Managing Diversity at German Universities: Definition, Discussion and Implementation.

Ida-seminar: Diversity Management compared internationally, 28th and 29th of May 2019 (Bonn)
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Gliederung

I. Diversity & Diversity Management

II. Factors Driving the Implementation of Diversity Management at German HEIs

III. Implementation of DiM
My Ph.D.- Project

Title: „More than Window-Dressing? Diversity Management at German Universities.“ (Working Title)

➢ Case studies (three German universities, contrasting cases)

➢ Interviews with vice presidents for DiM, equal opportunity officers & dekans of two faculties, document analysis

➢ Research questions: - Why did DiM become an issue for universities in Germany?
   - How do universities implement DiM (What are the conceptional variations and how is the concept implemented into the structures of the university?)
   - How is DiM linked with other equal-opportunity concepts, in particular Gender(mainstreaming)?
FOR A FAIR SELECTION EVERYBODY HAS TO TAKE THE SAME EXAM: PLEASE CLIMB THAT TREE
Defining Diversity

Diversity = Difference, heterogenity or „Vielfalt“ (dt. Übers.) of staff members, members of an organization regarding their lifestyles their forms of work or different aspects of their identity.

Not only the existence of differences is relevant, but also their perception and social construction.

Difference = inequality! Diversity as a social phenomenon of producing differences which mirror relationships of power and legitimation (e.g. civil rights movement).
Two variants of understanding diversity

1. Diversity as differences
   - Puts emphasis on differences between individuals
   - Risk of group-stereotyping

2. Diversity as differences & similarities
   - Puts emphasis on each individual’s multiple group-membership (intra- & intercategorial view)
   - Less susceptible for stereotyping

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Four Layers of Diversity (Gardenswartz and Rowe 2003)

- Gender
- Internationality
- Migration Background
- Disability
Diversity Management

➢ Concept aims at increasing personnel diversity & creating an environment free from discrimination.

➢ „Roof or umbrella-concept“: includes all policies that aim at a strategic & positive use of diversity in terms of a considerate and appreciative way of handling differences and similarities within a diverse staff/student body.

➢ Links already existing policies into an integrated framework.
Diversity Management

➢ **Diversity strategies** are in itself structural and conceptional diverse (Thomas & Ely 1996).

➢ To be effective, DiM needs to include *organisational learning & change* (Dass & Parker 2001; Smith 2015). Therefore it is (also) understood as a management task!

➢ **Alternative terms**: Managing Diversity, Diversity Mainstreaming, Diversity Policies, or the German terms Vielfalts- or Diversitätsmanagement

➢ Deficit-oriented → Resource oriented perspective

➢ **Ressource-oriented & antidiscrimination-oriented** approaches co-exist (Blome et al. 2013).

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Factors driving the implementation of DiM in German HEIs

1. Anti discrimination laws
2. Current labour shortages
3. Ethnic diversity on the labor market
4. Demographic change
5. Civil society influences
6. Influence of political Initiatives

In reference to Vedder (2009)
Interest in Diversity Management

- Two universities sign 'Charta der Vielfalt'
- Six universities implement DiM
- 96 HEI have signed Charta der Vielfalt, 36 of them are audited

2007 | 2010 | 2019

See also: Buß 2016
Political Initiatives

➢ Rector’s Conference: „Eine Hochschule für Alle“ (2009) and the ongoing nexus-programme

➢ The Diversity Audit (Stifterverband & CHE) since 2010

➢ In the context of the German Initiative of Excellence, the development of innovative equality concepts was encouraged.

➢ In Schleswig-Holstein & NRW legal provisions for DiM
Demographic Change
First-year student rate

Quelle: www.statista.com

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Implementation of DiM

➢ The strategic implementation of DiM varies between punctual & isolated individual measures and an integrated and holistic process of organizational change.

➢ Institutionalization of DiM into the structures of HEIs is diverse:
  - linked to the gender equality office: e.g. Univ. of Frankfurt, FU Berlin
  - prorectorate’s with assigned experts: e.g. UDE Duisburg-Essen, Univ. Bremen, FU Berlin, CAU Kiel
  - DiM departments and staff units: e.g. RWTH Aachen, TU Munich, Univ. Rostock, TU Dresden
Diverse linkages between Gender and Diversity

➢ Gender Equality is provided for by law since the 1990s with established structures.

➢ For the linkage of diversity and gender, there is no „best solution“ (Krell 2009: S. 149).

➢ Three options:

1. Gender & Diversity
2. Diversity under the roof of Gender
3. Gender under the roof of Diversity
Linkage of Gender & Diversity - Examples

„The is a very active discussion about the question whether we should speak about Gender & Diversity or is diversity the umbrella-term and gender an aspect of it? Are we already at the point that we can define it this way or should we continue to treat both subjects separately or only as linked with each other?“

Pro-rector, University A

„First of all, diversity includes everything that was previously gender equality.“

Vice-President, University B
Thank you for your attention!
Literatur


