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The sustainability of a social innovation in work relations: a diversity management tool

Barriers and opportunities for its diffusion

Impressum

Content

1   Objectives of the diversity management tool

The German employment and labor relations are increasingly shaped by labor participation of women, migrants and older people. Therefore, even smaller enterprises must assess the level of diversity of its staff, as well as develop strategies for diversity management. The understanding and management of diversity has an important impact on relationships in the work environment – not only between employees and employers but among employees as well. Thus, success is crucial here. Given the increasing diversity in work relations, new forms of solidarity are necessary. Solidarity can no longer refer to the familiar attractiveness of the similar, but must follow more abstract principles, and therein lays the challenge.

Yet there is an answer to this problem: a tool for diversity management. The Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund (Social research center at Technical University Dortmund) developed an internet-based analyzing tool on behalf of the Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin (the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health). This tool can be used free of charge at www.online-diversity.de. It has two main objectives: sensitization for and calling attention to diversity competences in enterprises. The internet-based Diversity-Self-Assessment-Tool (http://www.online-diversity.de/translations/english/nwe_sebsttest.inc.php) is the means to fulfill these tasks. This tool provides an analysis of the constitution of the staff as well as of the corporate culture in terms of diversity. Thus, it facilitates a rational analysis of the enterprise's situation.

Based on the description of this tool there arises the problem of establishing diversity management as a routine to change work and labor relations in a sustainable way. For this reason, two questions have to be answered: How can diversity management be disseminated in enterprises and what kind of requirements must be met?

In the following, the reasons for the implementation and use of diversity management will be named first (1). For this purpose an analysis of the diversity of the corporate organizational structure is necessary (2), which can be carried out by using the above mentioned Diversity Self-Assessment Tool or Online Diversity Tool (ODT). Afterwards, this tool for diversity management will be presented. However, the implementation of diversity management triggers a change of the corporate organizational structure (3) which is – from the organizational research perspective – confronted with known problems of structural resistance and paradoxical consequences of limited predictability (4). These problems can be tackled by taking a partial failure of the reform efforts into account and to use it as a learning opportunity with the help of the ODT (5).

2   Why diversity?

In the following years, the demographic structure and employment patterns will change more radically in Germany than in other OECD countries. On the one hand, the baby-boomer generation moves up to the higher employment age (the cohort of 1964 is numerically the strongest birth cohort), on the other hand, a decrease of the fertility rate (in western Germany since approx. 1970, in eastern Germany since approx. 1990) to approximately 1.4 children per woman can be observed. With a view to the future, labor market projections conclude that an ageing and declining of labor force potential cannot be stopped (IAB 2011, Prognos 2012, Bosch Stiftung 2013). Politicians responded to the changing composition of the workforce by, among other things, extending the duration of people's working life. Furthermore, the German government initiated a social discourse on a demographic strategy.

In particular, the ageing of the workforce is currently on the enterprises' agenda. Although this process differs from enterprise to enterprise, from sector to sector and from region to region, a general trend is evident. The level of diversity increases with the ageing of the workforce. In order to respond to the foreseeable decline in the working age population and the possible subsequent shortage of skilled workers, strategies for securing the supply of skilled employees have been proposed (Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2011, BMAS 2011). These strategies include essential elements such as increasing the labor market participation of women, especially of those who have (small) children as well as that of older workers. Another strategy is managing the immigration of skilled workers in a better way. Such measures will lead to a further increase of diversity in the companies' workforces.

Today, diversity is already present in every enterprise and every institution. This is true even where a workforce appears to be homogeneous. For instance, because predominantly white, local men or predominantly women are employed, there are some differences concerning the qualifications of employees, the form of employment (full-time, part-time) or the age structure. These findings of simultaneously existing different workforce characteristics and groups within company organizations are currently discussed as diversity. Accordingly, the term "diversity" is complex and multi-faceted, and underlines heterogeneity and variety.

In response to this, diversity management is a business concept based on workforce diversity within enterprises. Diversity management capitalizes on this diversity for positive development of the enterprise. It ascribes to a business management concept, which deliberately aims to make the diversity of the workforce an integral part of the employment policy and organization development. In this context, the workforce diversity should be valued and used. In addition to moral and legal reasons, there are important economic reasons for the implementation of diversity management. Enterprises as well as public and private institutions which systematically take the interests of their diverse customers, workforce

and their diverse environment into account are considered to be economically more successful (Stuber 2009).

In this context, the justifications applied by enterprises in order to address diversity are interesting. In her analysis, Ostendorp (2009) outlined different "interpretative repertoires" which are reasons for the implementation of a diversity management:

- Diversity as a luxury, as image-oriented (As everyone offers something on the subject of diversity, we have to as well).

- Diversity as a reflection of customers, as market-oriented (As much diversity as necessary, as little as possible).

- Diversity as a "good deed" for minorities, as minority-oriented (With a heart for social affairs).

- Diversity as a compatible topic, as topic-oriented (e.g. gender as a topic).

- Diversity as a catalyst for polyphony, as difference-orientated (The danger of getting lost in a vigorous diversity).

Thus, there are many different reasons why enterprises opt for a diversity management. These reasons are not always purely rational. Süß and Kleiner (2006) examined why management concepts initially establish themselves but can disappear again. Essentially, they outline three causes:

- Dependence on other enterprises, which exert pressure.

- Imitation by other, more successful enterprises.

- Normative pressure due to increasing professionalization of occupational groups such as counselors.

Both researchers find out that these processes also have an effect if there is no proof of efficiency. Lederle (2007) also concludes that diversity management is not practiced because of a precise cost-benefit calculation, but is "rather discursively produced in iterative and recursive processes. Demographic, legislative and market changes, which means anticipated expectations as relevant identified reference groups, are listed by company actors as those problems of which the solution is promised by the implementation of diversity management"[1] (Lederle 2007, 37). In particular, this creates the risk that changing external factors lead to a disappearance of diversity concepts from the daily business.

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[1] Own translation of the quote from Lederle (2007): Diversity Management "wird vielmehr in iterativen und rekursiven Prozessen diskursiv erzeugt. Demographische, gesetzliche und marktliche Veränderungen, d.h. antizipierte Erwartungen als relevant bezeichneter Bezugsgruppen, werden von den organisationalen Akteuren als jene Probleme angeführt, deren Lösung durch die Einführung von Diversity Management versprochen wird".

Due to these experiences, it seems appropriate to broaden the concept of diversity management. Diversity management should stand for a constructive and productive engagement with diversity. This involves the diversity of the workforce but also the diversity of customers. In this context, the idea of integrating people with a migrant background is at the forefront of the social debate.[2] In the women and gender policy debate it is discussed, albeit controversially, to what extent diversity concepts can contribute to achieving equal opportunity (i.a. articles in the journal Femina Politica 01/2007; Andresen *et al.* 2009; Krell 2009). The idea of linking gender equality and economization has led to critical assessments of diversity concepts, especially in women's and gender research (i.a. Stiegler 2005). Furthermore, in the scientific debate it is underlined that diversity is achieved by assigning people to specific "identity groups", e.g. to the group of elderly people, women or migrants. Individuals often assign themselves to one group. Apart from the fact that individual differences are neglected in this kind of analysis, these assignments can lead to discrimination. They name deviations from normality which is still associated with the white, male and German skilled worker. In order to break down or even prevent discrimination it seems pertinent to question and, subsequently to deconstruct the assignment to groups. For this purpose all fields of business activity have to be analyzed in regard to such construction processes. Thus, unequal treatments and exclusion of social groups can be examined in structure and action. Moreover, the possibilities that could potentially expedite equal opportunities and the commitment of the workforce should become apparent.

3   Taking inventory

The path to an adequate understanding of diversity runs through perception processes. Respectively, the identification of diversity leads to intensive communication of perceptions and appropriate action. Addressing existing diversity is a fundamental prerequisite for diversity management in the first place. In order to do so, existing practices, routines and structures for managing present and future workforce and customers must be scrutinized. This begins with disclosing real differences of the pertinent people and groups. Furthermore, actions and structures based on stereotypes and prejudices, and which have discriminating effects, must be analyzed. In this course, it is particularly important to take inventory of the business's heterogeneity, as well as the spread of stereotypes and prejudices about age (Staudinger 2007). The potential for mixed-age cooperation can only be exploited if tasks match the teams' profiles (Staudinger et al. 2011).

An internet-based analyzing tool, which was developed by the Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund (Social Research Center Dortmund) on behalf of the Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin (Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) enables such an inventory. The ODT lays the

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[2]   See i.a. the campaign by the German government "Charta der Vielfalt"(Charta of Diversity) [http://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de]

foundation for systematic measures, while the evaluations indicate priorities. On this basis, the representatives of the business parties must agree upon and then realize appropriate organizational change processes. Key success factors have been determined regarding these ensuing steps (Klose and Merx 2010):

- An apparent political will and a high level of commitment seem to be prerequisites. Commitment, for example, can be demonstrated by a work agreement or signing the German Diversity Charta. The apparent political will of the executives ought to be reflected in an appropriate endowment of resources. Furthermore, diversity should be seen as a cross-sectional task and integrated into all important organizational processes.

- In order to manage the organizational change processes, an unambiguous and institutional responsibility has to be created. Clear, quantified and timed objectives must be determined. Additionally, all organizational levels should be involved in developing and adopting a strategic concept, though a combined top-down or bottom-up process seems to be more promising.

- In many cases organizational changes are met with fears and resistance. These have to be addressed and dealt with by thorough communication. In order to do so, all relevant members of an organization have to be sensitized and equipped with diversity competences regardless of hierarchical levels.

- Lastly, the implementation of diversity management needs – like all organizational change processes – continuous controlling and evaluation measures.

4   Concept and function of the online diversity tool (ODT)

The concept of the ODT is based on the basic assumption that the participation of all company actors is a vital condition for successful diversity management. Furthermore, a strong link between diversity and inclusion is considered. Inclusion describes a permanent consideration, perception, active promotion and use of diversity. This includes revealing and overcoming the discrimination of individual and groups of employees. Exploiting diversity for potential economic improvement and equal opportunities means that it must run through all levels and processes in order to become effective in every decision and action. It means a linkage and holistic view of diversity in the entire sphere of activities and in all areas of the organization. Furthermore, successful diversity management is of a participatory nature. With a participatory approach, the employees' knowledge can be used for creating social-oriented work conditions along the road to diversity management. Participatory enterprise structures foster a creative and constructive environment. Due to an appropriately designed company dialogue, learning processes may begin which, in turn, can develop, strengthen and maintain a willingness to accept changes. Diver-

sity management evolves into a practical, individual and organizational learning process. This results in greater job satisfaction of the workforce, customer satisfaction, and a sharper competitive edge. Thus, the participatory and social part of diversity management is a win-win strategy. The performance and innovative capacity of enterprises depends essentially on the diverse knowledge of the workforce.

The ODT enables businesses, public and private institutions of all sizes in all industries embarking on diversity management to test how well they deal with a diverse workforce. It is available in the internet free of charge, and protecting the user's anonymity is a top priority. The diversity management online survey tool provides the user with a practical self-analysis and scientifically based evaluation. Thereby the ODT covers the wide variations in personnel in respect to age, gender, nationality as well as mental and physical challenges. It captures the following areas of action: diversity as corporate strategy, HR management, organization of work and labor, pay and performance, management and corporate culture, health, representation of interests, product and service development, marketing and PR.

The ODT is universally applicable. It takes into account the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) as well as large organizations. Manufacturing, service companies and public agencies can use the tool irrespective of whether they implement a diversity management policy or not. Thus, at the very least the ODT initiates an impulse for the implementation of diversity management.

It can also be used for repeated surveys to capture changes in the operational situation. It can be used to make an internal comparison between different departments or locations for internal benchmarking purposes. An internal dialog on diversity can be initiated or continued when management, diversity officers and (if applicable) employee representatives complete the ODT in parallel. Alternatively, it can be completed together. Thus ODT functions as a learning and information tool as well.

5   Change of Human Resource Management – an example for social innovation

The ODT is a tool that prepares and supports the change of management tasks such as leading, planning, and controlling. However, the tool aims at something more than merely a new adjustment of functioning processes. The use of personnel resources should be affected in a way that its diversity is taken into account. The reform initiated by the ODT brings about a change of a number of rules and routines within the organization as well. The change of the HRM can therefore irritate organizational procedures. This invokes structural resistances that can only be surmounted in a productive way. Namely, the implementation of diversity management by the help of the ODT must truly be understood and realized as an organizational opportunity for change.

5.1 Redundancy and Variation

In modern society organizations are exposed to diverse impulses like economic requirements, political regulations, consumer demands as well as religious claims which increase by globalization. Overall impulses are inconsistent in direction because they have different social references. Moreover, they are discrete in time and tend to occur sporadically. This causes constant contradictions. This friction arises amongst an organization's demanded stewardship of raw materials and human resources, as well as the realization of economic objectives. These demands seemingly exclude each other even if all are essential for the survival of the organization. However, the organization's strength is the ability to take impulses only as far into account as is its survival and the fulfillment of its self-defined purpose are served. Because impulses are only relevant if the organization can ascribe informational value to them, they must be acknowledged. Otherwise, they can be dismissed as irrelevant. This may or may not be convenient for the organizations[3] – at any rate they conclude for themselves if the impulse is beneficial or not.

However, organizations cannot risk merely sustaining its previously established structure. This would tend to endanger the fulfillment of its purpose, be it the production of goods or the provision of services. Companies cannot survive on the market for long, schools would provide only a very basic education, the state could not guarantee the safety of its citizens, justice would have to deal with cases ill fitted to its jurisdictions, and churches would possibly lose their congregations. It becomes apparent that the structural principles of organizations are ultimately inferior to society. Therefore, they require permanent change.

Organizations build up structures by themselves as hierarchical or participative relations of control. They hire persons by their own assessment, and define their purpose autonomously. However, because of their autonomy organizations must choose from various societal possibilities. Thus, they identify their place in society by ascribing themselves to a purpose. This purpose can be reduced to a particular objective or a factual topic (Tacke 2001). Hence, manifold tasks, expectations and actions derive from the self-determination. An example of this being when a company decides to produce energy storage devices. Organizations define themselves as agents of factually discrete, functional systems. Thus, they become addresses for expectations by other social players recognized as relevant performers (e.g. suppliers) or recipients (e.g. customers or clientele). The degree of factual similarity provides information about the nature of the relationship, namely a cooperation, competition, or subordination. All players address each other in regard to their expectations which derive from the organization's self-ascribed characterization. This is the description of the organizational output, produced in a particular way by a

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[3] The greatest danger for organizations stems from the inside. For example, it is caused by a structural stagnation or by an overexploitation of its own resources. However, organizations are brought even further down by reforms (Melloni 2005, Knudson 2006).

particular staff. However, naturally the expectations of these players of others can only be formulated concerning their own distinct ('eigenlogisch') experiences. Thus, expectations are only more or less true. This means that the ascriptions by others are also manifold and therefore do not match the self-ascribed characterization.

The expectations can emerge as relevant or irrelevant concerning their conformity with the self-ascribed expectations of the organization. Distinguishing the degree of conformity is the task of peripheral organizational members. Expectations are addressed to them when suppliers draw the attention of the purchasing team to their assortments, or costumer managers must assess the guarantee claims. Expectations are also addressed when political demands are claimed for compliance with environmental regulations, as well as when competitors or partners stock up with several certificates. This can accumulate contradictions to the structure of organizations. Indeed, it is the organizations which need solutions towards structural preservation or structural change. Furthermore, different expectations of top management in different divisions may cause internal conflicts of interests. This may be so even if expectations for themselves are aligned with the organization's purpose. Management must decide such conflicts in regard to the main definition of the organization's purpose. This definition is the core description of its output. If expectations appear to be non-conform but relevant, management is challenged to change the organizational structure by a reform. This challenge could be met by using, for instance, a new application such as the ODT to implement diversity management.

Management must solve a paradoxical task. It should retain the organization's boundaries, its structure and its identity by defending or adapting it to respective challenges and pressing issues. Management is forced to disturb organizational structure towards variety while simultaneously urging it toward redundancy (Baecker 2003: 243 ff.). Thus, for daily organizational routines, management must observe society- albeit from an entrepreneurial perspective- for opportunities which manifest themselves as manifold impulses. . Conversely, management must make sure that present production processes are not disturbed. In regard to relations within the company, namely between management and staff, this leads to a mutual urging toward change. This change is accompanied by opposing tendencies to keeping existing structures. In the end, projective reforms should leverage changes which are deemed necessary by particular parties.[4]

Thus, organizations like companies act in a world where they appear in diverse ways, and diversity is indeed what they experience. The diversity of the world is always questioned in regard to the relevance and consequences for their own structure and thus treated accordingly. – This occurs first at the periph-

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[4] Thereby worker participation in German companies can obtain very different forms reaching from hostility to obsequiousness. However, it is uncertain for any form if it particularly endangers the organization's survival or successfully advocates the employee's interests. Rather, a more or less asymmetrical balance of power relations ensues (see Jansen 2013).

ery, and later at the top among employees and management. Diversity should not be a challenge for management. This is because its treatment appears as a routine of structuring internal, factual processes as well as outbound relations to society. But, to what extent is the structural change the ODT intends an unusual imposition? In which way does the HRM as well as value-adding processes – actually the complete organizational structure – simultaneously adapt to external impulses for alteration-causing resistance?

5.2 Structural Impacts and Diversity Management

The ODT was developed with the objective of supporting organizations with implementing diversity management. The organization's performance depends on the performance of its members and their coordination. This means the members can fully engage according to the organizational purpose and the specification of their position. The coordination is regulated by both open and latent hierarchies within organizations. The management controls from the top down. People can be approached and sanctioned by their positions. However, management can motivate the performance, meaning the engagement of the staff, only by external impulses. The actual cause for the member's performance is always elusive, and can only be acknowledged as motivation. Training, bonuses and contests, company health management, childcare or even high-quality canteen food could provide contentment. Nonetheless, the actual effect of these measures on employee engagement is always obscured by individual purposes. Indeed, these purposes pursued by every employee but seldom, if ever, openly discussed.

From this perspective diversity management aims at empathetic engagement by affiliation. Affiliation demands acquiring acknowledgement by processes of trust. Likewise, the organization can foster empathetic affiliation by formal ensured acknowledgement. Processes of trust too confirm this. By acknowledging a member's special qualities, it is possible in this way to bind employee engagement to the organization's purpose. Therefore, diversity management treats acknowledgement as a means for engagement.[5] Concerning purpose, competence and position, every organizational member takes on a particular assignment (Luhmann 2000). These positions are assigned to thematically differentiated divisions or groups, where they contribute to the output defined by the self-ascribed characterization of the organization. This factually reasoned regulation of the social structure (meaning the discriminating relations of all members to each other) is, however, undermined by further regulations. Today, these additional regulations have been primarily introduced into the organization from the outside. This is observable when Eastern-European female doctors, in spite of adequate support and permission, are hired as nurses. Other example are when women get only a minimal chance for a successful career, the exclusion of obese people from the "Verbeamtung" in Germany, or when a headscarf is a barrier for a

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[5] For the relationship between affiliation, trust and acknowledgement in engagement structure see John and Knothe (2004).

woman to become a teacher an appointment or a tenured civil servant. Incidents for prejudice are evident in members' descriptions concerning their respective group's discrimination issues (i.e. race, gender, age etc.). These issues permeate beyond the organizational membership, and are always socially virulent. Group affiliation, especially those marked as ethnical, racial, sexist or even only cultural bias, are prone to prejudices. Such prejudices can potentially obstruct organizational performance. These discriminations introduced from the outside are biased because they are not founded on the purpose, hierarchy or the character of the organization. This is one ground for criticizing diversity management; to overlook the implications of power relations. According to critics, diversity policy would be used only for strategies to ensure legitimization with the purpose to shield the organizational structure from fundamental change (Vedder 2005). Nevertheless, biased discrimination is potent. For this reason, the particular focus bestowed upon biased discrimination by the ODT is well worth it. Addressed in this way the organization can treat biased discrimination as objects which become relevant for decisions. All in all the ODT is led by the assumption that organizational potential can be increased by addressing biased descriptions as diversity. In this way, the ODT should cause participation deemed beneficial for decision processes.[6] The ODT should also promote inclusion in a way that diversity is acknowledged as a structural fact, used as purpose-conform potential while eliminating latent discrimination. In the end, the ODT should be applied to all organizational levels.

Diversity management implemented through the ODT produces greater employee, customer and supplier satisfaction. This should increase organizational capability for customer acquisition and retention as well as in the increasingly important competition for excellent staff.[7] Organizational diversity is constructively mediated by learning processes strengthening the condition. Moreover, staff should be engaged and motivated to amply the contributions of their expertise.

However, considering the background of the organizational structure – in particular aspects of hierarchy, relevance selection, and decision-making – the use of the ODT raises questions about its feasibility. They must be answered for the implementation of diversity management into existing organizational structures. Beside the mentioned structural aspects, diversity management raises two more problems which take on the form of paradoxes. These are the de-thematization by thematization (or addressing) diversity as well as the reduction of discrimination by using its themes.

The prerequisite for diversity management to develop long-term relevance is the ability to distinguish factual or objective from biased discrimination. Subsequently, biased discrimination can be redefined as

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[6] This recalls not by chance the reform-wave of introducing group and team work as well as several attempts for organizational lean-management-models which all aimed at more participation more or less. For a summary and critical comments see Kühl (2001a)

[7] However, assuming that the ODT is mostly a unique characteristic in respect to competitors, the intended success, meaning the wide spread use of the ODT, contradicts the argument for a competitive advantage.

factual diversity. Factual diversity should be addressed as a possibility and used for organizational processes while de-thematizing and reducing biased discrimination. The learning processes initiated by the redefinition mediate diversity. This makes it possible to ponder on socially virulent discrimination patterns. In the sense of empowerment, organizational members should be enabled to recognize biased discrimination as prejudice and ignore them according to Klose and Merx (2010). However, addressing latent structures like prejudices renders them as manifest; with the result, that further communication is unavoidably implied. This is because when prejudices are presented as diversity, it becomes impossible not to validate them.

Including redefined biased discrimination in decision processes underscores this fact. Discriminations previously marked as biased become factual and therefore relevant as diversity – they become premises of decisions. This also adds up to a ratification of latent prejudices as manifest facts. Furthermore, the demanded participatory decision-making instigates further problems. Firstly, diversity increases the amount of alternatives stressing decision processes. Secondly, participatory procedures tend to consensus building, which requires pressure-free situations. However, in short-lived situations the information overload caused by alternatives and the consensus-imperative is insurmountable. They are rather solved by other, hierarchal higher instances (Kühl 2001a). In this way, the aim of participation is undermined by introducing diversity as a decision premise for decision processes.[8]

The evidence of paradoxical results of reforms is not unusual (Brunsson 2005, Kühl 2001b). They cannot be avoided just as reforms cannot be relinquished (Corsi 2005). The way to handle paradoxes is to enfold them. Opaque, contradictory relations will not be dissolved but rather straightened out. Thus, decisions become possible. On a factual level more or less relevant topics can be identified for diversity. On a social level, persons – employees and groups of them – can be identified as more or less pertinent. Concerning time, one can observe how the duration of decision and value-adding processes alternate. Thus, the three levels provide perspectives to identify problematical intervention points, solutions and therefore results for the organizational structure. This builds up to order of problem ranges making it possible to distinguish thematically specific problems, conflicts and urgencies.

Factual reference by topics, social reference by groups of employees, and temporal reference can be outlined as indicators of reform attempts. The indicators serve as reference points for the need of decisions. Therefore initiatives can be focused in factual, social and temporal regards as well as specifically evaluated in the same way for their efficiency. This offers reforms – in the sense of change intended by a plan – the possibility to impose its own premises such as diversity on the ongoing evolutionary change.

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[8] From a business perspective there is criticism that there is no causal proof for higher efficiency of heterogenic teams caused by diversity management. This is because besides diversity there are many other factors responsible for the success of labor division (Vedder 2005).

6 Evolution and Reform

A further impact on organizational structure follows from the implementation of diversity management aiming at the productive use of diversity. Addressing discrimination the ODT helps to indicate needs and measures for the implementation of diversity management. In this way, the ODT aims at an innovation of a company's organizational structure. It targets primarily on formatting the relations of employees and secondarily on the relations to suppliers and customers. Therefore, it must be understood as an initiation of the "social innovation" called diversity management. The debate distinguishes "social innovations" from innovations which usually refer to machine-technical artifacts. However, this distinction must be corrected as every innovation in the sense of structural change appears as a social phenomenon – a lesson which could already be learned from Schumpeter (1911/1932 and 1939/2011). To emphasize the social aspect of an innovation makes sense only if it alludes to the primary reference. Thus social innovations allude to social rather than to factual or temporal references. Social references of innovations point at sustainable changes in relations, procedures, routines and practices which have an impact on further social structures (Braun-Thürmann and John 2010). Therefore ODT is not an innovation by itself. Only if diversity management is successfully implemented into the organizational structure can the ODT be called an initiating element of a social innovation.

The diversity management concerns not only particular aspects of the organizational structure. Decision premises and hierarchies, the self-characterization of employees and in finally the organization's identity will be transformed by the reform of existing routines. What is more diversity management cannot be realized by a resolution. Like every new structural element, it must connect to the existing structure, make sense for employees, and prove to be stable in decision processes as well as reliable for the long-term. No plan can be developed which already considers all eventualities. But the manifold aspects amount to high complexity even within the separate organizational structure so that particular events can only be perceived as chances.

Along the evolutionary scheme, diversity management can be understood 1) as an irritating occasion for variations which 2) instigate selections by decisions and 3) must be stabilized in regard to the relevant environment (see John 2005). Left to its own devices, it is unlikely that diversity management would occur on the positive sides of evolutionary functions. However, it is only on the positive side that it can be recognized as a possible variation. Only there is it regarded as a valid structural element, and its impact on the organizational environment is at least tolerated. Yet this is exactly what is promised by diversity management: "social innovation".

This promise can only be redeemed by a planning initiative of the company's organization initiated by management. Planning tends to work contrary to the chance of socio-cultural evolution. The recogni-

tion of preferences – like the ones bundled up by the ODT – are only observable if they are addressed in decision processes. Irritating phenomena can only obtain a meaning, preferences for decision will be merely defined, and possibilities for coordinating the relations to the environment can only be identified with the means of planning. This enables a structural drift[9] within the evolutionary change.

Management must acquire an entrepreneurial attitude and make an effort to vary the structure of the organization. This means that irritations brought in from the outside, like the demand or recommendation for diversity management, must be acknowledged as opportunities for structural change. Management must prove itself as being innovative while it initiates a planned development by means of the ODT. In this way management obtains future decision options, in regard to employees and their capabilities, customers and suppliers, as well as factual alternatives (Drucker 1986). The coincidence of structural variations – which occurs anyway given the environmental complexity and manifold expectations – is countered by the means of innovation. Sufficiently relevant irritations instigate decisions. Therefore the structure changes even if a variation is dismissed as an alternative and the existing elements are confirmed. In a structural sense, innovation is unavoidable in organizations (Lieckweg and Wehrsig 2001). However in the case of diversity management it is important that this irritation of the company's organizational structure proves to be founded on good reasons. Only such reasons can cause a search for internal starting points to formulate a problem focusing on diversity. Ostendorp's research (2009) showed, however, a different picture. An aim can only be named as a solution for an identified problem on the base of the organization's own reasons. This is followed by efforts for a plan as a consistent chain of decisions about resources and a period.

Only the internal reasons identified by the ODT provide a justifiable starting point for the organization. It is the only way to encourage planning controlled by the organization's own stipulations. Thus, the "transformative capacity" (Dolata 2009) of new implemented structural element can be determined according to the organizational structure. In the case of diversity management, the HRM is primarily involved. Existing structures must be evaluated as to whether they can adopt the requirements presented by diversity management, or if there is for example a need for new appointments. Such appointments would eventually add to or replace existing ones. This raises, at a minimium, questions about the range of the implementation: Is it limited to the value-adding departments? Should it also be extended to management? Eventually the transformative capacity of the implementation of diversity management can change the meaning of the HRM (or another responsible department) within the management's structure. The determination of an order of problem ranges in regard to factual needs of resources, a temporal frame, and social potential for conflicts from an organizational starting point make it possible to estimate whether the innovative effort for the reform is altogether justified or not.

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[9]   For this term see Maturana/Varela (1983).

It is important to ensure the success of the change as soon as the parameters can be identified and out-lined for planning. Diversity management cannot count as a social innovation until it is implemented and causes manifold consequences within the organizational structure. Only than it can be evaluated as established and ensured. At this point management must change its mode from urging variety to retaining redundancy. Now it is about ensuring the structural sustainability of the new element. Management's task is then to maintain the structure. Here again at this point the order of problem ranges and the need of resources must be determined as well. Here planning can make use of structural anchors according to reform indicators (Coburn 2003).[10] These indicators are the *spread* of implementation, its practical *depth* in terms of wide-ranging consequences, its *sustainability* having withstood the test of time, and the *shift in reform ownership* as the initiation shift from the first protagonists extends to other people. The depth of the reform becomes apparent by measure, how deep the aims of the reform – (in the case of diversity management, the acknowledgement and use of diverse features of the staff, cus-tomers, and suppliers) – are embedded into the important practices of the company's organizational structure. It should be avoided to follow mere opportunistic aims. Rather the aims should be imple-mented as an important factor for actions and decisions. These practices informed by diversity should endure resistance. Not even the quantitative increase of units implementing the reform's aims may be assumed as the depth of the reform. Rather, the adoption as premises for decisions of the organization causes a broad reception. It requires not only nominal affirmations. It is essential that reforms make sense to specific contexts of several of the organization's units. Persons immediately concerned by the structural reform are responsible for the implementation of the reform's aims. The reform protagonists have to offer motives for the staff to participate in the reform. These motives should ideally build upon the individual purposes. However, these are not communicable in a way that the organization could convey. Thus, only the way for motivation remains. The other indicators are precarious as well, because they depend on the engagement of the employees. However, their engagement needs reasons for sup-porting the reform's importance in trustworthy processes of acknowledgement. This ensures affiliation or alliance.

7 Conclusion: Learning by Contradictions

The aim of diversity management is to change cooperation within an organization in such a way that the existing diversity appears as an opportunity for more engagement and contentment rather than as a barrier. How can the afore mentioned implementation indicators (depth, spread, sustainability and

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[10] This approach was introduced in the context of school reforms. However, it passes the test in regard to other factual references. Bormann et al. (2011) explain some examples in relation to the question about the effects of Agenda21 initiatives.

shift) come into effect in a way that converts the diversity management initiated by the ODT into a sustainable element of organizational structure?

Reforms tend towards contradictory or only partly satisfying results. Their failure is not uncommon. This fact tends to be recognized from without rather than from within (Brunsson 2005, 2006). Ripples caused by reforms like the implementation of the diversity management are the unintentional redefinition of the reform aim, the shift of problem-solution-relations and purpose-measure-confusion as well as the creation of new latencies by neutralizing the old. Indeed, the aims to increase company solidarity by considering diversity raises the question about the limits of inclusion. Which boundaries are eliminated between whom? It is unavoidable that they are established elsewhere anew. How does this concern the relation between management and staff? During the reform – especially when resistance occurs – its aims can easily mutate from a measure for a better HRM to the actual aim of HRM. The reform operates as if it were a zero-sum game. As a self-fulfilling purpose it loses its anchor within the organizational structure. Clearing up latencies in the forms of prejudices as biased discrimination creates an empty position. However, the manifest declaration of diversity as an opportunity does not fill up this empty position. Instead, new latencies originate, thus serving as biased discriminations.

Such contradictions and barriers must be identified by a feedback system, which seriously considers the possibility of failure. In addition to addressing diversity and identifying diverse organizational structures, this consideration marks a further strength of the ODT. Resistance can be brought up by permitting partial failure and dissent. Such a failure management is intelligent (Satkin 1992), because it enables learning while referring to the organization rather than to people. Thus, it enables a fundamental restructuring of the preference system.[11] In this way, implementation can react quickly and precisely.

However the first prerequisite of the implementation of diversity management is the innovative attitude of the management of an enterprise. It must focus resolutely on structural change and its retention while reasons are determined from the organizational perspective, necessary resources are allocated, and structural anchors are activated.

Yet the complexity and inherent uncertainty easily results in a belief in external reasons. They are considered as internal reasons so that implementation is realized intuitively only. In this case, success depends on the effectiveness of the mechanisms of hope (Brunsson 2006). These mechanisms help to realize the reform as an illusion while deflecting practice and reflection from reform cores as well as forgetting recognizable failures. Thus, in the end hardly anything changes. Nonetheless, the use of the ODT can counteract against the mere intuitive implementation of diversity management into the com-

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[11]   For an example of reform see Scott and Vessey (2000).

pany's organization. It can do so because it provides rational reasoning. It accomplishes this by helping to identify structural parameters, impact points as well as to determine the necessary resources.

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