpose of EDI research?

Although some EDI research outside of IB examines performance gains from diversity, the purpose of current EDI research outside of IB is commonly a drive to document and eliminate bias and systemic discrimination in organizations (Nkomo et al., 2019). Traditionally, social psychological theories that include social categorization, social identity, and stereotyping have been most prevalent. Bias stems from the fact that all human beings categorize people (and other things) to deal more

efficiently with them in memory. Once we create a category to which we can assign individuals, it is more cognitively efficient to implicitly recall the category than the individual. While the process of social categorization is a normal part of the human condition, issues arise when people attach (often negative) attitudes to the categories or use categorizations to enhance their feelings of self-worth by demeaning other groups which they deem to be somehow lower ranking or different (Taylor, 1981). These mental processes often function implicitly and can become the source of prejudice towards out-groups. Treating individuals as only members of an (often viewed as inferior) group is a fundamental unfairness that has created many social issues in societies across the globe. This fundamental process is the basis for organizational responses to bias and prejudice that addresses their underlying mechanisms.

Sociological and critical approaches to EDI take a structural rather than an individual view of inequality, and these are increasingly common (e.g., Zanoni et al., 2010; Romani, Zanoni & Holck, 2021). Structural inequality focuses on the mechanisms, practices, and structures that produce and maintain inequalities among different groups concerning access to opportunities, materials, and experiencing inclusion (e.g., Janssens & Steyaert, 2019). Acker (2006), in her foundational work, suggested that institutions can produce, sustain, and pass on inequality regimes that generate gender, race and class-based disadvantages. Addressing structural inequalities is a fundamental way of achieving lasting equality in organizations. However, there is often backlash and resistance to deep level equality interventions.

Ely and Thomas (2001) introduced three prominent rationales that are commonly used to justify engaging in EDI. These are performance, institutional and moral arguments for diversity. The *performance* rationale encompasses any view that claims organizations want to diversify because it improves performance. *Institutional* rationales claim that organizations must diversify because of societal or institutional trends. *Moral* rationales encompass claims that organizations ought to diversify because it is the right thing to do.

In addition to these three common rationales in favor of diversifying, we add a fourth to recognize the *resistance* to EDI. This broad category has been proposed (Dass & Parker, 1999) to encompass arguments against EDI, such as the downsides of diversity, including linking diversity with

conflict and instability (Langer, Mustapha, & Stewart, 2009). Consequently, our first review examines changes over time in the relative prominence of these four rationales in EDI research within and outside of IB.

METHOD

Guided by EDI research outside IB and the unique characteristics of MNEs, we conducted two systematic reviews of the literature on EDI both within and outside of IB for the period 1928 – 2022. The scoping review *zoomed out* by using text analysis to present the big picture of how IB research compares to non-IB research about EDI. We identified historical trends, focal categories, and rationales for engaging in EDI research. We followed with a narrative review that *zoomed in* with a more selective examination of EDI research in top IB journals. This identified the benefits and limitations of common theories and research questions addressing EDI within IB.

THE BIG PICTURE: TEXT ANALYSIS COMPARING IB VS NON-IB

Our initial study adopted a scoping review (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008) to capture how the literature reported the reasons that firms engaged in EDI management, the types of diversity studied, and the amount of EDI research being conducted. Using text analysis software (LIWC), we mapped the progression of EDI research along four diversity rationales (performance, institutional, moral and resistance), multiple EDI categories (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation), and research prominence over time. The LIWC analysis calculated the degree to which each article aligned with each diversity rationale, and with each demographic category of diversity, as a basis for comparison. To explain our results, we examined the articles with the highest rating for each rationale, both within and outside IB.

Sample

We downloaded all articles for the period 1928-2022 that resulted from a search for full text, academic peer-reviewed, English language articles with both terms *diversity* and *inclus** using Business Source Complete. We chose these terms strategically to track the progression toward a modern

conceptualization of EDI, even though they would not capture related research streams, such as cross-cultural management research on cultural diversity, which does not commonly use the term inclusion. Although many more articles were returned by searching for either *diversity* or *inclus**, or for searching *equality* or *equity* there were too many misplaced articles unrelated to EDI. For example, the term equity primarily surfaced finance research unrelated to EDI. We opted for a non-comprehensive sample of articles with both search terms that is more trustworthy in terms of only including articles about EDI, rather than a larger sample with either term, which produced misleading results. Based on a review of abstracts and titles, we removed 35 articles that had erroneously arrived in the dataset. This search resulted in a sample of 1618 articles.

Measures

IB vs non-IB fields. One author and a research assistant independently classified articles as IB (n = 223; 14% of the total) if the article title, journal title, keywords or abstract referred to international business. This included the terms global, international and world, and all publications in journals classified as International Business by the Academic Journal List. This approach purposefully includes research published outside IB journals to capture the breadth of IB research. Coders initially disagreed on 10% of the IB classifications, resolving the coding through discussion.

EDI arguments and categories. As recommended (Short, Broberg, Cogliser, & Brigham, 2010), we created and validated a custom LIWC dictionary that identified terms common to the four diversity rationales and nine of the most common diversity characteristics, such as gender, race, sexual orientation, and nationality. We validated the item lists with a sample of 10 students in an EDI seminar, who collectively categorized each item into the four diversity rationales and ten diversity characteristics. As a result, we revised 20 words on the item lists. The resultant custom dictionaries and details about dictionary creation are available in an online appendix to this paper.

Analysis and Results

The LIWC text analysis uses dictionaries to count the percentage coverage of each category, resulting in high-level patterns or trends (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). Therefore, we present

descriptive results only to avoid over-interpreting small differences, and divide our findings into the same two guiding questions we used to describe core aspects of EDI research outside of IB. We summarize these findings about EDI in IB in the second column of Table 1, and are datasets are publicly available (Fitzsimmons, Özbilgin, Thomas, & Nkomo, 2023).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

What is EDI? We first evaluated our assumption that the number of diversity categories commonly addressed would differ within and outside of IB. IB articles mentioned similar numbers of EDI categories per paper as non-IB articles ($M_{IB}=6.75$; $M_{non-IB}=6.57$). Articles received higher scores when they considered categories in addition to the primary focus. For example, a critical examination of non-traditional expatriates also mentioned almost all other diversity categories, except religion (McNulty & Hutchings, 2016). Figure 1 displays the most common categories within and outside of IB. As expected, IB led in addressing nationality and culture, while non-IB EDI research led in addressing race, age, and sexual orientation. Gender was by far the most mentioned diversity category. Although IB articles mention many EDI categories, upon further examination many were used predominantly as control variables rather than essential theoretical and conceptual research elements. We explore this in more depth in our narrative review.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

What is the purpose of EDI research? We next analyzed the development of EDI research over time, highlighting similarities and differences within and outside IB. As shown in Figure 2, EDI research has not exhibited the same meteoric rise within IB as outside IB. The pace of growth over the past two decades has been slower within than outside of IB, suggesting that EDI research may be at a much earlier

developmental stage within IB. This distinction arose during the 1990s, then grew further in the 2000s and 2010s, consistent with research outside IB shifting toward the performance benefits of diversity.

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

We also assessed the relative weightings of performance, institutional, moral and resistance arguments. As shown in Figure 3, the most consistent pattern across IB and non-IB articles was the relative prevalence of performance-based and institutional arguments over moral and resistance-based arguments. On reading the ten articles with the highest ratings for each argument within and outside of IB, we also noticed that some of these arguments were used differently within and outside of IB.

INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Performance arguments were similar within and outside of IB, in which the dominant story was assessing performance benefits from diversity (e.g., Lisak, Erez, Sui, & Lee, 2016, 2016 within IB and Pandey, Shanahan & Hansen, 2005 outside IB). The majority of the top ten IB articles adopting institutional arguments examined gender regulations (e.g., Zamberi Ahmad, 2012), while the articles from outside IB ranged from examining regulations related to traditional EDI categories (e.g., Lennartz, Proost, & Brebels, 2019) to unconventional categories such as physical attractiveness (Cavico, Muffler, & Mujtaba, 2013). Two exemplary cross-national regulatory comparisons illustrate the potential for institutional EDI arguments made in IB (see Parlalis, 2013 & Zamberi Ahmad, 2012). Articles that adopted moral arguments overlapped substantially with those using institutional arguments, likely because both often addressed regulations related to fairness, justice, or rights. In addition, articles using moral arguments were more likely than those using other arguments to examine how power dynamics affect inequities. Across both IB and non-IB articles, those that scored high on resistance arguments addressed problems related to EDI, such as increased potential for conflict or miscommunication

(Bierema, 2010). The sole exception was one article that actively argued against diversity (Köllen, Kakkuri-Knuuttila, & Bendl, 2018). The most notable difference between IB and non-IB articles using resistance arguments was that eight of the top ten non-IB articles were about immigrants, versus only three out of ten within IB. Although migration is a well acknowledged global challenge for business and society, these articles focused on domestic issues only, so were classified as non-IB. Yet, the relative prevalence of resistance arguments within immigration EDI research implies it receives more resistance than other EDI categories.

Although many patterns seem similar between IB and non-IB when examined from a distance, our examination of the top-rated articles in each category revealed differences that would otherwise have been hidden. In particular; EDI research is increasing more slowly within IB than outside IB, performance and institutional arguments dominate over moral or resistance arguments, and gender and cultural/national diversity dominate over all other diversity categories. These findings prompted us to conduct a narrative review to discover how EDI is theorized and studied in mainstream IB research.

NARRATIVE REVIEW OF EDI IN IB

We used a narrative review approach to *zoom in* on the big picture findings from the text analysis (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008). A narrative review synthesizes a collection of studies or body of literature to both evaluate and critique how a particular topic has been conceptualized and investigated. Narrative reviews deepen understanding of current knowledge and are particularly valuable for identifying future research directions. We prioritized recent over historical theoretical developments, and prominent over uncommon theoretical lenses to track progress regarding how IB research conceptualizes EDI, the research topics pursued, and the rationales for researching EDI. Along with our text analysis, they form the basis for our critical discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of EDI research within IB and research agenda recommendations for future improvements.

Sample and Analysis

Our search terms were equality (17 articles retained), equity (9), diversity (76), and inclusion or inclusive (14). We used Business Source Complete to search for each term in titles, abstracts, and

keywords for each of the nine journals ranked 3 or higher for international business on the 2021 Chartered Association of Business Schools journal list (ABS list, or Academic Journal Guide AJG). This journal list was chosen to represent high-quality, mainstream IB research. Compared to the text analysis review, this search strategy was narrower in the source journals and broader in terms of our search terms, consistent with our goal to unearth how EDI had been studied within mainstream IB journals.

Based on titles and abstracts we retained articles relevant to EDI (i.e., articles about the demographic diversity of people working together). This process resulted in 101 papers. This was less than the sum of articles listed by search terms because some articles appeared for more than one search term. Our sortable spreadsheet is available in a data repository for others to examine (Fitzsimmons et al., 2023).

We read and tabulated each article to identify research questions, key theories, samples, rationales, methodologies, level of the dependent variable or outcome, and major findings. We then classified the research questions and theoretical arguments to extract how EDI was conceptualized and the rationales for studying EDI in IB. This approach compared themes against the two guiding questions and six bases for comparison along the left-hand column of Table 1. For example, we identified themes related to the rationales for EDI research by studying research questions, theories and findings across all articles drawing on performance arguments, and comparing them to papers using institutional, moral or resistance arguments. In the end, this narrative review allowed us to gain a deeper and broader understanding of the knowledge about EDI in IB, particularly assumptions, blind spots or under-researched areas (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014).

Results

What is EDI? Our analysis follows the three bases for comparison in the left-hand column of Table 1. We first examined *social group categories*. There was a strong theme in EDI research within IB that conceptualized it in terms of heterogeneity exclusively. As evidence, 75% of our sample was discovered through *diversity* as a search term. Common research questions asked about the effect of cultural heterogeneity on team performance (Elron, 1996), how national diversity within subsidiary top

management teams influenced subsidiary performance (Gong, 2006), how MNE cultural diversity moderated the relationship between internationalization and MNE performance (de Jong & van Houten, 2014), and a review of the performance outcomes of cultural diversity (Ponomareva, Uman, Bodolica, & Wennberg, 2022). This produced a vibrant stream of complex models that theorized the foundational mechanisms through which diversity affects performance, even across levels. This included the role of within-country diversity (Dow, Cuypers, & Ertug, 2016), and a novel way to assess within-country cultural diversity in terms of heterozygosity, akin to cultural fractionalization (Messner, 2022). Thus, EDI research in IB excelled at conceptualizing and assessing foundational models of heterogeneity and its outcomes.

Within this sample, 41% addressed cultural diversity, 24% addressed gender diversity, 15% linguistic diversity, 11% ethnic diversity, 5% religious diversity and two papers took an intersectional approach (Fitzsimmons, Baggs & Brannen, 2020; Syed & Pio, 2010). Culture was more prominent than gender diversity in these findings than in the text analysis. This may have been because many more papers mentioned gender even if it wasn't the primary focus of a study. Because our narrative review was focused on central themes cultural diversity may be more prominent in core IB research than gender diversity. EDI research in IB often uses demographic diversity as a variable to account for cultural differences, such as countries of birth (e.g. Gong, 2006).

Cultural diversity was especially dominant within micro-level EDI research in IB, where it was also least likely to interrogate power or status differentials among social groups. For example, micro-level IB research on individuals with multiple cultural identities poses questions such as, "What is the relationship between the multiculturalism of employees and personal, social and task outcomes?" (Fitzsimmons, Liao, & Thomas, 2017) and "How do specific sociocultural experiences interact with existing individual cognitions to form different patterns of multiculturalism?" (Lücke, Kostova, & Roth, 2014). These questions illustrate IB's depth when theorizing how cultural complexity influences outcomes. However, belonging to multiple cultural identity groups matters more to this research

conversation than the specific identity groups (Vora, Martin, Fitzsimmons, Pekerti, Lakshman & Raheem, 2019), such that power, status, or postcolonial relations between cultures are often ignored.

Team-level EDI research in IB commonly adopted rigorous, often qualitative, methodological techniques to differentiate between sources of diversity, such as contextual, personal, demographic, or deep-level diversity (Ponomareva, et al., 2022). Yet these distinctions rarely analyzed structures of power and inequality that underpin team level EDI phenomenon, such that Afghani, Canadian and Nigerian cultures would typically be represented as relatively equivalent cultural identities within global teams. For example, a study of cultural gap bridging within multinational teams identified five behaviors that bridged across cultural gaps, regardless of whether gaps spanned national status or power differentials (Backmann, Kanitz, Tian, Hoffmann, & Hoegl, 2020).

Relative to individual- and team-based research, we found that firm-level research was more likely to consider power imbalances and historical relationships. Despite asking a status-neutral research question (“What role does culture play in allocating jobs among employees with diverse cultural backgrounds?”), Al Ariss and Guo (2016) found that managers in the United Arab Emirates stereotyped employees based on cultural groups and used these cultural artifacts to allocate people into higher or lower positions in the organizational hierarchy. Ferner and colleagues (2005) also asked a power-neutral question (“How do diversity policies transfer across national contexts?”), but found that subsidiary managers used power to resist internalizing a new diversity policy from headquarters. Although a critical interview study of migrant Muslim women in Australia did not explicitly use a postcolonial analysis, it concluded that macro-social policies such as those stemming from colonialism play a significant role in forming organizational diversity policies (Syed, & Pio, 2010). It further argues that IB research largely ignores these constraints, instead presuming organizations have almost-complete control over how they manage diversity. Research using a postcolonial theoretical framework was otherwise missing from our sample, representing a gap in knowledge about how MNEs engage with diversity while operating across nations with postcolonial ties.

Next, we examined themes around *levels of responsibility*. We found a notable shift over time and across theories, where earlier papers and those adopting identity-based or cognitive theorizing largely placed responsibility on individuals to recognize and address their cognitive and affective responses and biases. For example, Chevrier's (2003) cross-cultural management study of international teams found that project leaders adopt three strategies to cope with cultural diversity in international teams, including relying on tolerance and self-control. This older framing tells a story of cultural diversity as a problem for leaders to solve. More recent research tends to adopt a more positive lens, although identity-based theorizing still promotes individual over structural responsibility, such as how leaders' global identities influence multicultural team innovation (Lisak et al., 2016). Individually focused diversity training has generally been found to be ineffective in research outside IB, unless paired with simultaneous or prior commitment to changing institutions and systems (Noon, 2018).

In contrast, recent papers and those adopting institutional or resource-based theories were more likely to draw conclusions about structural, firm-level responsibilities. For example, a study of cultural minority leaders within 315 Australian organizations found that organizational climate was more important for predicting relationship conflict than individual-level factors (Olsen, et al., 2022). Research on diverse teams also emphasized the relative importance of diversity management processes over the mere existence of diversity for predicting team performance, often referring to an influential meta-analysis of cultural diversity in teams (Stahl & Maznevski, 2021; Stahl, et al., 2010). These illustrate the shift from individual towards structural explanations, consistent with the same shift that occurred in EDI research outside of IB.

The story most of these studies told is not one about individual versus structural responsibility for ending inequality, bias, and exclusion, which are the central concern of EDI research outside of IB. Instead, we found that EDI research in IB placed responsibility on both individuals and structures to leverage diversity for the sake of performance. We explore the rationales for EDI research in more depth in the next section.

Finally, we examined *characteristics of social groups* for the degree to which they presumed groups were static versus fluid, and essentialist versus socially constructed. Overall, we found that EDI research in IB was unlikely to consider dynamic shifts in social group memberships for individuals who belong to multiple groups simultaneously. For example, one of the only two intersectional analyses in this sample used binary, static categories to assess gender (male/female), race (white/person of color), and mother tongue (lingua franca/other), indicating that even intersectional research in IB tends towards essentialist and static conceptualizations of social groupings (Fitzsimmons, Baggs & Brannen, 2020). A possible explanation is that the research training in IB is historically conditioned by positivism (Sanchez, Bonache, Paz-Aparicio, & Oberty, 2023). Therefore, critical EDI research approaches may be branded as unscientific and anecdotal in mainstream IB research.

What is the purpose of EDI research? This section is structured around the three bases for comparison found in the left-hand column of Table 1. We started by analyzing the *rationales for EDI research*. Based on our assessments of research questions, theories, arguments and findings, we found that just over half (52%) of our sample drew on performance-based arguments, followed by 42% adopting institutional arguments, and 26% adopting moral arguments. We only found one article that addressed resistance to EDI (Soltani, Syed, Liao, & Shahi-Sough, 2012). As introduced in the previous section on conceptualizations, EDI research in IB generally did not engage with transforming organizations to end inequality, bias, or discrimination, even though some exceptions illustrate discriminatory consequences of inequality and asymmetries of power (e.g. Mäkelä, Björkman, & Ehrnrooth, 2010). Instead, this research focused primarily on conceptualizing performance gains from EDI, including drawing on it as a resource to reduce internationalization process losses. We address these performance-based arguments first, as they were dominant in our sample.

Performance-based arguments often relied on information, knowledge, network or other resource-based rationales to explain performance benefits of diversity. These rationales also shifted over time, away from arguing that diversity is a strategic resource, and toward arguing that it is a potential strategic resource, depending on how it is managed. We found many examples illustrating the latter approach. A

year-long ethnographic study in two MNEs found that multicultural individuals' strategic contributions depended on organizational factors such as specialized human resource architecture (Hong & Minbaeva, 2022). A study of Emirati and international employees in the UAE depicted a situation in which diversity was poorly managed and thus was not available as a resource (Al Ariss & Guo, 2016). Instead of placing people into positions based on capabilities, managers sorted individuals into highly hierarchical positions based on culture, creating animosity, resentment, and lack of knowledge flow among cultural groups. Breuillot (2021) made the most explicit links from firms' diversity management to their internationalization processes with a research question that is exemplary for this research stream, how diversity management influences firms' internationalization process. Drawing on eight case studies, she found that diversity became a negative resource when firms adopted the resistance rationale against diversity, an ordinary resource when firms adopted the institutional rationale for diversity, or a strategic resource when firms adopted the performance rationale. Illustrating the performance rationale, she explained that "*the learning perspective can help [early internationalizing firms] progress along their internationalization process*" (Breuillot, 2021: 127).

Although less common than performance-based arguments, we found rich examinations of EDI using institutional arguments, most of which examined how national EDI-relevant policies influenced internationalization processes for MNEs. For example, a study of MNEs operating in Taiwan and Thailand found that the MNEs' home country's anti-discrimination legislation constrained their gender- and age-based discrimination abroad, even when anti-discrimination legislation was absent in subsidiary countries (Wu, Lawler, & Yi, 2008). Ferner, Almond and Colling (2005) studied six US-based MNEs attempting to transfer their diversity policies to UK subsidiaries. They found that the transfers were all incomplete. They attributed this to the doubly contested institutional terrain of diversity, referring to the differences in diversity schemas across countries and the contested nature of diversity at the time, even within the US. Some results showed how country-level institutional environments unrelated to EDI, such as the level of property rights protection, influenced EDI outcomes (van der Straaten, Pisani, & Kolk, 2020). Specifically, relative to local conditions, foreign-born employees working in developed countries

received MNE wage premiums, while women working in developing countries did not. Overall, research adopting institutional arguments was more likely to examine predictors of firm-level EDI outcomes than those adopting performance arguments.

Like our text analysis findings, moral arguments were less common than either performance or institutional arguments. As already described, most studies of diversity in IB avoided engaging with the moral consequences of disparities in power or human rights across countries and regions. There were some notable exceptions. For example, Rao (2012) examined how historically entrenched conflicts influenced how religious diversity management was crafted in India. In a different setting but with a similar historical anchor, Minbaeva and Muratbekova-Touron (2013) examined clanism as an emic concept in Central Asia to account for indigenous fault lines. They explored how HRM practices could moderate the intensity of indigenous divisions caused by clanism. Tatli, Vassilopoulou, al Ariss and Özbilgin (2012) called for a way to examine how emic macro diversity concerns could be revealed by studying power and privilege structures in organizations. A recent turn toward human rights-based rationales in IB could represent a shift toward more moral arguments justifying EDI in the future (Wettstein, Giuliani, Santangelo, & Stahl, 2019).

Overall, these examples illustrate how studies that adopted performance-based arguments were both more prevalent than moral arguments, and more likely to instrumentalize diversity as a means to enhance performance. Research adopting moral arguments occurred at a similar rate over time, such that IB research is not exhibiting a parallel shift from performance-based arguments to moral arguments over time as is occurring outside of IB.

We next assessed whether research identified *interventions to achieve equality, inclusion, or social justice* in organizations. Only 32% of our sample was retained based on equality, equity, inclusion or inclusive search terms. Thus, we had limited examples of research designed to solve EDI problems. Among these articles, multilingual, resource-based, and institutional theoretical explanations were all common. Multilingualism research in particular has shifted from generally advocating for lingua franca approaches that standardize language policies to multilingual policies that allow for more localization

(Janssens & Steyaert, 2014). This shift is partly explained by research recognizing that native speakers of a lingua franca receive significant power advantages (Śliwa & Johansson, 2014).

Research on inequality usually addresses one of two themes: explaining gender inequality in employment representation or pay inequality due to discrimination. The former was found in research on Korean MNEs operating in Sweden (Song, 2022), a comparative study of subsidiaries in Germany and Japan (Bader, Froese, Cooke, & Schuster, 2022), and an international study of how cultural tightness or looseness constrains the emergence of female leaders (Toh & Leonardelli, 2012). The latter included an analysis of the unequal distribution of the MNE pay premium by gender, location, and immigrant background (van der Straaten et al., 2020). Both themes are closer to the spirit of EDI research outside of IB as equality and inclusion were central. However, even within papers that explicitly addressed inequality, many also justified this goal with performance arguments. For instance, a comparative study of how diversity management influenced organizational commitment among employees in Japanese and South Korean firms ultimately argued that strong diversity management practices were desirable because they enabled highly committed workers (Magoshi & Chang, 2009). Thus, research exists that purports to lead to equality or inclusion, but within IB these goals are often secondary to leveraging diversity to drive performance.

Finally, we assessed whether research *documents experiences* of bias, discrimination, and differential status of marginalized social groups, or resistance against EDI efforts by firms. We found a dearth of research taking either of these angles. One exception was research examining experiences among non-native English speakers, such as finding that non-native speakers are systematically penalized in their performance evaluations (e.g. Śliwa & Johansson, 2014). Multilingual organization-level research tended to be less US-centric than other IB areas, which may partly explain this prioritization of understanding experiences among marginalized linguistic groups.

The only study we found that directly targeted resistance to EDI within firms adopted a critical approach to understanding whether equal opportunity and diversity pronouncements benefit underrepresented employees (Soltani, et al., 2012). Based on two years of data collection within six

Iranian construction or manufacturing firms, this article revealed painful examples of how foreign, low-skilled, low-status, low-power employees were taken advantage of by firms in the name of the business case for diversity. Managers were purposefully manipulative, sowing competition and jealousy between ethnic groups, and designing structures to ensure ethnic and linguistic groups could not collectively organize. A 61-year-old foreign worker in their sample summed it up well; “All they [management team] see in our individual differences is how to make more profit out of us.” (Soltani et al., 2012: 29)

DISCUSSION: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF EDI RESEARCH IN IB

In combination, findings from our text analysis and narrative reviews help us evaluate EDI research within IB. From text analysis, we found that IB research lags far behind research outside IB in prevalence, and focuses primarily on gender, cultural and national diversity. Further, performance-based and institutional arguments are more common than moral or resistance arguments. Through a narrative review, we found that EDI research in IB excels at foundational theorizing aimed at modeling heterogeneity and its outcomes. The dominant story emphasizes the performance outcomes from power- or status-neutral cultural and national heterogeneity. Yet, EDI research within IB mostly conceptualizes social groups as static, rarely adopts moral or resistance arguments for EDI research, and largely ignores power imbalances between social groups or the influence of postcolonial relationships.

In this section and summarized in Table 2, we synthesize findings from both reviews to identify strengths and weaknesses in the way IB research studies EDI. In the next section we then compare our synthesized findings against the core aspects of EDI research outside of IB and propose a research agenda with new constructs and perspectives for future EDI research in IB. We structure this evaluation and research agenda using our two core questions.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

What is EDI? IB excels at foundational theorizing that models complexity related to heterogeneity. For example, our text analysis review found that IB articles examined similar or slightly more diversity categories per paper than EDI articles outside of IB. Although the difference was small, it indicates an opportunity for IB to lead. Our narrative review found rich examples of complex models of heterogeneity in IB across all levels of analysis, ranging from multicultural identities to intra-national diversity.

Weaknesses of the conceptualizations of EDI in IB research relate to the effects that are usually ignored. Specifically, mainstream EDI research in IB routinely ignores power imbalances across societies, including those stemming from postcolonial relationships among nations. Research with this focus from outside IB facilitates research questions about how these contextual influences affect the treatment of social groups. Further, despite substantial advances, IB research still often conceptualizes sources of diversity as relatively static, such as binary conceptions of gender or cultural categories fixed at birth (Vora et al., 2019). This limits the field's ability to address the dynamic and fluid nature of identities.

What is the purpose of EDI research? IB also exhibits strength in its emphasis on processes that apply regardless of the specific source of diversity. Although EDI research outside of IB has strong theorizing, such as the distinctions between diversity as variation, separation, or disparity (Harrison & Klein, 2007), it also exhibits a fractured set of findings where each stream relies on demographically-specific theorizing. For instance, this occurs when feminist theorizing is used for gender-based research and critical race theory research streams about racial diversity. In contrast, IB research tends to emphasize the fundamental ways diversity operates, regardless of its source, such as the ways diversity serves as a resource for internationalizing (Breuillot, 2021), determining individuals' membership in social groups (Peterson, Søndergaard, & Kara, 2018), and how international institutions differentially influence inclusion across countries (Ferner et al., 2005).

EDI research exhibits weaknesses in its overreliance on performance-based arguments over moral-based arguments, or those that examine reasons for resistance to EDI. Although a similar pattern exists within and outside IB, IB has not shifted from conceptualizing performance-based outcomes of

diversity to understanding what interventions could reduce inequality and bias, as happened outside of IB. As a result, EDI research in IB lacks an overt commitment to achieving equality and inclusion, which are fundamental to EDI research outside of IB. Commitment to changing institutions to end inequalities distinguishes EDI research from how it is framed in IB research.

Overall, the approach to EDI research within IB limits the field's ability to address questions that are core to EDI research outside of IB, such as how structural interventions can end systemic discrimination and promote equality and inclusion. The latter has become increasingly important given the worldwide spread of EDI-related social movements exerting pressure on MNEs to address inequalities in their global operations.

RESEARCH AGENDA: INCORPORATING EDI RESEARCH INTO IB

Our evaluative review suggests that EDI research in IB could be improved by drawing on advances in EDI research from outside IB. In Table 3, we summarize five recommendations to correspond with the five weaknesses identified in the previous section and summarized in Table 2. We include sample research questions to illustrate how our recommendations leverage EDI research outside of IB to create new possibilities for EDI research within IB. Our suggested research agenda proposes new approaches to EDI research in IB that build on its strengths, address conceptualization weaknesses by considering power dynamics and attending to dynamism in context, and address weaknesses related to the purpose of EDI research by de-emphasizing performance in favor of moral arguments and understanding resistance to diversity.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

What is EDI?

Consider power dynamics alongside heterogeneity. Power dynamics are central to EDI research outside of IB, especially when examined through a moral lens. Power dynamics could be even more influential for international EDI research than its domestic variant since national, supranational, and

international levels add layers of power. The Nobel Prize-winning economist Stiglitz (2012) explains that the impact of capitalism is not felt evenly across national borders, as countries with lower levels of social and economic development or weaker regulations were exposed to greater human rights violations and less equality at work.

A promising trend within IB is more recognition of the role of within-country diversity, which could support more dynamic, contextualized conceptualizations of EDI in IB, such as those we suggest in Table 3. IB's expertise in modeling heterogeneity could be exploited to model power-laden heterogeneity, including models that depict separation, variety, and disparity across more or less powerful social groups (Lumineau, Hanisch, & Wurtz, 2021). IB researchers could engage with the macro-level research by exploring etic (generic) and emic (indigenous) structures of power and privilege that shape EDI concerns at the local and international levels, with a view to upholding the value of human rights and ethics of principled and responsible international business and relations.

EDI has recently, through postcolonial theory, addressed the lingering effects of colonialism on diversity categories and practices. IB research could benefit from postcolonial theory's interest in understanding the historical and continuing power of the West to dominate other regions of the world (Özkazanç-Pan, 2019). MNEs often impose their definitions of culture and other social differences on subsidiaries when managing diversity (Ahonen, Tienari, Meriläinen, & Pullen, 2014). However, postcolonial nations may be characterized as having hybrid national cultures—a mixture of indigenous and postcolonial influences. There is a need to understand how contemporary hybrid cultural identities emerge from the mix of the postcolonial encounter and the continuing influence of MNEs. There is room for IB research to respond to the call of social movements to decolonize businesses and achieve greater equality.

Explorations of EDI require us to attend to power relations to explain why and how certain aspects of diversity get prioritized over others, such as IB's primary focus on gender and cultural/national diversity over all other categories of diversity. Such an effort requires a multilevel understanding of

power relations at work, from individual agency to institutional structures at the macro level, and how these levels interplay to co-construct each other.

Greater attention to dynamism in context. Our text and narrative reviews found that gender and culture/nation were the most prevalent diversity categories in IB, and that they were generally represented as relatively static, decontextualized categories. Further, gender, national, or cultural diversity research is sometimes substituted for more holistic EDI research programs. We propose that theories of transnationalism and intersectionality from EDI could enrich IB's research by bringing more contextualized dynamism, as illustrated in Table 3.

EDI scholarship has proposed transnationalism as a means for understanding the multiple ties and interactions that link institutes, peoples, ideas, and resource flows across the borders of nation-states (Metcalf & Woodhams, 2012). For instance, a transnational lens suggests EDI social movements are not always anchored to local contexts (De Genova, 2018). Instead, they appear to be increasingly influenced by external events elsewhere. To address transnational variations, Özbilgin, Tatli, Ipek, and Sameer (2016) identified a need for accountability for policies and practices of EDI within the global value chains of international organizations. Calás, Ou, and Smircich (2013) introduced the concept of *mobile subjectivities* to suggest that analyses of EDI strategies and identity categories must be ongoing, not static. A transnational lens to diversity reminds scholars that definitions of identity, nation and culture are unstable, encouraging more contextualized, process-oriented explanations, as well as those of boundary conditions (Özkazanç-Pan & Calás, 2015).

Intersectionality assumes that human experiences are not shaped by single factors working independently, such as nationality or gender or race, but by their combination, creating something distinct from their constituent parts (Crenshaw, 1991). Hancock (2007) argues that intersectional research must assume that relationships between demographic categories are open and fluid and that the original categories are transformed into something new after intersecting. For example, wedding the concept of mobile subjectivities with intersectionality theory underscores the idea that individuals' multiple social

identity categories are fluid and dynamic, not static (Nkomo et al., 2019) and can be used to understand the combined effects of multiple identity categories in each context, and over time.

What is the purpose of EDI research?

De-emphasize performance arguments. Our text analysis found that increased performance is one of the most common arguments for diversifying, both within and outside of IB. The problems with this approach have been recognized to some degree in IB for at least 15 years (Ferner et al., 2005). Yet research outside of IB has produced results that cast a more critical eye on assumptions about the link between diversity and performance.

Recent research reveals four points for consideration in the move away from performance as the dominant objective in EDI research. First, research and practitioners have moved forward enough that EDI no longer needs to be put on trial for its worthiness as a field of research and practice. Second, moral arguments can be even more effective than economic arguments for selling social issues such as EDI (Mayer, Ong, Sonenshein, & Ashford, 2019). Third, a more significant causal relationship exists between effective management of EDI and positive organizational outcomes than between diversity itself and positive organizational outcomes (Roberson et al. 2017). Finally, the overly positive claims made by some IB articles of performance gains from diversity do not reflect the best research evidence about the contingent nature of this relationship. Indeed, Ely and Thomas (2020) recently updated their earlier work to argue for an end to the business case for diversity based on a lack of evidence. Instead of a positive and direct relationship between diversity and performance, there is more evidence for the importance of mediators and moderators for predicting performance, referring to the ways organizations manage EDI (Stahl & Maznevski, 2021). It may be time for IB research to reduce its reliance on positive performance gains from diversity in favor of alternative approaches described ahead and in Table 3.

Make up for the missing moral argument. We found that moral arguments are missing from much of the EDI literature, both within and outside of IB. Limited use of moral arguments unnecessarily limits the range of outcomes considered, such as predicting justice, fairness, or improved access to human rights. IB research regularly addresses moral tensions between local and universal principles, such as

handling corruption or corporate social responsibility (van der Straaten et al., 2020). Donaldson and Dunfee's (1994) principles of integrative social contracts across societies were foundational for assessing when it is reasonable to apply ethical standards globally or adapt locally. Yet both of our reviews found that moral arguments are not commonly used to explain EDI in IB.

We suggest that IB can learn from EDI research in critical diversity studies, public policy, and law, where moral arguments play a more significant role and thus expand IB's pool of research avenues. EDI scholars have developed strands of scholarship that focus on ethical and moral drivers for EDI (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2013) and social justice and fairness arguments (Dahanayake, Rajendran, Selvarajah, & Ballantyne, 2018) inspired by social movements and changes in the moral landscape. Most relevant to our discussion is critical diversity studies' rejection of a purely instrumental motivation for EDI and the use of social justice arguments to justify including members of marginalized groups (e.g., Zaroni et al., 2010) or a dual approach, conceptualizing diversity as a bridge resting on both equality and economic arguments (Pringle & Strachan, 2015).

A promising development in IB research is a recent interest in human rights (Wettstein et al., 2019) and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (Montiel, Cuervo-Cazurra, Park, Antolín-López, & Husted, 2021). These standards and conventions can provide universal ethical principles that support consistent global approaches to EDI. Other conventions specific to EDI include the UN's CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Research on how universal ideals of EDI are translated and transposed into local policies and practices (Tatli et al., 2012) could also present IB scholars with numerous research opportunities.

Examine resistance to EDI. In both our reviews, we found far less research about resistance to EDI than there was about arguments in support of EDI. One possible explanation is that EDI researchers prefer examining reasons that favor it. IB research commonly takes a contingent, moderated or 'double-edged sword' approach, recognizing dual effects of diversity (Stahl et al., 2010; Stahl & Maznevski, 2021). The limited research suggests resistance to diversity can occur across levels. For instance, at the

individual level, resistance manifests in microaggressions against non-dominant social identities or rejection of diversity training (Iyer, 2022). At the organizational level, a more subtle form of resistance can occur when there is little connection between diversity training and performance expectations concerning EDI goals. Worse, firms can weaponize diversity, by purposefully pitting ethnic groups against one another to suppress their power (Soltani, Syed, Liao, & Shahi-Sough, 2012).

The most highly developed resistance arguments from our text analysis related to migration-based diversity. One article explained why resistance research tends to favor migration over other forms of diversity: “Migration has become a lightning rod for conversations about the value of diversity and inclusion in liberal democracies” (Özkazanç-Pan, 2019: 477). IB seems like the natural home for migration-based diversity research, with recent or upcoming special issues dedicated to migration in all three of the major IB journals (Barnard, Deeds, Mudambi & Vaaler, 2019; Fitzsimmons, Minbaeva, Phene & Narula, forthcoming; Hajro, Caprar, Zikic, & Stahl, 2021).

Beyond migration, it is also important to understand resistance to EDI more generally (Iyer, 2022). Many dimensions of EDI fall outside the focus of IB policy and practices, such as local taboos or dimensions that are poorly protected by legal or social regulations. IB researchers could use their expertise in theorizing complexity to explain resistance to MNEs’ efforts to redress unprotected inequalities, such as socio-economic class, LGBTQ+ equality and tribe or caste. This cross-cultural, intergroup, and intragroup learning could unlock new possibilities for overcoming some nationally entrenched diversity-related challenges.

Overall, our suggested research agenda is designed to propose new approaches to EDI research in IB that build on its strengths and address weaknesses. Ultimately, we aim to help IB researchers address a wider range of purposes, environmental complexity, and outcomes in EDI research.

CONCLUSION

Research in international business has long been concerned with the performance of MNEs that operate in various institutional and cultural contexts. It also has a long history of addressing the value of cultural diversity within organizations and the importance of understanding gender diversity in global

mobility and international assignments. In contrast, the primary concern of research on equality, diversity, and inclusion outside of IB is eliminating bias and systemic discrimination, focusing on justice for disadvantaged or historically marginalized groups. These two research streams have developed along disciplinary lines and have not informed or drawn on each other in a significant way. However, global social movements represent a changing moral landscape towards EDI, and MNEs are uniquely positioned to disseminate EDI practices and understandings internationally. It is an opportune time to evaluate the extent to which EDI research within IB addresses this critical issue and consider new approaches to studying EDI in IB.

This is the first systematic review of EDI research within IB. We conclude that while EDI research within IB has significant strengths in terms of theorizing about heterogeneity and modeling complexity, it still needs to keep pace with the environmental power shift toward equality and inclusion of underrepresented groups, including intersectional or fluid social identity groupings. As a result, it often draws conclusions that are blind to power, status, postcolonial, or equality differences between groups and nations. Our review provides a foundation for proposing a new research agenda on EDI in an IB context. Regarding conceptualizing EDI in IB, our agenda proposes building on IB's theoretical strengths in modeling heterogeneity and complexity, while counteracting its tendencies toward static, ahistorical approaches that ignore power differentials. In terms of shifting the purpose of EDI research in IB, our agenda proposes a more moral-based and power-laden analysis that builds an understanding of international resistance to EDI while maintaining an interest in EDI's relationship to organizational performance. At the intersection of IB and EDI research, we see the opportunity to uncover new insights that can help MNEs proactively lead societal change in the countries where they operate. MNEs can be a strong force for good, leveraging their unique characteristics and global presence to address systemic discrimination and ensure everyone is valued and included.

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Figure One: Average mention of EDI categories per paper in IB and in non-IB

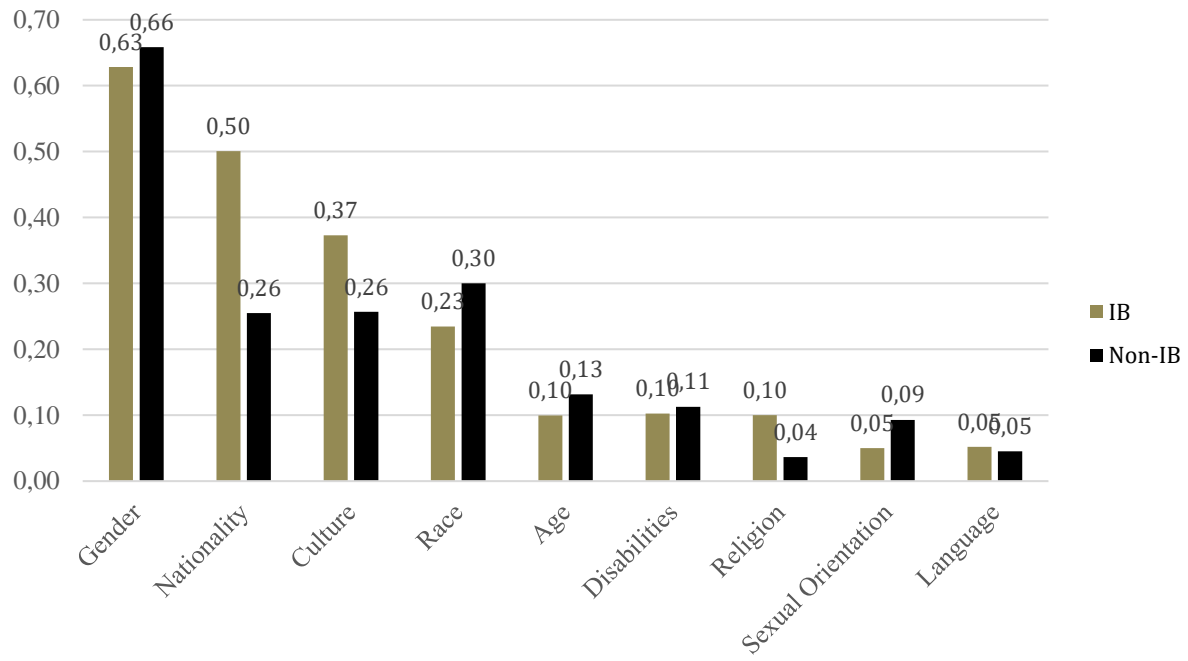
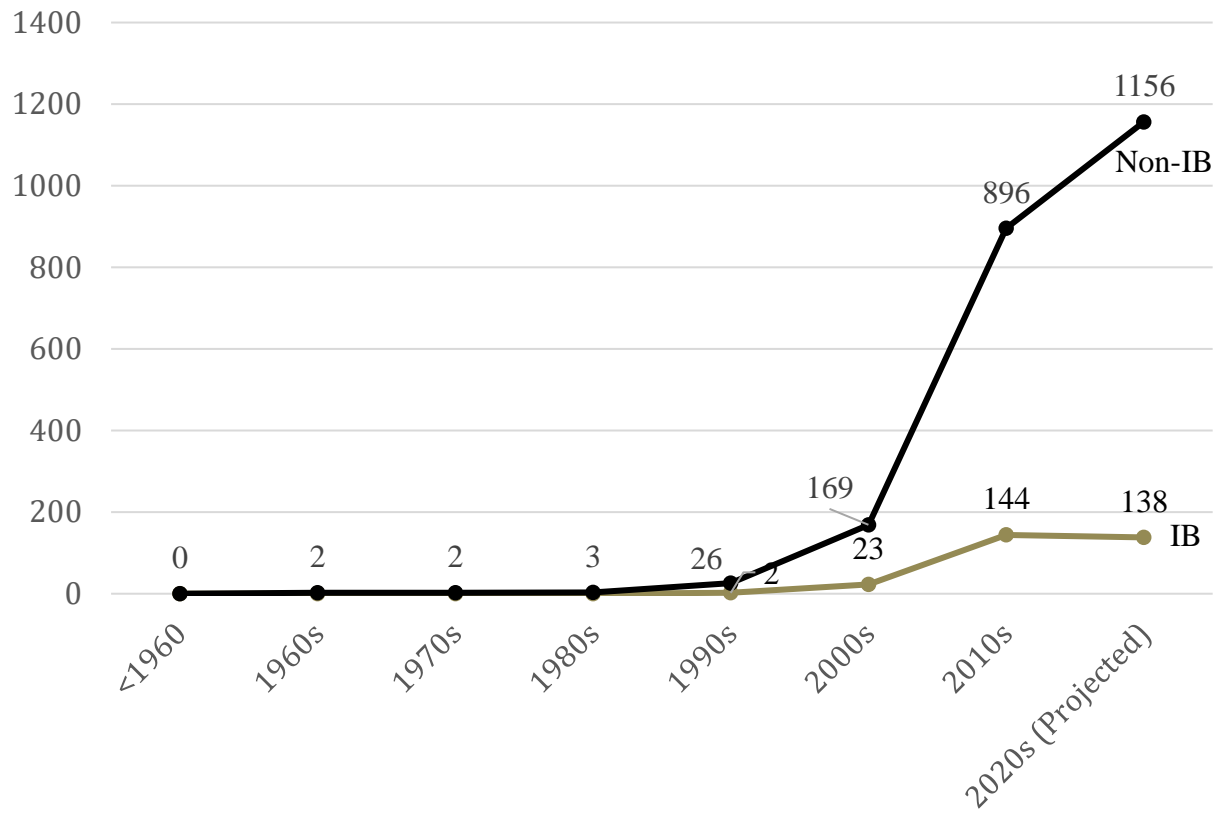


Figure Two: Historical prevalence of EDI in IB and in non-IB business fields



Note: Projected values for 2020s were calculated by multiplying the values from the first 2.75 years by (10/2.75) to get an estimated value for the decade.

Figure Three: Average mention of EDI arguments across fields

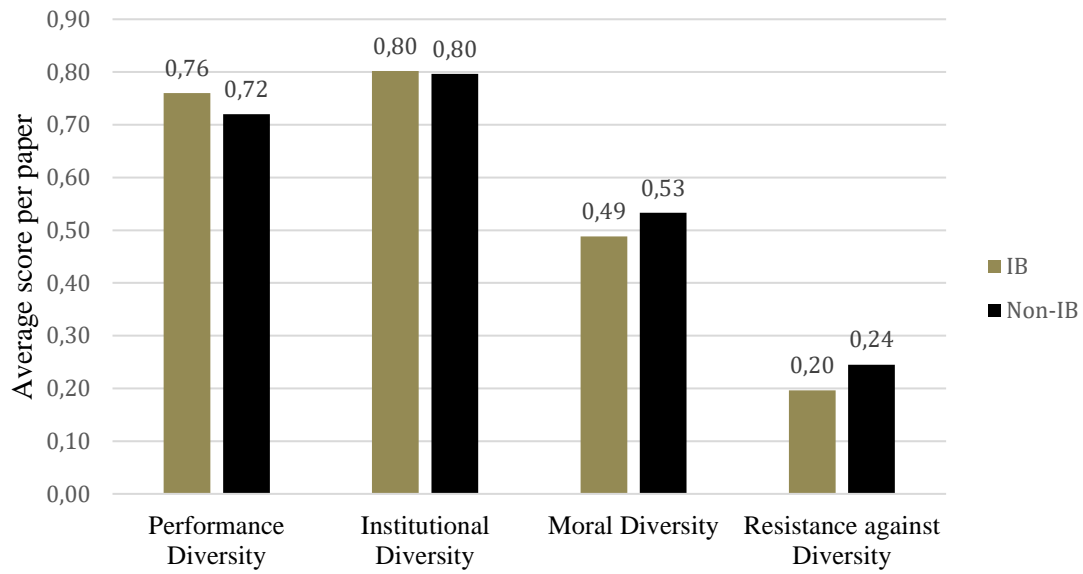


Table 1: Evaluation and conclusions about EDI research within and outside of IB

Basis for comparison	Findings about EDI in IB	
<i>Core aspects of EDI research outside of IB</i>	Text analysis	Narrative review
What is EDI?		
<p><i>Social group categories.</i> <i>Sociodemographic differences that are underpinned by historical, postcolonial, and power-based struggles for equality. Commonly focuses on gender and sex, race and ethnicity, class and caste/tribe, gender identity and sexual orientation, age, and disability.</i></p>	<p>Gender is the most common diversity category, followed by national and cultural diversity. IB less commonly addresses diversity underpinned by power differentials, like age, race, and sexual orientation, relative to non-IB research.</p>	<p>Any attribute that differentiates individuals, with a stronger focus on cultural differences. Almost no mention of power differentials, historical, postcolonial or power-based struggles for equality.</p>
<p><i>Levels of responsibility.</i> <i>Focuses on both individual and structural barriers to equality, equity, and inclusion across social groups.</i></p>	<p>Research is far behind research outside of IB, in terms of prevalence and its development over time.</p>	<p>Focus is on theorizing both individual and structural responsibility to leverage diversity for the sake of performance over theorizing barriers, predictors and outcomes of inequality, and how to reduce it.</p>
<p><i>Characteristics of social groups.</i> <i>Socially constructed, dynamically changing and fluid conceptualizations of social groupings.</i></p>	<p>EDI constructs beyond nation or culture are primarily used as control or peripheral variables, rather than core research constructs.</p>	<p>Essentialist and static conceptualizations of social groupings.</p>

What is the purpose of EDI research?		
<p><i>Rationale for EDI research have shifted over time from conceptualizing outcomes of EDI (including performance) to interventions that promote equality, often based on moral and social justice arguments.</i></p>	<p>Both institutional and performance arguments were more prevalent than moral or resistance arguments, in IB and outside of it.</p>	<p>Rationale for EDI research in IB largely instrumentalizes EDI by arguing for it in the context of either performance gains or reducing internationalization process losses. This tendency was especially prevalent in firm-level research.</p>
<p><i>Interventions for equality and inclusion. Improve diverse work group relations or dynamics and achieve equality and social justice in organizations. Approaches this purpose by identifying change interventions to create and foster inclusion.</i></p>	<p>When they occur, moral-based arguments commonly examine power dynamics and overlap with institutional arguments.</p>	<p>Limited research exists that purports to lead to equality or inclusion, but these moral goals are commonly secondary to research on change interventions that facilitate internationalization processes.</p>
<p><i>Documenting experiences of bias, discrimination, and differential status of marginalized social groups;</i></p>	<p>Research examining the resistance or backlash against EDI were rare, and primarily examined resistance to immigration.</p>	<p>Rarely documents experiences of bias, discrimination, marginalization, or the resistance to EDI.</p>

Table 2: Strengths and weaknesses of EDI research in IB

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p data-bbox="201 365 363 396">What is EDI?</p> <p data-bbox="201 430 602 632"><i>Foundational theorizing that models complexity</i> by conceptualizing and assessing heterogeneity and its outcomes, including cross-level effects of diversity on performance.</p>	<p data-bbox="670 430 1146 564">Rarely contextualizes research within <i>power imbalances</i> between social groups or through the influence of historical, postcolonial relationships.</p> <p data-bbox="670 600 1138 699">Largely ignores <i>dynamic conceptualizations</i> of diversity within context, including intersectionality.</p>
<p data-bbox="201 732 537 798">What is the purpose of EDI research?</p> <p data-bbox="201 831 634 1098">IB research tends to excel at explaining <i>how diversity influences performance within MNEs</i>, regardless of its source or specific diversity categories. There is a well-established stream of research related to the business case for EDI in MNEs.</p> <p data-bbox="201 1136 634 1308">Performance includes internationalization processes, such as how national EDI-relevant policies influenced MNE internationalization processes.</p>	<p data-bbox="670 831 1167 1031"><i>Overreliance on performance arguments</i> is ineffective for understanding how to reduce inequality and bias, especially when the effective mechanisms of redress are located at systemic and institutional levels.</p> <p data-bbox="670 1068 1157 1203"><i>Minimal adoption of moral-based arguments</i> limits the extent to which it attempts to achieve equality and social justice in organizations.</p> <p data-bbox="670 1241 1146 1339"><i>Largely ignores the resistance to EDI</i>, beyond some studies that examine it with respect to immigrant employees.</p>

Table 3: New directions for IB research on EDI

New directions for IB research on EDI	Relevant EDI theories/concepts	Possible research questions
<i>What is EDI?</i>		
<i>Consider Power Dynamics Alongside heterogeneity</i>	Postcolonial theory and subjectivities (Özkazanç-Pan, 2019); Structural forms of inequality (Acker, 2006)	How do hybrid cultural identities emerge from the combination of the postcolonial encounter and the influence of MNEs? How can EDI be managed in MNEs without reproducing the home country's power to define what differences matter? How are MNEs responding to calls for decolonization of business enterprises?
<i>Pay greater attention to dynamism in context</i>	Transnationalism (Metcalf & Woodhams, 2012); Mobile subjectivities (Calás et al., 2013); transnational diversity (Ozkazanç-Pan & Calás, 2015); intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Hancock, 2007)	How do mobile subjectivities impact decisions about localizing versus globally integrating EDI over time and across contexts? Under what conditions do MNEs support versus suppress transnational diversity among employees? Under what conditions do employees draw on intersectional combinations of powerful versus marginalized social identity groups to enact change in MNEs?
<i>What is the purpose of EDI research?</i>		
<i>De-emphasize performance arguments</i>	Beyond the business case (Ely & Thomas, 2020)	How does de-emphasizing performance arguments for EDI change the way MNEs address EDI? How do employees from underrepresented groups respond to firms acting upon performance arguments for EDI?

New directions for IB research on EDI	Relevant EDI theories/concepts	Possible research questions
<i>Make up for the missing moral argument. Foster commitments to end inequality</i>	Critical diversity studies (Romani, Zanoni, & Holck 2021)	To what extent do MNEs address the changing moral landscape for EDI, as demonstrated by social movements? Under what conditions do MNEs help to achieve SDG 10 (reduced inequalities within and among countries)? Under what conditions do MNEs exacerbate inequalities?
<i>Examine and overcome resistance to EDI</i>	Backlash, resistance, and setbacks against EDI (Iyer, 2022); domestic employees' acculturative stress in the context of globalization (Lau & Shaffer, 2023)	Does resistance emanate from differences in localized constructions of social differences, or from efforts to standardize EDI categories and strategies? How have MNEs reduced resistance to immigrant employees?