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Creating Inclusive Organizations through Policies

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Organizational employment systems are becoming more open to external markets and institutional pressures, characterized as frequent employee movements in and out of the organization (at all hierarchical levels), and the merit-based (i.e., performance, competence, efforts, abilities-based) reward distribution. Alarming, merit-based employment systems do not only fail to improve workplace equality but also contribute to increasing inequality, namely “the paradox of meritocracy.” Then a critical question arises: how can organizations create (or maintain) an inclusive culture when their employment systems are changing toward merit-based ones? To retain and be more inclusive of diverse individuals, especially minority and low status groups, I posit that it is important to design and implement policies and practices that support their diverse needs. Building on a recent study (Park, Lee, & Budd, 2018), I identify four important considerations: availability, awareness, affordability, and assurance. That is, in designing and facilitating the use of inclusive policies, organizations should consider whether necessary policies are available to employees, whether employees are aware of those policies, whether employees can afford to use the policies, and whether they get assurance that they can use the policies without being concerned about negative outcomes.