

Diversity, Inclusion and Equity (DEI) in Research: Building Bridges for Stronger Collaborations and Communities

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DEI, Excellence and Research: Rethinking Dualisms and the Logic of Compromise

- Many debates about diversity have met with resistance from some who perceive an almost **irreconcilable difference** between equity and excellence in research.
- Some authors (Hong and Page 2004; Page 2007) have sought to qualify and challenge the dualisms and **logic of compromise** that underlie the opposition between equity and excellence, diversity and ability, and which assume that more diversity equals less excellence or merit.

Source: Henry, F., Dua, E., James, C. E., Kobayashi, A., Li, P., Ramos, H., & Smith, M. S. (2017). *The equity myth: Racialization and indigeneity at Canadian universities*. UBC Press.

What is diversity?



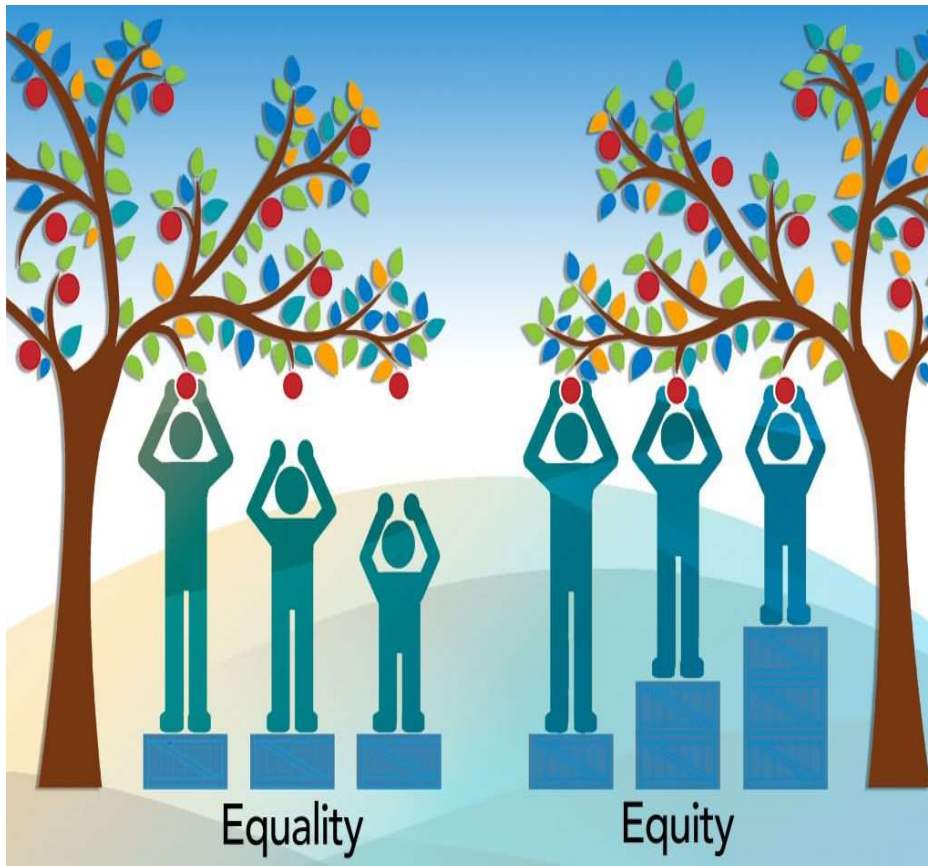
- **Human variability** - all the ways in which we differ as individuals.
- The presence within an ecosystem of people from different groups, which encourages a variety of perspectives, approaches and experiences (Cox, 1994, p.3).
- **Surface** diversity
- **Deep** diversity

Diversity of Canadian University Senior Leadership

Table 1. Diversity of Canadian university senior leadership

	Women (%)	Racialized (%)	Indigenous (%)	Persons with disabilities (%)	LGBTQ2S+ (%)	Identifies with two or more designated groups (%)
Senior university leaders ¹	48.9	8.3	2.9	4.5	8.0	10.7
Full-time faculty ²	40.2	20.9	1.3	21.8 ³	N/A	N/A
Doctorate holders ⁴	37.5	30.5	0.9	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graduate students ⁵	54.8	40.1 ⁶	3.3	5.0	N/A	N/A
Undergraduate students ⁶	57.1	40.0 ⁸	3.0	22.0	N/A	N/A
General population ⁷	50.9	22.3	4.9	22.3 ³	3.0 ⁹	N/A

Equity



- Recognition of the historical and/or ongoing systemic marginalization/discrimination experienced by specific groups. (Henry, F. et al., 2017)
- Fair treatment, aimed in particular at eliminating systemic barriers that disadvantage certain groups.



Inclusion

- Implementing **practices** that enable the entire community to be and feel valued, supported and respected, with special attention to underrepresented groups.
- Inclusive research practices promote **collaboration, encourage diverse voices** to be heard, and create spaces for constructive dialogue and mutual learning.

DEI in research

- An increasing number of studies (Monture, 2010; Henry, 2015), originating from social sciences as well as technological, engineering, and mathematical disciplines, **draw attention to the role of disciplines** in advancing diversity.
- Canadian researchers from various disciplines have examined the **exclusion of racialized and Indigenous researchers** and the silence that has enveloped the historical legacy of exclusion.

#CommunicationSoWhite

Paula Chakravartty ✉, Rachel Kuo, Victoria Grubbs, Charlton McIlwain

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We believe that the most profound and potentially most radical politics come directly out of our own identity, as opposed to working to end somebody else's oppression. –Combahee River Collective (1977, p. 267).

DEI in the context of research

Dimensions	Questions	Potential responses
Epistemological	Where do our knowledges come from ? Fundamental questions about the production of scientific knowledge that relate to the nature, origin, and validity of this knowledge .	Epistemic justice acknowledges that the production of knowledge is not neutral, but rather shaped by structures of power and social, economic, and political inequalities.
Ethical	How are equity and institutional responsibility taken into account in scientific research?	Recognition of the historical and/or ongoing systemic marginalization /discrimination experienced by specific groups.
Logical	What are the most effective ways to integrate DEI in research and diversify research themes?	Rethinking hegemonic paradigms within disciplines (colonial knowledge and narratives)

Epistemological dimension

Intersectional bias and epistemic injustice

- Bias related to social identity can lead to epistemic injustices.
- These injustices include **undue credibility and intelligibility deficits**.
- Biases can result in some groups being **excluded from developing interpretive resources**. This exclusion perpetuates systemic marginalization and discrimination.

Catala, A. (2015). Democracy, trust, and epistemic justice. *The Monist*, 98(4), 424-440.

Epistemological dimension - Example

Hermeneutical injustice

- Bias in society's **interpretive resources** (concepts, social representations, collective understandings) due to the exclusion of certain groups in the development of these resources.
- " For example, before the term 'sexual harassment' was coined, many women in the workplace experienced this first type of hermeneutical injustice: the **lack of a proper term rendered their experience unintelligible**, as the utter unease they felt in response to the inappropriate behavior of their colleagues was characterized instead as a lack of humor or a prudish mindset. (Catala, A, p. 2) "

Catala, A. (2015). Democracy, trust, and epistemic justice. *The Monist*, 98(4), 424-440.

Ethical dimension - Example

Tuskegee Study on untreated syphilis in Black men as a symbol of "medical racism"



Epstein, S. (2014). Différences corporelles et identités collectives: la politique du genre et de la race dans la recherche biomédicale aux États-Unis. Genre, sexualité & société, (12).

Logical dimension - Example

- Rethinking **hegemonic paradigms** within disciplines (colonial knowledge and narratives)
- Engaged research entails a fundamental shift in how we, as researchers, define **our relationships** with the individuals or communities being studied and collaborate with stakeholders, which are essential elements for conducting a research project.
- This paradigm shift demands a (re)examination of **our methodological practices** to better comprehend the relationships and co-construction processes at play in the researcher's engagement with stakeholders, who lie at the core of an engaged research approach.



What are the institutional logics underpinning the research system?

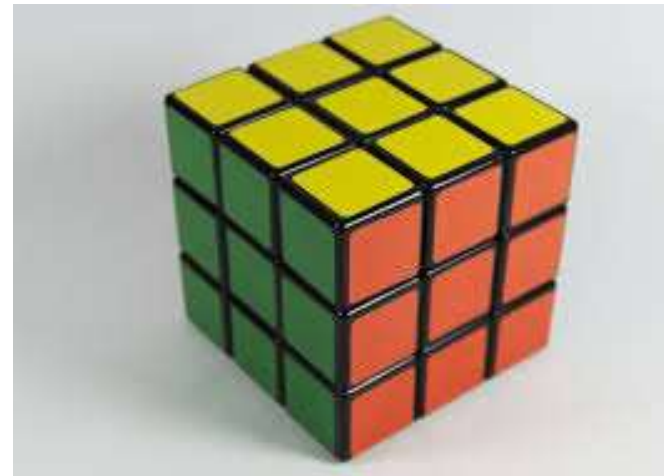
System of racial hierarchy

- Anti-Indigenous racism
- Anti-Black racism

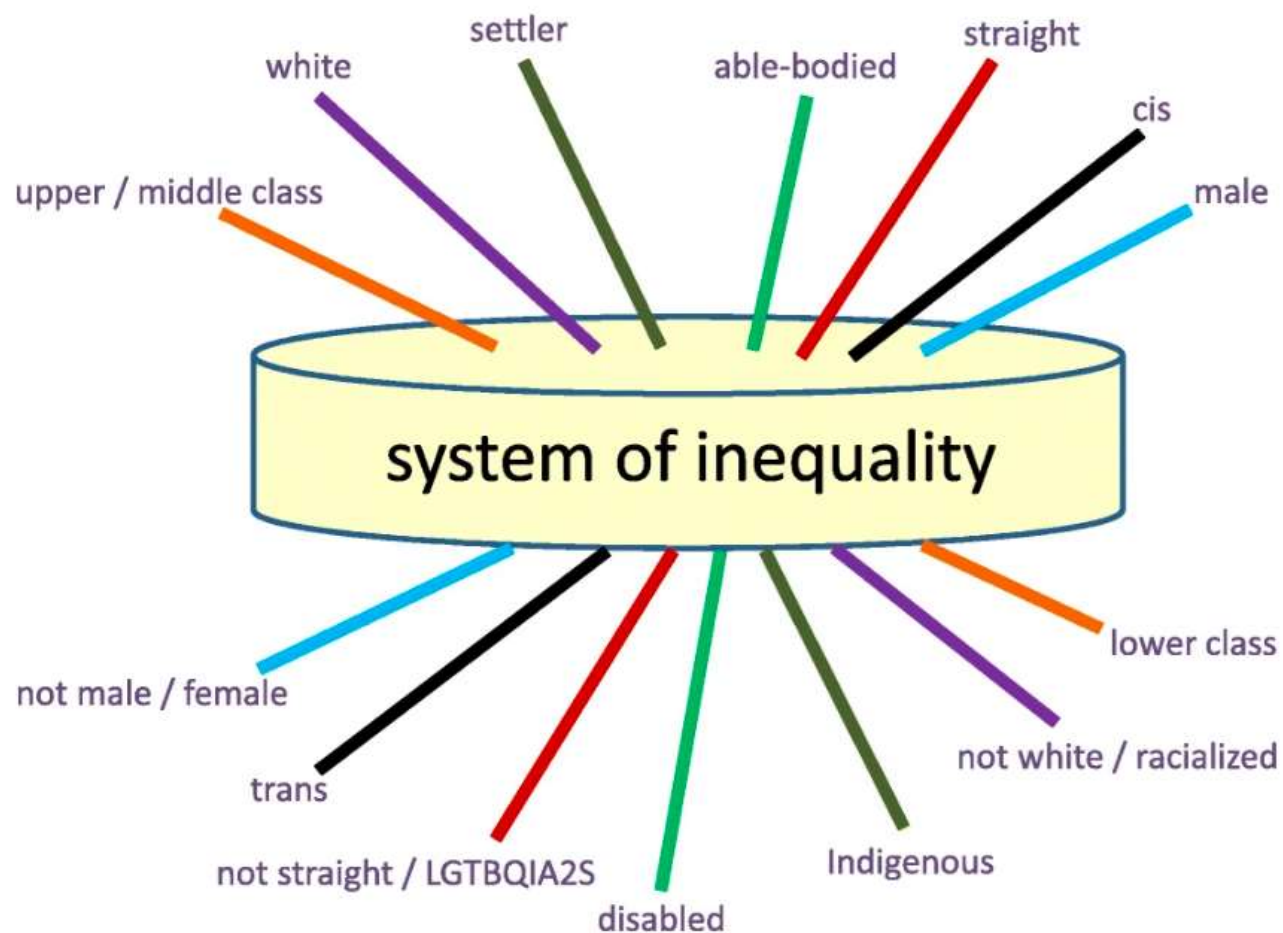
Patriarchal

Heteronormative and transphobic

Ableist



The coin model of privilege



Each of the following systems of inequality* (or coins) intersects with the others to co-constitute inequalities:

- classism
- racism
- settler colonialism
- ableism
- heterosexism
- cisgenderism
- sexism

*These examples do not represent all systems of inequality; e.g., other coins not presented here include systems of inequality related to age, religion, accent, or shade of skin.

Tiré de Nixon (2019) The coin model of privilege and critical allyship: implications for health

Transformative logics

- Transformative logics are supposed to disrupt, break and produce something new.
- Decolonization of knowledge
- Epistemic decolonization



Structural change and transformation of human understanding and relationships. (Rinaldo Walcott; 2019)

Practical implications for research

Formulation of
excellence criteria
(research chair,
doctoral fellowship,
etc.)

Composition of
research teams

Research project design

Peer review process

Support for research
clusters that enable
diverse communities to
flourish

Collaborations - Composition of research teams

- In addition to potential positive impacts such as accessing diverse networks and gaining varied perspectives, research has shown that a **diverse team can minimize implicit biases** among members of dominant groups **simply by their presence**.
- Rethinking the formulation of **excellence criteria** to ensure inclusion.



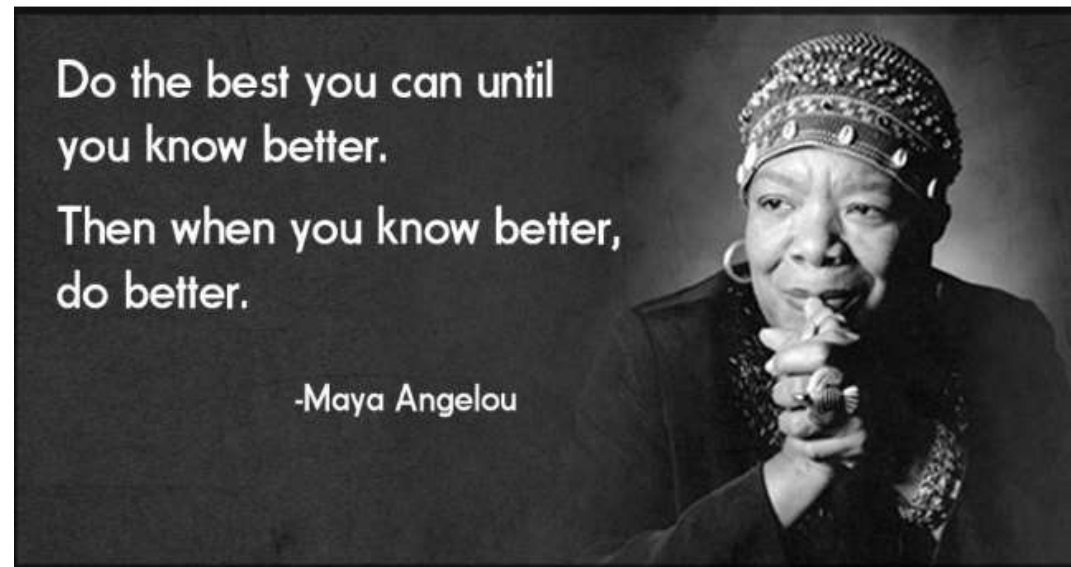
Collaborative writing strategies

- A more **inclusive approach to authorship** is needed, to recognize "contributions that extend beyond the usual data collection, analysis and writing" .
- Facilitate **contributions beyond the actual writing**: informal peer review, group discussions and conversations that can be noted and written down by an academic, ask for feedback on presentation/outline rather than a full paper draft.

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Thanks! - Questions



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