

Studying the Diversity

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Theoretical starting points

* 'Mainstream' diversity management literature:

Talks about how to do DM but not of what to do – the content.

Treats often DM as a panacea.

* 'Critical' diversity management literature:

Talks on the behalf of the diversely managed people and describe them as stigmatized.

Two research objectives

* Objective 1: to understand what an organisation that claims to do diversity management really does: What does diversity management mean in practice?

* Objective 2 - what does diversity
a) mean for the people
b) how do they experience working in a so called diverse organisation?

Assumptions

- * Diversity is not given but socially constructed among the organisational members in their interaction. What is understood as diversity may therefore evolve and change over time.
- * Diversity work as grounded in discrimination.

What do I study?

- * How organisational members at different positions, organisational units and hierarchical levels understand and make use of the notion.

How do I study this?

- * Observing work and meetings
- * Interviews
- * Document analysis

Fieldwork – so far

- Observations
 - Unit daily work (9)
 - Unit meetings (15)
 - Top management meeting (1)
 - Reference groups (18)
 - Diversity events (2)
 - Shadowing (2)
- Interviews
 - at the unit (7)
 - Central administration (2)
- Written material
 - Statistics, reports, annual reports

Initial findings

- Despite broad definition of diversity in policies in practice the focus is on ethnicities
- Language as a problem
- Events
- DM for dedicated people mostly
- Budget cuts means less focus on DM

More findings

- On micro level DM is more about good daily basis management
- Not so much diversity management but diversity work – focus on not discriminating anyone

Diversity *management* - of what?

- “management is the process of *planning, organizing, leading* and *controlling* the efforts of organization members and of using all other organizational *resources* to achieve stated organizational goals”

Diversity *management* =

- Planning, organising, leading and controlling diversity

Diversity management – of what?

What is diversity and Who is
diverse?

- o Gender
- o Ethnicity
- o Sexuality
- o Race
- o (Dis)ability
- o Age

Translation of diversity management

- Women management –
planning, organising, leading
and controlling women
- Ethnic minority management
(e.g., arabs)
- Gay management
- Handicap management
- Old people management

Initial findings: There is no diversity management

- How diversity management is described and defined in the literature - is just good management.
- How the informants talk about diversity management - is just good management.
- Diversity is about getting rid of discriminative structures - therefore diversity work.