

THE SUSTAINABILITY OF A SOCIAL INNOVATION IN WORK RELATIONS: A DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT TOOL – BARRIERS AND CHANCES OF ITS DIFFUSION

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The German employment and labor relations are increasingly shaped by female labor participation, employment of migrants and of older people. Therefore even smaller enterprises face the task to get an overview of the level of diversity of its staff. They have to develop strategies for the management of diversity. Succeeding is crucial here, because the understanding and the management of diversity has an important impact on the relationships at work – between employees and employers as well as among employees. The increasing diversity in work relations makes necessary new forms of solidarity. However the solidarity can no longer refer to the attractiveness of the similar. Rather it has to follow more abstract principles, which are not easy to convey though.

A tool for diversity management answers to this problem. The Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund (Social research center Dortmund) developed an internet-based analyzing tool on the 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. The 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 situation of the enterprise.

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

sity 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).

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 decline of the 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 people's working life. Furthermore, the German government initiated a social discourse on a demographic strategy.

Especially 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, increasing the labor market participation of older workers, managing the immigration of skilled workers in a better way – measures which will lead to a further increase of diversity in the companies' workforces.

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

In response to this, diversity management is a business concept based on workforce diversity within enterprises and uses it for a positive development of the enterprise. It describes a business management concept which deliberately wants 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 especially 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, their diverse 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 also have to).
- Diversity as a reflection of customers, as market-oriented (As much diversity as necessary, as less 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 to get lost in an active 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 on the basis of a precise cost-benefit calculation, it “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“¹ (Lederle 2007, 37). Particularly this creates the risk that changing external factors lead to a disappearance of diversity concepts from the daily business.

Due to these experiences it seems to be appropriate to extend 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 extremely controversially discussed 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, of women or of 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 necessary to question and, thus, 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, on the one hand, unequal treatments and exclusion of social groups can be examined in structure and action, but on the other hand, especially possibilities which can contribute to more equal opportunities and an increased commitment of the workforce should become apparent.

Taking an inventory

The way towards an adequate understanding of diversity leads over perception processes and the identification of diversity to an intensive communication of these findings and appropriate action. Addressing the existing diversity is a fundamental prerequisite for diversity management in the first instance. In order to do so, the existing practices, routines and structures for dealing with the present and future workforce and

¹ Own translation of the quote from Lederle (2007) “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.”

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

customers have to be scrutinized. This begins with disclosing real differences of the acting people and groups as well as analyzing actions and structures which are based on stereotypes and prejudices and which have a discriminating effect. In this course, it is particularly important to take an inventory of the business' heterogeneity and the spread of stereotypes and prejudices in regard to the age (Staudinger 2007). The potential of 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 taking. The ODT lays the foundation for systematic measures. The evaluations indicate priorities. On this basis, the representatives of the business parties have to agree upon and realize appropriate organizational change processes. Regarding these further steps key success factors have been determined (Klose and Merx 2010):

- An apparent political will and a high level of commitment can be described as prerequisites. Commitment, for example, can be expressed by a works 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 organization processes.
- In order to manage the organizational change processes an unambiguous and institutional responsibility has to be created and clear, quantified and timed objectives have to 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 a comprehensive 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 – a continuous controlling and evaluation measures.

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 as potential for the economy and equal opportunities means that it has to run through all levels and processes in order to become effective in each decision and each action. It means a linkage and holistic view of diversity in the entire sphere of activities and in all areas of the organization. Furthermore, a successful diversity management is of a participatory nature. Due to a participatory approach the employees' knowledge can be used for creating social-oriented work and working conditions on the road to diversity management. Participatory enterprise structures foster a creative and constructive environment. Due to an appropriately designed company dialogue, learning processes can start which can develop, strengthen and maintain a willingness to accept changes. Diversity management evolves into a practical, individual and organizational learning process. This results in greater job satisfaction of the workforce, customer satisfaction, and an increasing competitiveness. 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 competences of the workforce.

To begin with the implementation of diversity management the ODT enables businesses and public as well as private institutions of all sizes in all industries to test how well they deal with a diverse workforce –

i.e. their diversity management. It is available in the internet free of charge. Protecting the user's anonymity is a top priority. The diversity management online survey tool gives the user a practical self-analysis and scientifically based evaluation. Thereby the ODT covers the wide variations in personnel in respect of age, gender, migration background and the integration of differently abled people. 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 SMBs as well as large organizations. Manufacturing and service companies and public agencies can use the tool irrespective of whether they implement a diversity management policy or not. Thus the ODT sets at least an impulse for the implementation of the diversity management.

It can also be used for repeat surveys in order 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 worked on together. Thus ODT functions as a learning and information tool as well.

CHANGE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – AN EXAMPLE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

The ODT is a tool which prepares and supports the change of genuine management tasks like leading, planning, and controlling. However the tool aims at something more than merely a new adjustment of running 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 cause irritations of the organizational procedures. This invokes structural resistances. They can only be surmounted in a productive way, if the implementation of diversity management by the help of the ODT is really understood and realized as an organizational opportunity for change.

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. The impulses are overall not consistent in direction, because they have different social references, they are discrete in time and rather seldom occur continually. This causes constant contradictions between demanded responsibility of organizations for the use of raw materials as well as human resources and the realization of economic objectives. These demands exclude or seem to exclude each other even if all of them are essential for the survival of the organization. However the strength of the organization is the ability to take the impulses only as far into account as it serves its survival and the fulfillment of its self-defined purpose. They are only relevant if the organization can ascribe informational value to them. Thus they have to be acknowledged. Otherwise they can be ignored as irrelevant. This can be convenient for the organizations or not³ – at any rate they decide by themselves if the impulse is beneficial or not.

However organizations cannot risk only to sustain its once 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 at the market for a long time, schools provide education only inappropriately, the state

³ The greatest danger for organizations threatens from the inside. It is caused by a structural stagnation or by an overexploitation of its own resources for example. Organizations are even more brought down by reform(ation)s though (Melloni 2005, Knudson 2006).

could not guarantee the safety of its citizens, justice had to deal with cases, which do not fit to its right, and churches would possibly lose their congregations. The structural principle of organizations turns out to be inferior to society, what requires 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 entirely autonomous. But because of their self-determination organizations have to choose from the various societal possibilities. Thus they identify their place in society by ascribing themselves to a purpose which can be reduced to a particular objective, a factual topic (Tacke 2001). Hence manifold tasks, expectations and actions derive from the self-determination for instance when a company decides to produce energy storage devices. Organizations define themselves as agents of factual discrete, functional systems. Thus they become addresses for expectations by other social players which are recognized as relevant performers (like suppliers) or recipients (like customers or clientele). The degree of factual similarity provides information about the expectable relation, namely a cooperation, competition, or subordination. All players address each other in regard to their expectations which derive from the organizational self-description, what means the description of the organizational output, produced in a particular way by a particular staff. Albeit the expectations of these players on others can only be formulated in regard to their logical distinct ('eigenlogisch') experiences. Thus the expectations are only more or less true. This means that the ascription by others are also manifold and do rather not match the self-description.

The expectations can turn out as relevant or irrelevant in regard to their conformity with the self-description. Distinguishing the degree of conformity is the task of the organizational members at the periphery. Expectations are addressed to them when suppliers draw the attention of the purchasing team to their assortments or costumer managers have to assess the guarantee claims as well as when political demands are claimed for the compliance with environmental regulations and competitors or partners stock up with several certificates. This can accumulate contradictions to the structure of organizations which need solutions towards structural preservation or structural change. Furthermore different expectations at the top of different divisions can cause internal contradictions between their interests even if the expectations for themselves are in line with the organizational purpose. Such conflicts have to be decided by the management in regard to the very last definition of the organizational purpose, the core of the output description. If the expectations appear to be non-conform but nevertheless relevant, the management is challenged by the task to change the organizational structure by a reform, for instance using a new application like the ODT to implement diversity management.

The management has to solve a paradoxical task. It should retain the organization's border, its structure and its identity by defending or adapting it with respect to the pressing challenges. The management has to disturb the organizational structure toward variety while simultaneously urging it toward redundancy (Baecker 2003: 243 ff.). This means for organizational daily routines that on the one hand the management has to observe entrepreneurially the society for opportunities which manifest themselves as manifold impulses. On the other hand the management has to make sure that the running production processes are not disturbed. In regard to the relations within the company, namely between management and staff, this leads to a mutual urging toward change which is accompanied by opposite tendencies of keeping the existing structures. In the end projective reforms should leverage changes which are considered as necessary by particular parties.⁴

Thus, organizations like companies act in a world appearing diverse, what they experience indeed. The diversity of the world is always questioned in regard to the relevance and consequences for their own structure and accordingly treated – first at the periphery and later at the top by employees and management. Diversity should not be a challenge for the management, because its treatment appears as a routine of structuring internal factual processes as well as of outbound relations to society. But to what extent is the

⁴ Thereby worker participation in German companies can obtain very different forms reaching from hostility to obsequiousness. However it is not sure for any form, that 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).

structural change intended by the ODT an unusual imposition? In which way do the HRM as well as value-adding processes – actually the whole organizational structure – adapt to external impulses for alteration causing resistance at the same time?

Structural Impacts and Diversity Management

The ODT was developed and provided with the objective of supporting organizations to implement 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 by their appointment. The coordination is regulated by open and latent hierarchies in organizations. The management controls top down. Persons can be addressed and sanctioned at their appointments admittedly, but the management can motivate only by external impulses the performance, meaning the engagement of the staff. The actual cause for the member's performance is always unattainable. It can only be in-actually addressed as motivation. Trainings or bonuses and contests, company health management, child care or even qualitative canteen food could provide contentment. However the actual effect of these measures on the engagement is always obscured by individual purposes which are pursued by every employee but seldom or never talked about.

In this perspective the diversity management aims at the engagement by emphatic affliction. The emphatic affliction has to acquire acknowledgement by processes of trust. Likewise the organization can cause emphatic affliction by formal ensured acknowledgement which is confirmed by processes of trust as well. In this way it is possible by the acknowledgment of a member's special features to bind the engagement for the purpose of the organization. Therefore diversity management treats acknowledgement as a means for engagement.⁵ In regard to purpose, competence and position every organizational member takes a particular appointment (Luhmann 2000). These appointments are assigned to thematically differentiated divisions or groups, where they contribute to the output defined in the self-description of the organization. This factual reasoned regulation of the social structure, meaning the discriminating relations of all members to each other, is undermined by further regulations though. Today these further regulations were mostly introduced into the organization from the outside. This is observable when Eastern-European female doctors besides their approbations are hired as nurses or when women get only a minimal chance for a successful career, and obese persons are excluded from the "Verbeamtung" in Germany, an appointment as a tenured civil servant or when a headscarf is a barrier for a woman to become a teacher.

The occasions for un-objective discriminations are given in the self-description of the members in regard to their group afflictions outside the organizational membership which are always social virulent. Group affliction especially marked as ethnical, racial, sexist or even only cultural are suitable for un-objective discrimination which obstruct the organizational performance. These discriminations introduced from the outside are un-objective because they are not reasoned by the purpose, the hierarchy or the self-description of the organization. This is one reason for criticizing the diversity management to overlook the implications of power relations. According to the critics, diversity policy would be used only for strategies to ensure legitimization with the purpose to prevent the organizational structure from a fundamental change (Vedder 2005). Nevertheless the un-objective discriminations are effective why it is worth the trouble that they are especially addressed by the ODT. Addressed in this way the organization can treat the un-objective discrimination as objects which become relevant for decisions. All in all the ODT is led by the assumption, that an organizational potential can be raised by addressing the un-objective discriminating descriptions as diversity. In this way the ODT should cause participation which is rated as beneficial for decision processes.⁶ The ODT should also promote inclusion in a way that diversity is acknowledged as a

⁵ For the relation on affliction, trust and acknowledgement in engagement structure see John and Knothe (2004).

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

structural fact and used as purpose-conform potential while eliminating the latent discrimination. In the end the ODT should be applied on all organizational levels.

A greater contentment of the staff as well as of customers and suppliers is anticipated by the diversity management implemented through the ODT. This should increase the organizational capability in the competition for customers as well as in the competition for outstanding persons which becomes increasingly important.⁷ While the organizational diversity is constructively mediated by learning processes strengthening the affliction, the staff should be engaged and motivated to amply contribute its competencies.

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

The prerequisite for diversity management developing long-term relevance is the ability to distinguish factual or objective from un-objective discriminations. Subsequently un-objective discriminations can be redefined as factual diversity. Factual diversity should be addressed as a potential and be used for organizational processes while de-thematizing and reducing un-objective discriminations. The learning processes initiated by the redefinition mediate diversity making it possible to pounce on social virulent discrimination templates. In the sense of empowerment the organizational members should be enabled to recognize un-objective discriminations as prejudice and ignore them according to Klose and Merx (2010). But the addressing of latencies renders them as manifest with the result that further communication is unavoidable connoted by them. While prejudices are presented as diversity it becomes unavoidable not to ratify them.

The inclusion of redefined un-objective discriminations in decision processes increases this fact. The discriminations earlier marked as un-objective 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 constitutes a further problems. Firstly diversity increases the amount of alternatives stressing decision processes. Secondly participatory procedures tend to consensus-building needing pressure-free situations. However in situations short in time the information overload by alternatives and the consensus-imperative is not to master. 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 to 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 dealings with paradoxes are to unfold them. The opaque contradictory relations will not be dissolved but 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 pertained. In regard of 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 their results for the organizational structure. This builds up to an order of problem ranges making possible to distinguish thematically specific problems, conflicts and urgencies.

The factual reference by topics, the social reference by groups of employees, and the 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

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

⁸ From a business perspective there is criticized anyway, that there is no causal prove for the higher efficiency of heterogenic teams caused by diversity management, because beside diversity there are many other facts responsible for the success of labor division (Vedder 2005).

evaluated in the same way for their efficiency. This offers to reforms – in the sense of change intended by a plan – the possibility to impose the own premises like diversity on the ongoing evolutionary change.

EVOLUTION AND REFORM

A further impact on the organizational structure follows from the implementation of the diversity management aiming at the productive use of diversity. Addressing un-objective discrimination the ODT helps to indicate needs and measures for the implementation of the diversity management. In this way the ODT aims at an innovation of a company's organizational structure targeting primarily on formatting the relations of employees and secondarily on the relations to suppliers and customers. Therefore it has to 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. But this distinction has to 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 only sense 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 the diversity management is successfully implemented into the organizational structure the ODT can 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 as well as the self-description of the employees and in the end the organization's identity will be transformed by the reform of existing routines. What is more the diversity management cannot be realized by a resolution. Like every new structural element it has to connect to the existing structure, make sense for the employees, and prove to be stable in decision processes as well as reliable lastingly. 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 the diversity management can be understood 1) as an irritating occasion for variations which 2) urge to selections by decisions and 3) has to be stabilized in regard to the relevant environment (see John 2005). Left to its own devices it would be unlikely that the diversity management would occur on the positive sides of the evolutionary functions. But only on the positive side it can be recognized as a possible variation. Only there it is decided as a valid structural element and its impact on the organizational environment is at least tolerated. But this is exactly promised by the diversity management called a "social innovation".

This promise can only be redeemed by a planning initiative of the company's organization initiated by the management. Planning tends to work contrary to the chance of socio-cultural evolution. The realization 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 only defined, and possibilities for coordinating the relations to the environment can only be identified with the means of planning. This enables a structural drift⁹ within the evolutionary change.

The management has to get on an entrepreneurial attitude and make an effort for the variety of the structure of the organization. This means that irritations brought in from the outside like the demand or recommendation for a diversity management have to be acknowledged as opportunities for structural change. The management has to prove itself as being innovative while it initiates a planned development by the means of the ODT. In this way the management obtains future decision options at least in regard to the employees and their competences as well as in regard to customers and suppliers, and also in regard to

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

factual alternatives (Drucker 1986). The coincidence of structural variations – occurring anyway by the environmental complexity and manifold expectations – is countered by the means of innovation. Sufficiently relevant irritations urge to decisions in any way. Therefore the structure changes even if a variation is dismissed as an alternative and the existing element are confirmed. In a structural sense innovation is unavoidable in organizations (Lieckweg and Wehrsig 2001). However in the case of the diversity management it is important that this irritation of the company's organizational structure proves to have good reasons. Only such reasons can cause a search for internal starting points to formulate a problem with the topic of diversity. Ostendorp's research (2009) showed of course 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. There will be than an effort for a plan as a consistent chain of decisions about resources and a time frame.

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 involved first of all. Existing structures have to be evaluated whether they can adopt the requirements presented by the diversity management or there is for example a need for new appointments which eventually add to or replace the existing ones. This raises at least questions about the range of the implementation: Is it limited to the value-adding departments or should it be extended to the management? Eventually the transformative capacity of the implementation of the diversity management can change the meaning of 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 potentials for conflicts from an organizational starting point makes it possible to estimate whether the innovative effort for the reform is altogether justified or not.

It is important to ensure the success of the change as soon as the parameters can be identified and outlined for planning. The diversity management can count for a social innovation not before it is implemented and causes manifold consequences within the organizational structure. Only than it can be evaluated as established and ensured. At this point the management has to change its mode from urging variety to retaining redundancy. Now it is about ensuring the structural sustainability of the new element. The management's task is maintenance of the structure than. At this point the order of problem ranges and the need of resources have to be determined as well. Here planning can make use of structural anchors according to reform indicators (Coburn 2003).¹⁰ These indicators are *spread* of implementation, practical *depth* in terms of wide-ranging consequences, *sustainability* as the proved resistance of the new element over time, and *shift in reform ownership* as the initiative shift from the first protagonists to other and more persons. 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, the customers, and suppliers – are embedded into the important practices of the company's organization. It should be avoided to follow mere opportunistic the aims. Rather the aims should be implemented as an important factor for actions and decisions. These practices informed by diversity should endure against resistance. Not 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 confessions. It is essential that the reform makes sense to specific contexts of the several 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 on the individual purposes. These are not communicable in a way that the organization could intervene though. Thus, there is only

¹⁰ This approach was introduced in the context of school reforms. However it stands 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.

the way for motivation left. The other indicators are precarious as well, because they depend on the engagement of the employees. However the engagement needs reasons for supporting the reform's matter in trustful processes of acknowledgement ensuring affliction.

CONCLUSION: LEARNING BY CONTRADICTIONS

The aim of the diversity management is to change the cooperation within the organization in a way that the existing diversity does rather appear as an occasion for more engagement and contentment than as a barrier. How can the above mentioned implementation indicators depth, spread, sustainability and shift in reform ownership come into effect in a way, that the diversity management initiated by the ODT becomes a sustainable element of the organizational structure?

Reforms tend to paradox or only partly satisfying results. Their failure is not uncommon, what is recognized rather from the out- than the inside (Brunsson 2005, 2006). Threads caused by reforms like the implementation of the diversity management are the not-intended 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. The aim to increase company solidarity by considering diversity rises indeed the question about the limits of inclusion. Which boundaries are eliminated between whom? It is unavoidable that they are establish 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 it were in a zero-mode. As a self-fulfilling purpose it lose its anchor within the organizational structure. Clearing up latencies in forms of prejudices as un-objective discriminations creates an empty position. The manifest declaration of diversity as an opportunity does not fill up this empty position though. Instead new latencies originate serving as un-objective discriminations.

Such contradictions and barriers have to be identified by a feedback system which seriously takes the possibility of failure. This marks a further strength of the ODT besides addressing diversity and identifying diverse organizational structure. 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 rather to the organization than to persons. Thus it enables a fundamental restructuring of the preference system.¹¹ In this way the implementation can react fast and exactly.

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

But the complexity and inherent uncertainty easily results in the belief in external reasons. They are considered as internal reasons so that the implementation is realized intuitively only. In this case the success depends rather on the effectiveness of the mechanisms of hope (Brunsson 2006) which help to realize the reform as an illusion while keeping away the reform cores from practice and reflection and forgetting recognizable failures. In the end hardly anything does change. However the use of the ODT can counteract against the mere intuitive implementation of the diversity management into the company's organization. It can do so, because it provides rational reasons by helping to identify structural parameters and impact points as well as to determine the necessary resources.

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

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