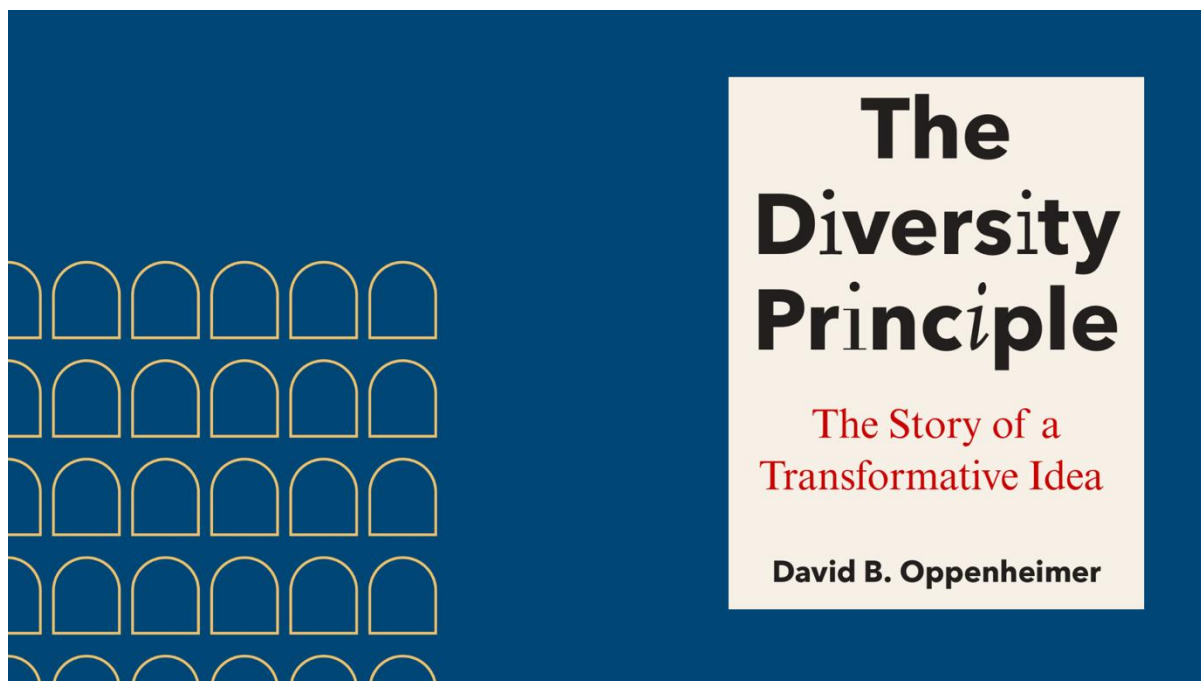


The European University Institute, Università degli Studi di Firenze and NYU Florence join David Oppenheimer (UC Berkeley) as he traces the historical, intellectual, and empirical foundations of the diversity principle.



June 5, **14:00 - 16:00 CEST**

Online and Sala del Capitolo, Via dei Roccettini 9 - 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole

Registration required: <https://apps.eui.eu/EventRegistration/Home/Login?eventId=584423>

[The Diversity Principle: The Story of a Transformative Idea](#) (Yale 2026) tells the 200+ year history of the idea that people with different backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints benefit from engaging with each other. That is why it's important for people who are insiders to expand their circles to include outsiders, and vice versa. The experience of being an outsider is often influenced by age, religion, ethnicity, gender, race, language, disability, economic class, and other forms of identity. When compared with groups that are more homogeneous, diverse groups do a better job of solving problems, making discoveries, teaching and learning from each other and improving democratic discourse.

This was a core tenet of the first modern research university. It is why Wilhelm von Humboldt welcomed Catholics and Jews to the University of

Berlin, founded in Germany in 1810. It was the inspiration for John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill's *On Liberty*. In the United States it was a touchstone of academic freedom, a hallmark of Charles Eliot's remaking of Harvard in the late nineteenth century to promote the 'clash of ideas', and a foundation of Thurgood Marshall, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Pauli Murray's work for racial and gender equality in the mid-twentieth.

In the twenty-first century the principle has returned to its European roots. With the spread of the *charte de la diversité* it has been endorsed across Europe but is now in the crosshairs of 'anti-woke' activists in Europe and North America.

Meanwhile, for most of the past two centuries the diversity principle was an observed phenomenon but lacked empirical proof. But in the past few decades it has been carefully studied and demonstrated to be empirically sound. It has nonetheless engendered controversy and is the subject of considerable opposition.

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