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An Objective Study of Inter and Intra-Politics at the Border: Tajfel's Social Identity Theory

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses some objective truths in the workplace where an employee may feel isolated for various reasons in different domains such as salary, professional status, promotions, and more. Certain ideologies of human society create disparities in these natural practices and limit development in our modern world. For instance, politics, religion, class, gender, and language contribute to these disparities. The researcher utilizes Henry Tajfel's social identity theory to understand the social problems created by specific groups of people. Qualitative methodology is employed to collect data. Ten of the most reviewed articles were studied among the 30 chosen articles to review literature and find essential information.

INTRODUCTION

Workplace dynamics often reflect broader societal issues, where employees may experience isolation and inequality in various areas such as salary, professional status, and career advancement. These disparities are not merely individual challenges but are deeply intertwined with societal ideologies, including politics, religion, social class, gender, and language. These factors contribute to systemic inequalities that hinder both individual and organizational development. This paper examines these issues through the lens of Henry Tajfel's social identity theory, which provides a framework for understanding how group affiliations and identities contribute to social problems within the workplace. By employing a qualitative methodology, the research aims to explore the lived experiences of employees and the societal structures that influence workplace disparities. A review of ten highly regarded articles, selected from a broader set of thirty, provides essential insights and informs the study's analysis of these complex social dynamics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Titled "Encountering Social Class Differences at Work: How 'Class Work' Perpetuates Inequality," Barbara Gray introduced the concept of class work. The author also depicted an authoritative group of people having certain traits, such as cognition and practices that people carry into their workplace validating them and establishing them as standard norms. Consequently, these rules and norms create a social hierarchy, shaping the sustainability of the working ambiance (Gray, 2013, pp. 670-699).

Religious Discrimination in the Workplace: A Review and Examination of Current and Future Trends" by Sonia Ghumman, Ann Marie Ryan, Lizabeth A. Barclay, and Karen S. Markel (2013) explored religious discrimination in the workplace, following the criteria of the Civil Rights Act (CRA). The study reviewed numerous online articles where individuals were marginalized for reasons such as having long hair, wearing hijabs, keeping beards, following specific dress codes, and having particular food choices. Gender, skin color, and tribal discrimination can manifest through behaviors such as isolating oneself from the group, experiencing changes in behavior, using derogatory terms, and pressuring individuals to accept certain norms as standards (Schneider et al. 2000; Fitzgerald et al.).

Gender Stereotypes and Their Impact on Women's Career Progressions from a Managerial Perspective" was published in 2021 that explored three prominent points: women in management, the relationship between management and women, and gender influence on the workplace. The study identified gender taboos in Asian countries as well as other developed nations. The authors introduced the perception of women in the workplace as being subordinate, caregivers, and risk-averse. They also highlighted certain societal and workplace stereotypes about women that limit their career advancement (Tabassum & Nayak, 2021).

Borders are not merely physical demarcations but also symbolic spaces where identity politics manifest (Paasi, 1996). The concept of the "other" is central to border politics, as groups on either side of the border often view each other through the lens of their own social identity. This has been observed in various geopolitical contexts, where border conflicts are fueled by perceptions of threat and competition between different national or ethnic groups (Barth, 1969). SIT helps to explain why such conflicts are particularly intense at borders, as these areas are where group identities are most salient.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. Does politics work behind inter and intra-border disparities in the workplace?
- ii. What are the criteria for constructing the formation of a social group?
- iii. How do various aspects of society create discrimination in the workplace?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To identify the political motives in creating social discrimination in the workplace.
- To understand the cognitive sources for establishing social disparity.
- To assess the steps of forming a specific social class.
- To evaluate the secret intentions of authoritative groups in constructing disparities in the workplace
- To recommend some reasonable solution to make an equal society for all in workplace.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers followed a qualitative approach to collect data. They gathered data from secondary sources such as journals, research works, articles, books, etc. Thirty research articles were selected as a sample to collect secondary data. Later, ten articles were chosen because they represent the major information from other parts of the articles. All of these articles have a higher level of authenticity due to their strong publication background in prestigious journals like Sage, JSTOR, and Science Direct, etc. Reports and statistics were also studied from the official websites of ILO, UNICEF, and Interpol, representing a higher level of validity.

1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a qualitative research design, which is well-suited for exploring complex phenomena, understanding the experiences of individuals, and uncovering the meanings that participants ascribe to their experiences. A qualitative approach allows for an in-depth examination of the research topic through the collection of rich, detailed data.

2. RESEARCH APPROACH

The study follows an inductive approach, which is typical in qualitative research. This approach allows patterns, themes, and insights to emerge from the data

rather than imposing predefined theories or hypotheses. The research is exploratory and interpretive, aiming to understand the nuances and intricacies of the subject matter.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher adopted some subsequent theories along with the Social Identity Theory to advance the investigation.

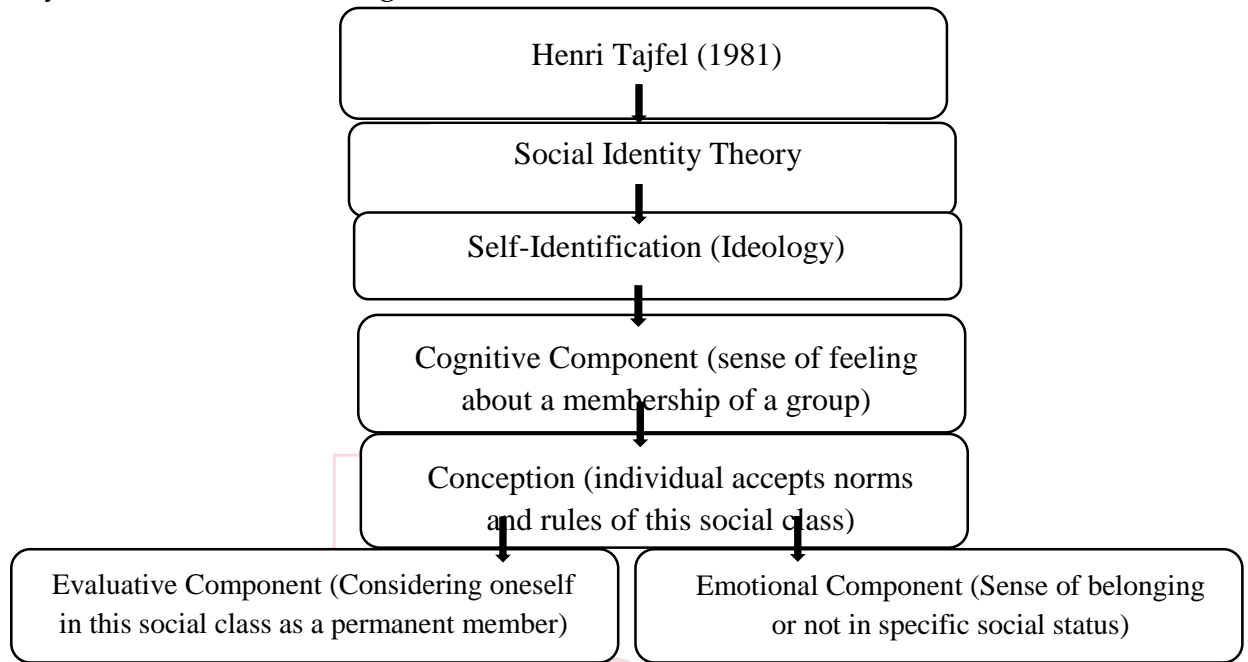


Figure. Theoretical conception of a group.

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

This theory, developed by Henri Tajfel in the 1970s, explores how individuals define themselves based on their group memberships and how this impacts their attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions. The theory gained widespread recognition in 1981. Tajfel proposed the steps of Social Identification Theory. Firstly, a group of people from society identifies themselves as different from other groups. They consider themselves based on religion, culture, gender, ideology, belief, language, dialect, and class. In the antecedent stage, they visualize their community and assign to themselves certain categories of people, including their dress, manners, and ethics. Then, in the next stage, this group constructs social norms and rules that are specific to their social group. They begin to view other groups in society as marginalized and label them as "others". The conception stage can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, as an evaluative component where the person declares themselves as a permanent member of this social class and others start considering them in the same way. Another implication in this stage is the emotional component; this group builds a sense of responsibility, love, and faith for their own social class and maintains strong relationships with members of the same class. The opposite side of this group is anti-belonging people who reject adopting all the attributes of this group. This group may dislocate

themselves to another society or within the same society but among other groups of people. Institutional discrimination may arise from these dynamics.

This theory suggests that there are many internal, unwritten issues within an organization where the institution favors certain schools or individuals for recruiting employees. The Social Identity Theory tells us that this occurs because certain groups always strive to benefit their in-group community.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Human beings create social disparity, leaving society in chaos. In the early creation of humanity, there was no discrimination; it is a human-made approach. Before engaging in discrimination, individuals, societies, or states consider certain factors, reinforcing their beliefs day by day by adhering to their own ideologies. Some issues to be noted for creating social disparity include economics, politics, race, class, language, gender, religion, and ideologies (Halldorson, 2009). All of these factors are natural, and no one has control over them. However, we have taken control of these issues and started altering them according to our own whims, resulting in social violence and indiscipline.

1. Formation of social discord: Philosopher of the 17th century, John Locke, considered the human brain as a tabula rasa, a blank slate, implying that every human child born on this earth starts with an empty mind devoid of knowledge. As they live in society and experience various things through their five sensory organs, they develop their understanding of life. This means that we act based on the experiences and knowledge gained from society. Locke's book titled "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" in 1689 received widespread recognition for this unique observation about children's brains.

The Social Identity Theory (SIT) believes that cognitive and psychological processes determine our self-categorization, and this categorization influences our behavior. Henri Tajfel (1970), in his social identity theory, discussed two philosophies of groups in society: in-group favoritism and out-group bias. When people from certain regions, through their long history of living and communication experiences, perceive their own superiority within their community, they ideologically consider themselves as members of that specific group. Apart from their own group, they view other groups in society as inferior or negligible. Consequently, variations arise within the nation, creating divisions. Hogg & Abrahams (1988) asserted that SIT signifies the identity of a person, which is shaped by their own social group or social categories. Belonging implies the sense of considering oneself a member of a specific community (Tajfel, 1981), and social behavior is an overall depiction of a person's actions in their community (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). "An individual's meaningful role in society reflects their character, and they adopt these norms and values as standards for their own society. Self-evaluation and self-devaluation both begin from an early age" (Tajfel, 1981).

The structuralist perspective in society indicates whether a society follows a structured sequence or not, with seniors and authorities patronizing subordinates. Hogg & Abraham (1988) explored two structures in society: conflict structure and consensual structure. The conflict structure signifies major ideological differences between two groups in society, while the consensual structure represents minor differences between two groups in society accepting ideological variations.

2. Language

Communication Accommodation Theory and Ethnolinguistic Identity theory support the notion that linguistic discourse implies our status, focusing on the importance of linguistics, leading individuals to adapt to certain outer groups in their social circle and accept their accents, approach, dialect, and language. Regional discrimination may arise from factors such as accent or dialect, colloquialisms/traditions, casual conversation, surnames, etc. (Giles & Johnson, 1987).

In every big and small society, various dialects exist. Among these dialects, we choose the standard dialect. To consider a dialect as a perfect form of communication, we have to follow certain approaches, such as having a dictionary, speaking by a large group of people, adhering to standard grammar, etc. For political interests, some dialects in certain regions gain prestige over others. Such ideological approaches create disparities later in life and have long-term effects. For instance, in the context of Bangladesh, tribal languages have no impact on our official or regular communication. As a result, a person from that community may struggle to integrate into Bengali society, as language barriers create significant gaps in proper communication.

Moreover, people from cities like Chittagong, Chandpur, Feni, and Noakhali, known for their distinct dialects, can be identified by their pronunciation of 'f' and 'p' sounds, showing little or no variation in these two sounds. If an employer or employee has any intention to sow discord in any region, they can identify it through certain dialects and continue to discriminate in the workplace. Such forms of disparity can be observed in countries where a country is divided into many borders, regions, states, or districts.

Taking the example of East and West Germany, we can understand some discriminatory approaches to dialects in their respective workplaces. East Germans coined many terms from Russian, as they were controlled by the Soviet Union, while West Germany used terms similar to those used in America, as they were influenced by the United States for a long period. We are in the age of the fourth industrial revolution, where industrial production leads other means of production, and those engaged in industry are economically more advanced than agrarian people. Nowadays, most industries, institutions, and organizations are administered by people who have a good command of language, and the people of Germany still carry this tendency to follow rules and regulations associated

with capitalist society. As a result, West Germany and its people enjoy the highest benefits in job placement. However, this form of professional disparity based on language has diminished to a large extent.

3. Ideology

Discrimination is not always a direct approach; rather, individuals may experience indirect disparity (Stangor et al., 2003). When a group of people is ideologically brainwashed and belongs to a specific ideology, positive or negative, they may apply it in their workplace towards others whom they perceive as inferior. For instance, they may show aversion towards the musical choices of another person or, during company trips, they may choose to sit together at a restaurant and exclude certain individuals from their table. Another tactic they may employ with their assumed subordinate colleagues in the workplace is to talk softly or behave differently when their preferred group members are absent. Direct discrimination is visible, and the affected employee can choose how to respond. However, in cases of indirect discrimination, employees may struggle to decide what action to take, leading to uneasiness in their mental and physical health conditions (Jones et al., 2016; Lewis et al., 2015; Phelan and Link, 2015; Schmitt et al., 2014).

Many articles have discussed the negative impact of patriarchal societies, often overlooking negative experiences within matriarchal institutions, where the organization's leader is female. In institutions where female managers or bosses control discipline, they may act according to their personal biases. Sometimes, their actions may reflect aversion towards male colleagues or employees. If they have had negative experiences with a male individual in their personal life, they may generalize these experiences to all males, leading to mental health deterioration among male employees and potentially affecting their physical health as well. The situation worsens when the administration reacts in extreme ways, such as rewarding some employees while depriving others based on their ideologies and thoughts, even if they are qualified enough (Kaiser and Major 2006; Major et al., 2007; Stangor et al., 2003).

4. Class

Bourdieu mentioned that "individual class is enacted in the workplace based on certain aspects such as economic, social, and cultural capital. Wealth is considered economic capital, whereas networking and social connections are part of social capital. Finally, cultural capital signifies an individual's social tastes and norms achieved through institutional and visual experiences" (Bourdieu, 1984). Authorities judge an employee by their appearance in the workplace. There may be minor issues in everyone's lives where they face many challenges in their personal life. Sharing one's personal life may create a bad impression and bring negative attention to the organization. It is true in many cases that employee satisfaction contributes to the success of the institution. Furthermore, it is unethical for a supervisor to monitor every step of an employee regarding personal choices. An employee may not enjoy the same food or restaurant items

as others, but it does not mean they have an aversion towards spending money. Extravagant individuals may make many friends, but that approach may not be suitable for everyone.

"Individual's regular activities in the workplace assign their privileged status over other groups in the workplace" (Bourdieu, 1984). Different individuals carry various attributes; some may be introverted while others may be extroverted. These personal variations can have direct or indirect impacts on job responsibilities. This individual variation can create disparity in the judgment of a candidate for a superior position. The senior body of the organization follows specific rules on a daily basis, such as attending the institution, providing suggestions about health or other real-life experiences, and instructing employees about their responsibilities. These daily activities position the head of the committee in a prestigious position, and they may favor employees who reinforce their observations and beliefs and refrain from disagreeing. Bourdieu states, "When individuals from high-class society in their workplace do the same thing repeatedly, they institutionalize it, and members of this group act in the same way, turning it into a rule and norm."

5. Religion

Hiring discrimination can be found in various categories, including religion. For instance, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and atheists may face discrimination during the hiring process (Wallace et al., 2014; Wright et al., 2013). There are many organizations where, although they may not express it directly, they willingly and secretly give preferences to one religion over others, even when the responsibility has nothing to do with religion. This religious disparity can also manifest in other forms, such as if a candidate is a follower of a particular religion or openly expresses their cultural beliefs or traditions.

Grollman demonstrated that in the USA, individuals who experience various forms of discrimination, including religious discrimination, often suffer from deteriorated health conditions. This is especially true for marginalized groups such as Hispanics, women, Blacks, and Asians. Hispanics and Asians may face discrimination based on their pronunciation and facial appearance, while Blacks and women may be marginalized due to their skin color and gender in predominantly white-dominated or developed countries. In countries where multiple beliefs exist among citizens, conflicts may arise. For example, East and West Germans hold strong beliefs in two different faiths. People from East Germany are often atheists or have no belief in God, while West Germans are predominantly Christians. This creates a dilemma for recruiters when they must choose between two qualified candidates for a position, leading them to develop a tendency to select a person from their own religious belief in most cases (Grollman, 2012).

The Civil Rights Act prohibits any form of religious discrimination. If any conflicts arise regarding an individual's religion, it is mandatory to accommodate

their religious beliefs. This implies that work events should be rearranged to respect employees' religious sentiments (EEOC, 2021b). Additionally, the EEOC considers any approach against an employee's religious faith as illegal and categorizes it as harassment in the workplace. If any such issues arise within the organization or by other employees targeting marginalized groups, the employer organization must take responsibility, and appropriate action must be taken by the authorities.

6. Gender

Capitalist society perpetuates gender segregation in the workplace for its own benefit (Bradley, 1989). Cheap labor and advertising serve as great sources of free or low-cost labor that can be gained from female counterparts if they are enticed with eye-catching offers. The classical perception of female labor suggests that they can work for free or at a lower cost because they are perceived as physically inferior and unable to produce the same amount of work as their male counterparts. In advertising, females are enticed with promises of becoming world-class models, offered opportunities from home and abroad to endorse various cosmetics, and gain adoration and followers. If we examine the backgrounds of the world's top models, we often find that their families struggled financially in the past.

The perception of women lacking leadership qualities is considered constant and creates barriers to their success (Napasri & Yukongdi, 2015). In many Asian and African societies, people believe that women in the modern world cannot escape prejudices and stereotypes, despite advancements in sports, education, regulations, and security. People still believe that women's qualities are innate and unchangeable, ascribed by a higher power.

Prasad and Thomas (2011) drew attention to the existence of social prejudice against women in Bahrain, while Sogra (1995) experienced patriarchal attributes in countries like Bangladesh. In institutions, both males and females experience the negative effects of gender disparity. Although recent protocols regarding women have softened some gender-related taboos in Bangladesh, there is still a long way to go for complete eradication of these gender-related issues in the workplace.

In "Capitalism and the Oppression of Women: Marx Revisited" the author demonstrated the maltreatment of women in capitalist societies, identifying observable effects in the labor market, social and economic structures, disparities in household environments, and workplace bureaucracy. Before the reunification of East and West Germany, East German females were not as concerned about gender disparity in the workplace, as the country provided numerous facilities such as pregnancy holidays, job security, and favorable job policies. However, both genders in East Germany lagged behind in education, job opportunities, and living standards (Gimenez, 2005).

7. Post-Reunification Dynamics

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany in 1990, the dynamics of intergroup and intragroup politics shifted but did not disappear. SIT suggests that the legacy of strong social identities can persist even after the removal of physical and political barriers, leading to ongoing challenges in integration and social cohesion.

In post-reunification Germany, the distinction between "Ossis" (East Germans) and "Wessis" (West Germans) continued to influence social and political dynamics. Many East Germans felt marginalized in the new, unified Germany, as they struggled to adapt to the capitalist economy and faced discrimination in the job market. This led to a sense of resentment and alienation, reinforcing the perception of an enduring divide between the two groups.

West Germans, on the other hand, often viewed their Eastern counterparts as backward or less capable, perpetuating stereotypes that had been cultivated during the Cold War. These lingering divisions have continued to shape political discourse in Germany, with regional disparities in economic development and social attitudes reflecting the lasting impact of the division.

RECOMMENDATION

Interpolitics and interborder phenomena have brought about many social changes that have been reduced and are becoming easier to manage in the near future. However, certain measures must be implemented to minimize social problems in human life and maintain a healthy working environment worldwide.

Firstly, schooling on tolerance and respect for comrades and colleagues in every sphere of life should be ensured from the early years of academic life. This will undoubtedly minimize problems of maltreatment towards others in the workplace and in all other academic and non-academic fields.

It is essential for policymakers and administrators to prioritize the interests of institutions. An employee may possess physical, cultural, and linguistic competencies, but if they are not suitable for the duties required in their position or are less capable than other discriminated-against candidates, this should be taken into consideration. Furthermore, diversity projects can be implemented and celebrated as festivals among various employees. Workstations must have a diverse range of employees in terms of their beliefs, regions, and languages. If authorities organize competitions and events to celebrate such diversity among their employees, it will undoubtedly improve the sense of bonding and eradicate social discrimination in every sphere of life.

Collaborative research between institutions in the former East and West Germany should be encouraged to explore shared historical experiences and develop joint solutions to current social and political challenges.

It is essential to develop and assess the impact of cultural integration programs designed to bridge the gap between East and West Germans by fostering mutual understanding and respect for cultural differences.

CONCLUSION

It is equally important to monitor internal politics within society, as it often leads to social disparity, violence, and human dissatisfaction. Sociology continually addresses such internal problems in human life through its analysis of daily social movements. While there are numerous rules, laws, and protocols in place for international affairs and crimes, precautions for safeguarding internal human rights within borders are often overlooked. Consequently, many individuals lead miserable lives generation after generation, with no avenue for seeking justice. From the above discussion, it is evident that to address internal politics in the workplace, certain societal variables must be given attention, such as class, religion, gender, ideology, and language. Granting one class control over others inevitably leads to social violence, unless it is driven by intellectual and ethical interests. Institutional state apparatuses must educate their constituents about the negative impacts of creating social disparities and demonstrate how such disparities can hinder a nation's success. In the modern world, success is contingent upon the contributions of the entire human populace, regardless of minority or majority status. Humanity can only thrive in this challenging world when individuals work hand in hand and demonstrate respect for diversity.

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