Gender, Work & Organization
Gender, Work and Organization Vol. 24 No. 5 September 2017
doi:10.1111/gwao.12159

Gender, Dis-/ability and Diversity Management: Unequal Dynamics of Inclusion?

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Although the body of diversity research has been growing steadily over recent decades, the impact of diversity management on the inclusion of historically disadvantaged groups is still in question. By jointly examining how gender and dis-/ability are addressed, shaped and coconstituted by practices labelled as diversity management, this study aims to paint a finer-grained picture of the inclusionary potential of the 'diversity turn'. It offers a comparative analysis of two 'diversity dimensions' that are assumed to be opposing in terms of social desirability or economic exploitability. It thereby provides insight into the inclusionary and exclusionary dynamics of diversity management. Based on interviews in for-profit and non-profit organizations in Austria and Germany, the study reveals persistent, unequal dynamics of inclusion and exclusion: while the inclusion of supposedly non-disabled women and men with 'female-associated living conditions' revolves around a mostly undisputed gender-equality norm, the inclusion of disabled people depends on specific conditions and is not taken for granted.

Keywords: diversity management, disability, gender, exclusion, inclusion

Introduction

Since the rise of diversity management in US-based corporations in the mid 1980s (Dobbin, 2009) and its subsequent 'global expansion' (Litvin, 2006, p. 76), the steady growth of the 'diversity phenomenon' has been accompanied by increasingly fine-grained diversity research (Ahonen and Tienari, 2009; Ragins and Gonzalez, 2003; Zanoni *et al.*, 2010). However, despite these research efforts, the actual effects of diversity management and, in particular, its inclusionary potential[1] for historically disadvantaged groups, represent a highly contentious issue. The scepticism is multifaceted: simplistic diversity rhetoric would lead to the (re-)essentialization and even naturalization of — socially constructed — differences (e.g. Litvin, 1997; Zanoni and Janssens, 2004); because of its link to criteria of profitability, only specific target groups such as white women or well-educated key employees with a migration background would benefit from the 'diversity turn' (e.g. Ahmed, 2012; Woodhams and Danieli, 2000); and the dominance of an affirmative diversity rhetoric would draw attention away from questions of inequality (e.g. Michaels, 2006) and still-persistent racism (e.g. Ahmed, 2012; Bell and Hartmann, 2007). Furthermore, the actual implementation of diversity-related practices seems to 'rely on "best practices" lists rather than on research findings' (Dobbin, 2009, pp. 232–33), which increases the suspicion that diversity management is about the 'showcase' (Prasad and Mills, 1997, p. 8) rather than real changes. In Austria and Germany,[2] which represent the context of this study, diversity research is often more concerned with *why* diversity management is becoming increasingly established, rather than with *how* this process unfolds, and what the actual consequences of these practices are (Krell and Sieben, 2011).

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Clearly, there is a need for more research that engages empirically with the ramifications of the ubiquitous 'diversity turn' (Zanoni *et al.*, 2010). Against this background, this article aims to investigate the inclusionary potential of non-/discursive practices labelled as diversity-relevant. In doing so, it follows Tomlinson and Schwabenland's (2010) advice to carefully examine the multiple challenges of diversity work in actual organizational settings. The specific research questions are:

1. How do organizations that describe themselves as active in the area of diversity management address and thereby coconstitute gender and dis-/ability?
2. What conclusions can be drawn for the de-/legitimization of inclusion in/exclusion from the organizations investigated and therefore for the inclusionary potential of diversity management in general?

With its comparative analysis of two 'diversity dimensions', this study pursues a twofold approach. First, by simultaneously examining gender and dis-/ability, the inclusionary potential of diversity-related practices should become particularly obvious. This is because gender receives the most attention in terms of a 'diversity marker' from actual practices of diversity management (e.g. Kalev *et al.*, 2006) as well as from diversity research (Nkomo and Stewart, 2006; Lambert and Bell, 2013). In contrast, the category of dis-/ability leads a shadowy existence within the 'diversity paradigm': 'gender is now accepted as a legitimate dimension in studies of organizational processes, power and practices […] Similar debates concerning disabled employees, nonetheless, remain conspicuous by their absence' (Foster and Wass, 2012, p. 710).

Studies that deal with dis-/ability as a cross-cutting issue of organizations (e.g. Foster and Fosh, 2010; Harlan and Robert, 1998; Mik-Meyer, 2015; Stone and Colella, 1996) or as a relevant 'diversity dimension' (e.g. Baumgärtner *et al.*, 2015; Thanem, 2008; Woodhams and Danieli, 2000; Zanoni, 2011) are scarce. This is mostly due to the widespread assumption in scientific and public discourse that disability is first and foremost caused by individually embodied deficits, instead of a complex interplay between individual, sociomaterial and organizational/societal factors (Hughes and Paterson, 1997; Oliver and Barnes, 2012). Disability seems to represent a quintessential negative: 'a lack of disability is treated as both the positive and the universal experience' (Morris, 1993, p. 67). By simultaneously analysing how gender and dis-/ability — two 'diversity markers' assumingly located at opposite ends of the poles of social desirability and economic exploitability — are addressed, shaped and thereby coconstituted by practices labelled as diversity management, I expect to gain particular insights into the inherent inclusionary/exclusionary dynamics of diversity management.

Second, by applying dis-/ability in terms of 'a productive category in theoretical interpretations of organizations' (Williams and Mavin, 2012, p. 160) and investigating 'how assumptions of non-disability (or ableism) infuse organizing processes' (*ibid*., p. 161), I aim to contribute to critical and self-reflexive diversity scholarship that pays more attention to its inherent dynamics of placing 'diversity dimensions' at the core (e.g. gender) and the periphery (e.g. dis-/ability) of its own research landscape.

Before presenting my comparative analysis, I specify the theoretical foundations by which I approach gender and dis-/ability and argue why conceptualizing diversity management in terms of a '*dispositif*' (Foucault, 1980) is helpful in order to grasp the complexity of the field of study. The following section provides insight into the data collection and analysis of interviews with key actors in organizations active in the area of diversity management. I then present an empirically grounded analysis of how gender and dis-/ability are addressed, shaped and coconstituted by diversity-related practices. Finally, I discuss my findings and potential avenues for future research.

Theoretical framework

As a first step, I unfold the particular understanding of gender and dis-/ability that served as a reference point for analysing the empirical data and, thus, for evaluating the inclusionary potential of diversity-related practices in general. As a second step, I conceptualize diversity management in terms of a dispositive, which is part of Foucauldian theory formation and helps to put this study into a broader societal context.

Gender and dis-/ability: similarities and differences

Following Zanoni *et al.*'s (2010) programmatic outline of the central elements of critical diversity research, I approach both gender and dis-/ability from a non-essentialist, relational and context-sensitive perspective. The approach is non-essentialist because of the assumption that there is no naturally given link between being labelled as a 'woman', a 'man' or a 'disabled person'[3] and the associated biological and/or physical conditions. Rather, I understand gender and dis-/ability as effective categories that emerge from distinctions based on contingently relevant criteria (West and Fenstermaker, 1995; West and Zimmerman, 2009). These distinctions result 'neither [from] a single act nor a causal process initiated by a subject' (Butler, 1993, p. 10). Instead, they are caused by mostly taken-for-granted and repetitive 'micro-practices' of distinguishing in everyday life, which refer to and potentially affirm collective norms of gender- and (dis-)ability-adequate appearance and behaviour (see also Turner, 2001). For Butler, this means that we are dealing with a '*naturalized* effect' (*ibid*., emphasis in original) of reiterated distinctions, which are actually socially constructed and only appear as essential because they have become 'objectified' (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 35) over time.

With respect to gender and dis-/ability, a relational perspective shows that both categories are based on a more or less binary mode of distinction, by which you can either be labelled as 'female' or 'male' and as 'disabled' or 'non-disabled' (Butler, 1990, p. 6; Williams and Mavin, 2012). This means that the two categories are characterized by mutually exclusive classifications, which at the same time depend on each other inextricably and can be imagined as 'communicating vessels' (see also Lamont and Molnár, 2002). However, this relational foundation of gender and dis-/ability does not imply that the 'range of [subject] positions in each category' (Verloo, 2006, p. 216), their attributed qualities and institutionalized relevance, are equally distributed. A subject position can be defined as:

> [A] linguistic category, a placeholder, a structure in formation. Individuals come to occupy the site of the subject […] and they enjoy intelligibility only to the extent that they are first established in language. (Butler, 1997, pp. 10–11)

Such 'sites of the subject' include job titles (e.g. doctor, manager, teacher) as well as all possible personal designations (e.g. woman, man, uncle, child) that assign a commonly accepted subject status. Adopting a subject position is not the result of individual and autonomous agency but rather of which positions are 'made available within one's own and others' discursive practices' (Davies and Harré, 1990, p. 46). With respect to the specific research focus, the available subject positions operate under a binary logic that establishes a hierarchical relationality, wherein being labelled as a 'woman' or as a 'disabled person' is in multiple ways inferior to labelling as a 'man' or a 'non-disabled person'. This is because male and able-bodied subject positions appear to be seamlessly congruent with ideas of bodylessness, invulnerability and autonomy — all central components in order to take up an 'unmarked normative locale' (Puwar, 2004, p. 57), whose invisibility 'is clearly a place of power' (*ibid*.). It indicates a sign of proper fit between one's own needs and the environmental conditions:

> Life and work have been structured as though no one […] who works outside the home for wages, has to breast-feed a baby or look after a sick child […] Much of the world is also structured as though everyone can walk, hear and see well. (Wendell, 2010, p. 341)

It is the idea of an abstract 'disembodied worker' (Acker, 1990, p. 149) that serves as a benchmark for working arrangements and organizational inclusion/exclusion policies in general (see also Foster and Wass, 2012). However, this standardization only becomes visible when a mismatch between the supposedly neutral management practices and the 'deviant' organizational members (e.g. women with caring responsibilities or women and men with impairments, who need workplace adjustments) is problematized (Foster and Williams, 2014).

As argued earlier, subject positions related to gender and dis-/ability are both constituted by a hierarchical relationality. At the same time, the specific distinctions between subject positions conforming to (e.g. male, non-disabled) and deviating from (e.g. female, disabled) the norm(ality)

show decisive differences (see also Lamont and Molnár, 2002). In the specific context of this study (Austria and Germany), we see that although women take the position of 'the other' they are still — as long as their biologically assigned sex, gender identity, sexual practices and desires conform to heteronormativity (Butler, 1990) — placed in the area of normality. This is mainly because the subject positions of 'women' and 'men' make up two numerically equal groups of the population, which simultaneously confirms and reproduces 'the natural order' of two sexes (Schildmann, 2003, 2007; Waldschmidt, 2010). In contrast, the label of 'disabled people' usually refers to a more or less substantial minority, which ranges between 10 and 20 per cent in the study context (BMAS, 2013). This results in a twofold deviant status of subject positions marked as 'disabled': not only are they demographically located on the border to/outside of normality, but they are also ascribed an 'inherent inferiority' (Garland-Thomson, 2005, p. 1557) that is commonly framed as 'a pathology to cure, or an undesirable trait to eliminate' (*ibid*.).

This unequal positioning in the area of normality is reflected in and perpetuated by the fact that gender- and disability-related issues are addressed differently in public discourse in general and in certain policy fields in particular. Achieving gender equality represents an explicit and widely undisputed policy goal in the national as well as the EU context (Booth and Bennett, 2002; Ferree, 2008). This is expressed in corresponding legislation[4] and in institutionalized forms of women-specific representation bodies, which deal with questions of enhancing gender equality (Bendl 2004; Ferree, 2008). In contrast, the issue of disability has been dominated by a 'medical-therapeutic and special needs-pedagogical paradigm' (Waldschmidt, 2005, p. 13; translation by this author), where disability is mostly associated with individually embodied, definite impairments that need to be diminished or compensated for by rehabilitation and/or labour-market integration programmes. As a consequence, for decades the issue of disability has been considered first and foremost a part of traditional social policy instead of a topic related to questions of equality and citizenship (Maschke, 2004). Moreover, in both countries the private sector does not meet the legally binding quota of employing at least 5 per cent disabled employees when companies have more than 20 (in Germany) or 25 (in Austria) workplaces (ADS, 2013; AK, 2015). They prefer to engage with compensation payment because of the prevalent assumption that being impaired is inextricably bound up with performance deficits and also the latent fear of over-excessive needs for workplace adjustments (ADS, 2013; Banafsche, 2012). In contrast, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) focuses on societies as a whole in their enabling and disabling function for the participation of disabled people. It provides a 'new disability rights paradigm' (Harpur, 2012, p. 2) for the political mainstream discourse, which follows the shift 'from biomedical agendas to discourses about politics and citizenship' (Hughes and Paterson, 1997, p. 325) that dis-/ability scholars and activists have demanded for decades. Both Austria and Germany have signed the convention and are thus currently in the process of aligning their national law and policy programmes according to this different understanding of disability.

One aim of this study is to understand whether this programmatic turn is compatible with and reflected in management practices labelled as diversity-relevant. Before engaging with the empirical analysis of diversity management and its coconstitution of gender and dis-/ability in organizations, I need to clarify the theoretical framing of diversity management.

Diversity management: a dispositive analytical perspective

In accordance with the outlined explanations of how gender and dis-/ability are socially produced and assigned meaning, I conceptualize diversity management from a poststructuralist perspective. In the context of organization studies — but also in various other fields of research — the theoretical work of Michel Foucault has gained particular attention over the last two decades (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2011; Raffnsøe *et al.*, 2014; for a critical discussion, see Alvesson and Kärreman 2011; Newton, 1998). This is because his work is driven by a 'critical ontology' (Bührmann and Schneider, 2008, p. 36; translation by this author) that fundamentally questions any form of 'self-evident' certainties or 'naturally given' conditions. Rather, the conditions (e.g. gender or dis-/ability)

are conceptualized as specific forms of knowledge that have become particularly uncontested in a certain context and are thus inextricably bound up with power relations (Foucault, 1972; see also Zanoni and Janssens, 2007). With respect to the phenomenon of diversity (management), this means that there 'is no diversity-in-general; the conditions under which diversity becomes an object to be known (and critiqued) is a result of particular and specific circumstances of knowledge production' (Ahonen *et al.*, 2014, p. 269).

One of such circumstances in which the production of diversity knowledge takes place is an organization that deals explicitly with diversity management. An organization represents a setting 'open to the multiplicity of ideas, vocabularies and practices in the contemporary world' (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, p. 637), in which various actors are embedded in and thereby shape organizational 'power–knowledge relationships' (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2011, p. 1254). With respect to diversity management, the question of how diversity is defined or by which practices it is addressed, and what actual effects these practices have, is neither an a priori given nor simply controlled by a linear top-down approach (Foldy 2002; see e.g. Kamp and Hagedorn-Rasmussen, 2004; Tomlinson and Schwabenland, 2010; Zanoni and Janssens, 2007). In order to grasp the complexity of the 'diversity phenomenon' I build on the term of the *dispositif*, which is part of the Foucauldian theoretical repertoire and can be understood as a historically specific, relational constellation of knowledge, discourses, practices, subjects and objects (Ahonen and Tienari, 2009; Bührmann and Schneider, 2008; Raffnsøe *et al.*, 2014). According to Foucault, this formation of different but mutually connected elements 'has as its major function at a given historical moment, that of responding to an *urgent need*' (Foucault, 1980, p. 195; emphasis in original). With regard to the diversity-management dispositive, the urgent need to which it responds is multifaceted: an ageing and shrinking workforce that is perceived as increasingly diversified (e.g. because of the participation of women and/or migrants in the labour market); globalized competition for the 'best talents'; and decreasing legitimacy of discrimination based on so-called horizontal inequalities (Lederle, 2008; Bruchhagen *et al.*, 2010).

In the course of dealing with this urgent need, the dispositive develops a 'heterogeneous ensemble' (Foucault, 1980, p. 194) of elements. The effects of this ensemble are not determined a priori, and are released through a 'system of relations' (*ibid*.). Against this background, Raffnsøe *et al.* (2014) describe the dispositive as 'of *relational* nature, rather than of a substantial kind' (p. 7; emphasis in original). The interplay of discursive (e.g. the rhetoric of diversity as a potential rather than a burden) and non-discursive practices (e.g. the statistical documentation of gender distribution) invokes subjectivities (e.g. sensitivity towards diversity issues as a requirement for 'good management') and constitutes subject positions (e.g. diversity-relevant target groups), as well as induces sociomaterial sedimentations (e.g. implementing a barrier-free infrastructure). Together, these processes form a 'complex, multidimensional, and overdetermined field' (*ibid*. p. 14). The particular feature of a dispositive analytical perspective is that it gives primacy to a 'messy' idea of reality. Actors — more or less consciously — pursue an agenda in the context of a constraining but non-determining material structure, and thereby encounter relatively stable, but nonetheless changeable, non-/discursive practices. This 'fundamental openness' of the dispositive is based on the assumption that it 'is not governed by a single guiding principle that would regulate the way it functions; there are various kinds of relationships within the practices in a *dispositif*, including tense ones' (Ahonen and Tienari, 2009, p. 660; emphasis in original).

In light of the various criticisms of the 'diversity turn' and the persistent questioning of its actual impact on the inclusion of different, historically disadvantaged groups, the dispositive seems to be an appropriate concept to paint a differentiated picture of the non-/discursive practices marked as diversity-relevant and their potentially ambiguous consequences. In particular, I focus on which gender- and dis-/ability-related *subject positions* are enabled by the diversity-management dispositive, how their potential *exclusion* from organizations is legitimized and which non-/discursive *practices* are identified in order to address these issues. By simultaneously analysing gender and dis-/ability from a poststructuralist perspective and thus approaching them in terms of context-specific knowledge, I strive to counteract ableist notions that frame disability in terms of an essentialized 'diminished state of being human' (Campbell, 2001, p. 44).

Data collection and analysis

The selection of organizations that describe themselves as active in the area of diversity management was based on the idea of 'theoretical sampling' by Glaser and Strauss (1967). In this context, the data collection is driven primarily by the research interest and a complementary literature review instead of questions of representativeness. With respect to the specific research focus of this study, I based my selection on three criteria. First, considering the confrontational academic debate about diversity management between the poles of the social justice and business cases (e.g. Noon 2007), the sample should include non-profit as well as for-profit organizations. Second, in order to analyse comparatively how gender and dis-/ability are coconstituted by non-/discursive practices labelled as diversity management, I selected organizations that explicitly address these two categories. Because disability plays such a marginalized role within the 'diversity paradigm', the search for such organizations was difficult and limited the pool of potential cases. Third, the organizations should have some form of institutionalized diversity activities (e.g. diversity staff position, diversity network across departments), which could be read as a sign for the 'seriousness' and potential sustainability of diversity-related endeavours (Dobbin *et al*., 2011; Kalev *et al.*, 2006).

Based on these selection criteria, I examined five Austrian and German organizations between July 2011 and May 2012 in the context of a larger research project (Dobusch, 2015). Two of them are for-profit organizations: a large bank (Bancorp) and a social enterprise (Educorp) that provides training courses for deaf people and people with hearing impairments. The other three cases are public organizations: a university (Unimin) and two city administrations (Citymin A and B). Altogether, I conducted 26 interviews with organizational members at various levels of organizational hierarchy, work areas and involvement with explicit diversity-related non-/discursive practices (e.g. diversity managers, gender-equality officers, representatives for disabled people). Most of the semi-structured interviews took place at the interviewee's workplace, lasted about one hour, and were digitally recorded and fully transcribed. The interview guideline included questions regarding the establishment of diversity management and its underlying ideas of diversity, the actual activities and measures perceived as diversity-, gender- and/or disability-related, as well as the un-/desired characteristics of current or future colleagues. By asking these relatively broad questions I aimed to get as wide a range as possible of what was 'sayable' and subsequently 'doable' within the diversity-management dispositive. This open interviewing technique in turn allowed me to investigate inclusionary and exclusionary consequences for gender- and dis-/ability-related subject positions.

I do not interpret these interviews as passive reflections of organizational reality (Jäger, 2004). Rather — in accordance with my theoretical approach, outlined earlier — I assume that the interviewees' statements are part of the organizational diversity discourses, which make up one element of the overall diversity-management dispositive. More specifically, the statements can be understood as the interactive product of the encounter between two conversation partners, who are both attempting to converse in a particularly relatable and socially desirable way: the interviewer, who tries to ask questions that can relate with the empirical knowledge of the interviewee and thus stimulate vivid narratives; and vice versa the interviewee, who very likely hopes to present his/her activities and the organization in the best light, trying to refer to a discursive repertoire that is comprehensible for 'outsiders' (see also Alvesson, 2003). Against the background of my research focus, this does not need to be regarded as a disadvantage but rather as an opportunity to gain insight into the limits of what is 'sayable' and 'doable' from the perspective of analysing the limits of the inclusionary potential within the diversity-management dispositive.

The data analysis followed an inductive, multistage coding process as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Charmaz (2010). I identified interview sequences that were related to my research question and inductively labelled these units with codes indicated by the empirical data of each interview. In the next step, I compared and redefined these codes across the interviews in order to find regular, cross-organizational patterns of what is 'sayable' and accordingly 'doable'. Against the background of the dispositive analytical framework, my analysis was guided by the following questions: what are the relevant characteristics in order to be defined as a gender- and/or dis-/ability-related

subject position? By which forms of (potential) exclusion are these subject positions confronted and how do the interview partners de-/legitimize them? Which discursive and non-discursive practices are mentioned in order to address gender- and dis-/ability related issues, and are these practices consistent with the assumed reasons for (potential) exclusion?

Analysis

In this section, I present the cross-organizational similarities and differences of how the interview partners describe gender- and dis-/ability-related subject positions, how they legitimize their potential inclusion/exclusion, and which non-/discursive practices they identify to address these issues. In the final step, I question these different levels of analysis regarding their consequences for the recognition or denial of claims of inclusion. Table 1 provides an overview of the dominant features of the analysed elements of the diversity-management dispositive.

Constitution of subject positions: between one- and multidimensionality

The subject positions related to both gender and dis−/ability are characterized by the assumption of a 'naturally' given, 'prediscursive' dichotomy. This is shown, for instance, in a statement by the HR Manager at Bancorp, who describes disabled organizational members as having special needs as well as the potential for developing particular competences:

> We have learnt a lot about these people, because we have a lot of them, who have acquired their — an awful word — disability here […] and we have learnt a lot from these people about their needs but also about the special competences they develop. (HR Manager, Bancorp)

Table 1: Coconstitution of gender and dis-/ability within the diversity-management dispositive

Elements of the dispositive	Gender	Dis-/ability
Subject positions	Assumption of 'naturally given' dichotomy *Multidimensionality:* – Diversity-relevance because of social conditions (e.g. lack of access to central resources) – Potential openness towards other 'diversity markers'	Assumption of 'naturally given' dichotomy *One-dimensionality:* – Diversity-relevance because of an individually embodied, negative deviance – Non-disability as an 'invisible' but omnipresent, positive standard
Reasons for exclusion	– *Result of social conditions:* unequal distribution of un-/paid labour and segregation of labour market – *Result of individual attitudes and behaviour:* negative attitudes towards gender equality and lack of adequate attitudes/behaviour of women	*Result of individual attitudes and behaviour:* non-/intended, discriminatory behaviour of non-disabled people; but also deficient behaviour/attitudes of disabled people
Mentioned practices aimed at inclusion	– Practices at the individual as well as organizational level – Gender-related activities as cross-cutting issues for the whole organization	Focus on practices at the individual level: dealing with 'special needs' disabled people
Legitimacy of claims to inclusion	Implicit gender-equality norm legitimizes claims to inclusion by women and men associated with 'female living conditions'	Claims to inclusion by disabled people depend on conditions and are open to negotiation

By using the personal pronoun 'we' the HR Manager creates a subject position that represents a quasi self-evident counterpart to that of the disabled organizational members. This 'we' seems to refer to those employees who are assumed to be free of any impairment and to have gained 'disability knowledge' by dealing with their disabled colleagues over the years. Further, the interview partner evaluates talking about 'acquiring a disability' as something 'awful', and thereby associates the topic of disability with a tragic stroke of fate; its (also) socially rooted causes remain concealed. In contrast, being labelled as 'female' or 'male' is not characterized by such an asymmetric relationship of subject positions: taking on the position as a 'woman' or as a 'man' is — similar to dis−/ability-related subject positions — mutually exclusive but at the same time indisputably anchored in the area of normality. This becomes manifest in statements that deny the relevance of gender-based categorization at the workplace. For instance, the Representative for Disabled People at Bancorp emphasizes that she counsels female as well as male colleagues 'equally' and that she does 'not make any difference' between these two groups. Similarly, the Managing Director at Educorp points out that she 'honestly' believes that gender is irrelevant for the application procedures at her company, and illustrates this with the fact that she has filled the 'typically female role' of the management assistant with a male candidate. One effect of interpreting gender as completely insignificant is that it simultaneously reinforces the 'undeniable facticity' of the binary gender order. Consequently, this means that the space for possible subject positions is fundamentally limited and even divided: organizational members and/or members of diversity target groups can be classified as 'women' or 'men'; they are perceived as either 'disabled' or 'non-disabled'. Subject positions that are located between the poles of unambiguous femaleness and maleness, and those of clear ability or disability, remain unsaid. However, the specific *qualities* of the gender- and dis-/ability-related subject positions differ considerably.

This is because the gender-related subject positions that are provided within the diversity-management dispositive are characterized by multidimensionality. Women are not solely invoked as somehow inferior to/deviant from men, nor do they represent the only target group of diversity management. In fact, male subject positions are also marked as diversity-relevant as long as they are (1) perceived as under-represented in a specific context, (2) assumingly confronted with discrimination or (3) seen as experiencing circumstances associated with 'female living conditions'. With respect to the topic of under-representation the Diversity Manager at Unimin, for instance, refers to the annual 'Boys' Day' that is organized at the university in order to attract more male students for 'typically female study programmes' such as social work or training for elementary teachers. She argues that it was important to 'take measures in those areas, where men are severely under-represented'. Likewise, the Department Head for Gender Equality at Citymin B states that a core component of her work includes the compensation of dis-/advantages 'often for women, sometimes for men'. She explains that male adolescents and adults use the city library to a lesser extent than their female counterparts, and that they have adapted the library's offer accordingly. The statements indicate an implicit gender-equality norm, which is based on the assumption that women and men should have equal access to all areas of society. If this norm is actually or potentially under threat, male subject positions become intelligible diversity target groups. Moreover, male subject positions are marked as diversity-relevant when they seem to face any form of discrimination. This is illustrated by the statement of the Department Head for Diversity and Equal Opportunities at Citymin B, who points out that men 'with a so-called socially disadvantaged background' can be badly affected by discrimination. Further, she mentions the phenomena of 'forced marriages' and of violence in 'gay partnerships', which can also result in difficult life situations for men. In this context, she notes in a self-critical way that she and her team 'are lacking a bit of sensitization regarding men' and that they therefore 'have a great deal to learn'. Also, the Head of the Diversity Network at Unimin describes how both female and male students can be affected by 'caring responsibilities' regarding their study progress: 'this means that nowadays there are sometimes young men who take care of their children'.

By taking social conditions (e.g. discrimination, representativeness in a given context, responsibilities for reproductive work) into account when gender-related subject positions are marked as diversity-relevant, the effect is that supposedly natural, incorporated and essential qualities recede into the background. In contrast, the focus shifts to the (changeability of) gender relations,

which become identifiable as socially meaningful distinctions that affect access to central resources (e.g. recognition, services, time). Furthermore, gender-related subject positions show a potential openness towards other 'diversity markers': the interview partners describe 'women wearing headscarves', 'women with migration background' or 'girls with disabilities' as intelligible diversity target groups. Thereby, the 'master category' of gender is supplemented by other characteristics, which allows for capturing more complex living conditions and social inequalities. However, this complexity is often bought at the price of creating subject positions that combine multiple disadvantages, which accumulate in a deficient status.

In comparison to gender-related subject positions, those referring to dis-/ability are characterized by persistent one-dimensionality. In fact, the relationship between the two available positions — disabled and non-disabled organizational members — is fundamentally asymmetrical. For instance, a Member of the Work Council at Educorp explicitly distances the group of deaf people from those with physical impairments:

> [W]e deaf people are not disabled in this regard, we don't belong, as it were, to the group of the disabled, let's say the physically disabled or so. This means […] we deaf people have — this must not be forgotten — a different language and we also have a different culture, and language is culture, isn't it? […] [B]ut it is always said, or rather the hearing people say: 'okay, you are disabled'. (Member of the Work Council, Educorp)

The previous statement indicates that belonging to the subject position of 'disabled people' is avoided as far as possible. The interview partner describes how hearing people label deaf people as 'disabled', understanding this label as an undesired, externally imposed attribution. The self-determined description as 'disabled' only appears when an impairment — and this implies a legally recognized 'status of disability' — is the condition for doing one's job (e.g. representative for disabled people). While non-disabled people 'naturally' take up their space in the area of normality, disabled people are positioned at its periphery (e.g. people with physical impairments) or even outside (e.g. people with cognitive and/or psychosocial impairments). This becomes manifest in a statement by the Diversity Manager at Bancorp, who invokes the figure of the 'person with cognitive impairments' in contrast to the well-educated employee with a headscarf, who seems to depict a perfect fit with the organizational idea of desired diversity:

> She wears a headscarf and this does not mean that you are mentally disabled. On the contrary, she has a doctoral degree in engineering and is thus a totally qualified staff member. (Diversity Manager, Bancorp)

It is only those disability-related subject positions that relate to impairments that are either 'invisible' (e.g. official status as a 'severely disabled person' after cancer treatment) or supposedly totally meaningless that escape the 'fate' of representing a difference too far. In this context, the Department Head for Gender Equality at Unimin explains — from a critical perspective — that disabled people 'should appear as normal as possible' in order to succeed at a job interview and thus to be considered for inclusion into the organization:

> If this is the case, it does not matter if the person is sitting in a wheelchair or something like that. But if someone obviously shows that his or her behaviour is different because of a disability, it will become very difficult. (Department Head for Gender Equality, Unimin)

These quotations illustrate how people with cognitive impairments and/or socially irritating behaviour are explicitly denied a status as diversity-relevant. In contrast, subject positions classified as 'non-disabled' remain unmentioned. They constitute the implicit reference point by which disabled people are identified as deviant. Non-disabled people enjoy the 'privilege of invisibility': they paradoxically take up an unmarked subject position, which is simultaneously omnipresent. There is a similar tendency regarding gender-related subject positions, namely that women represent a prioritized and thus particularly visible diversity target group. However, as stated earlier, male subject positions are also explicitly labelled as diversity-relevant and thus gender becomes apparent as a mutually

constitutive relationship. This is not the case with respect to dis-/ability-related subject positions: disabled people are exclusively marked as deviant and thereby become 'hyper-visible', while non-disabled people fulfill the role of an implicit standard of expected abilities or socially adequate behaviour that remains invisible within the diversity-management dispositive. This is reflected in the fact that there is no semantic equivalent to female/male and women/men in everyday language. Labelling someone as a 'person without impairments' or as a 'non-disabled person' does not result in an intelligible subject position, rather s/he is considered the prototype of a human being as such that does not need any further specification. One consequence of this non-mentioning of subject positions that seem to conform to commonly accepted standards of physical, sensorial, cognitive and psychosocial abilities is that the social constitution of non-disability is disguised. Thus statements that deal with the interaction of individual (e.g. body height) and sociomaterial (e.g. infrastructure oriented towards average body height) factors, which first and foremost enable the positioning of non-disabled people within the area of normality, remain unsaid.

Explanations of exclusion and mentioned practices aimed at inclusion

The differences regarding the formations of subject positions (one- versus multidimensionality) are not reflected to the same extent in the explanations of the (potential) exclusion of gender and dis-/ability-related subject positions. In both cases various explanations and several practices for enhancing inclusion — or at least preventing exclusion — are mentioned across the investigated organizations.

With respect to gender and its assumed impact on questions of inclusion and exclusion, the interview partners emphasize its structural significance for access to resources, positions and rewards in their organizations as well as in society. For instance, a Staff Member of the Department for Integration at Citymin B points out that there is a noticeable gender wage gap within the city administration. She specifies that it is mostly 'female migrants, who are almost entirely ranked lower' in the salary classification compared to their male but also white female colleagues, and thus stresses the importance of gender and ethnicity/nationality for the particular quality of inclusion at the municipality. The Employee at the Diversity Management Department at Educorp even identifies a gender-based segregation of the entire labour market when revealing that 'societal non-equal pay' is reflected in the relatively low salaries at the company because it is located in a female-dominated industry. Apart from the gender wage gap, which the interview partners interpret as being caused by structural inequalities, they also refer to the unequal distribution of paid and unpaid labour. This is shown in the statement by the Department Head for Gender Equality at Unimin, who criticizes the fact that the 'main burden' of unpaid work is still carried by women, which obviously 'affects their career prospects'. Altogether, the statements indicate that the segregated inclusion of women in the world of work is understood as the result of social conditions. The interview partners interpret gender as a ubiquitously relevant order criterion that assigns different places to women and men on the vertical as well as horizontal axes of the labour market.

Additionally, the (potential) exclusion or segregated inclusion of gender-related subject positions is explained as the result of individual attitudes and behaviour. In this context, the interview partners describe male organizational members as having a negative attitude towards gender-equality issues and their female counterparts as lacking self-confidence and agency. For instance, the HR Manager at Bancorp notes that she tries to counteract 'this old-established attitude of [male] managers' who prefer men in the hiring process. Similarly, an Employee at the Gender Equality Department at Citymin A identifies a principal rejection of gender-equality work: 'it doesn't matter about what subject I speak, if I am right or wrong, whatever, it is always blocked […] and this normally happens in male circles'. The Diversity Manager at Bancorp also propagates the need for 'more awareness-raising' of male executives for gender equality but simultaneously points out that female organizational members should acquire more self-confidence and show more individual initiative: 'their self-marketing could be developed, and pushing one's own strengths into the foreground is definitely more difficult for women than for men'.

In summary, the explanation of gender-related exclusion and/or segregated inclusion follows a twofold logic: the interview partners identify possible causes at the micro and macro level, but do not mention the meso level — the organization — as relevant for gender-based disadvantages. This does not necessarily mean that the organization and its potentially exclusionary practices are totally ignored or negated. Rather, it might be the case that the interview partners perceive the risks of exclusion at the meso level as already solved (e.g. by providing adequate childcare) or as currently addressed. Because when talking about gender-related practices they quote the activity of establishing and disseminating knowledge, which includes the individual exchange of information (e.g. current job vacancies) but also public-relations work at the organizational and community level (e.g. promoting International Women's Day). Moreover, the interview partners refer to practices that aim at changing knowledge and/or institutionalized practices, which implies awareness-raising of individual organizational members as well as the establishment of gender competences in terms of a cross-cutting issue for the whole organization. Also, with regard to immediately inclusionary practices, organization-wide activities seem relevant, for instance, when the interview partners point to the regular statistical recording of the proportion of female executives. As we can see, despite — or perhaps because of — the fact that gender-related exclusion is mostly explained with reference to individual and societal conditions, the mentioned practices aimed at counteracting exclusion and promoting inclusion are often located at the organizational level.

With respect to disability and its assumed relevance for questions of inclusion and exclusion, the interview partners also identify several explanations and practices but these differ from the gender-related explanations and practices outlined earlier: they particularly focus on the individual level combined with a latent deficit perspective. First and foremost, the (potential) exclusion of disability-related subject positions is explained as the result of individual attitudes and behaviour. On the one hand, the subject positions of non-disabled people — the 'average' organizational members — are described as prejudiced, inexperienced, insecure, insensitive and sometimes purposefully discriminating, which can have the effect that disabled people are discriminated against (e.g. bullying by their colleagues) or completely excluded (e.g. more frequently affected by waves of layoffs). This is shown, for instance, in the statement by the Representative for Disabled People at Unimin, who points out that 'severely disabled persons' are often 'disadvantaged' in appointment processes compared to their non-impaired competitors. She explains this with the fact that candidates with 'obvious limitations' are assumed to be less productive in the work context, although this is not necessarily the case. The Department Head for Gender Equality at Unimin argues in a similar direction, by mentioning that most non-disabled organizational members lack 'everyday experience with disabled people' and thus react with feelings of 'insecurity' and 'inaccessability' when dealing with disabled colleagues or applicants. The Representative for Disabled People at Bancorp describes how disabled employees are even purposefully discriminated against by their superiors and that she sometimes observes a 'conscious ignorance' towards the topic of disability.

On the other hand, the subject positions of disabled organizational members are characterized by specific attitudes and behaviours (e.g. lack of self-confidence), which are identified as potential causes of self-exclusion. For instance, the Department Head for Fairness at Unimin emphasizes that it is important to support disabled students, because they often seem 'helpless' and would 'not dare' to stand up against discrimination or for their right to disadvantage compensation. She illustrates how the disabled students do not tell their teachers about 'any illness' in advance; 'only when they did not pass the exam' do they reveal their impairments and special needs. As indicated by the statement, the disabled students themselves are assigned a decisive role in the exposure to exclusion risks at the university. As a consequence, they are perceived as deficient with regard to their self-confidence as well as their organizational skills, and thus delayed study progress or the potential self-exclusion of disabled students is traced back to individual shortcomings.

This focus on the individual level is reflected to some extent in the practices that the interview partners identify as disability-related. With respect to the activity of establishing and disseminating knowledge, it is not about providing 'disability knowledge' for the whole organization but rather about individual counselling (e.g. between representatives for disabled people and disabled

organizational members). However, the interview partners also mention some practices on the organizational level; for instance, setting up a barrier-free infrastructure such as a wheelchair ramp, which is a long-term adjustment and not related to a particular individual. It becomes apparent that those practices that focus on the adaptation of the organization and not the individual exclusively target organizational members and/or diversity target groups (e.g. elderly people) with physical and/or sensorial impairments. People with cognitive and/or psychosocial impairments do not seem to represent intelligible subject positions that should be addressed by organization-wide change efforts. Apart from that, the interview partners refer to another practice: changing knowledge and/or institutionalized practices. However, this practice is often described as being in the planning phase; its actual significance as a disability-relevant practice appears questionable. This is all the more astonishing considering that the interview partners identify individual (negative) attitudes and behaviours as one of the main reasons for the potential exclusion of disabled people. It seems as if the practices that are described as disability-related focus first and foremost on the occasionally identified 'special needs' of individual organizational members instead of dealing with dis-/ability in terms of the combined result of the organization's structural, cultural and sociomaterial conditions. In summary, we can see that explanations for the (potential) exclusion of disabled people, as well as the mentioned practices, are not as one-dimensionally shaped as the constitution of dis-/ability-related subject positions would suggest. Nonetheless, across all three fields of analysis, the prevalence of a 'methodological individualism' is a central feature.

Asymmetrical legitimation of claims on inclusion

A comparative examination of available subject positions, articulated reasons for risks of exclusion and mentioned practices aimed at enhancing inclusion or preventing exclusion reveals a qualitative difference regarding how the diversity-management dispositive deals with gender and dis-/ability. Gender, in terms of a definite and dichotomously shaped status, is commonly attributed to every intelligible subject and is thereby normalized. It is assigned a high relevance with respect to its impact on the constitution of society as a whole as well as the individual's life opportunities. In contrast, disability is framed as an intrinsic deficiency, which is treated as an exceptional case that needs to be compensated for if possible, or at best avoided. The assumption that the supposedly non-disabled subject develops and solidifies her/his abilities only in interaction with organizational and societal factors remains unsaid. The consequence is an asymmetrical legitimation of claims on inclusion by different historically excluded or particularly vulnerable subject positions. Specifically, we find an implicit gender-equality norm across all the organizations investigated, whose core objective is the balanced distribution of women and men in the working as well as living environment. This ubiquitous normative guideline is — if made explicit at all — only mentioned in an affirmative manner. This is shown, for instance, in a statement by the HR Manager at Bancorp, who evaluates the balanced hiring of trainees at the bank as a very positive development:

> [W]e encourage applications from women very much and this year we achieved that, inasmuch as more than half of the new employees are female. This is a great success, because if we fill the pipeline properly the future can only be better. (HR Manager, Bancorp)

The balanced inclusion of women and men is depicted as the result of targeted management processes and thereby is identified as a responsibility of the whole organization. Thus the applicants do not have to carry the 'burden' of achieving inclusion all by themselves; the bank is also ascribed a proactive role in making the organization more permeable. In this regard we encounter an interesting phenomenon: while gender-related subject positions are characterized by multidimensionality, the potential discursive pathways become very one-dimensional when talking about the equal participation of female and male subject positions. Alternative statements that would question the objective of a balanced gender distribution are not part of the 'sayability-repertoire' within the diversity-management dispositive. With respect to dis-/ability, the opposite seems to be the case: the inclusion of subject positions marked as 'disabled' does not represent an undisputed norm — for instance, that

the number of disabled people should be reflected accordingly in the workforce — but is rather subject to certain conditions. This is shown in a statement made by the Diversity Manager at Unimin, who describes the university as responsible for enhancing inclusion but only regarding those organizational members who have already made it there:

> My main interest is that people with disabilities have good working conditions at the university. Or students with disabilities, they […] should be able to study properly and all the facilities should be accessible without any barriers. But it is not a goal to increase the number of people with disabilities at the university in general. (Diversity Manager, Unimin)

This quotation indicates that questions of the inclusion of disability-related subject positions are not connected to an undisputed equality norm, but rather are open to negotiations and organizational prioritization. The disabled organizational members should be provided with an adequate working environment and barrier-free infrastructure, but it is they who are supposed to adapt to the already existing — and assumingly ability-neutral — organizational conditions.

Discussion

What conclusions can be drawn from this analysis regarding the modes of inclusion and exclusion within the diversity-management dispositive? How should we evaluate the fact that disabled women and men are assigned a precarious status of diversity-relevance in comparison to assumingly non-disabled women and men facing 'female living conditions'? Is the explicit denial of a diversity-relevant status to subject positions that are attributed cognitive/psychosocial impairments and/or irritating behaviours an indicator for the complete failure of the inclusionary potential of practices labelled as diversity management?

The joint analysis of gender and dis-/ability, of how they are addressed, shaped and coconstituted within the diversity-management dispositive, reveals a significant internal differentiation between the diversity target groups: supposedly non-disabled, gender-related subject positions are recognized undisputedly as diversity-relevant and thus — at least according to the discursive representation in the interviews — targeted by organization-wide practices aiming to enhance their inclusion. Furthermore, although the gender-related subject positions are characterized by a rigorous dichotomy, they do not represent an inescapable 'fate of invocation'. Rather, the context decides whether one's attributed femaleness/maleness is regarded as ir-/relevant. For instance, the interview partners perceive gender as relevant for the unequal distribution of reproductive work but not for fulfilling one's job at the organization (see also Whiting, 2012). Moreover, the gender-related subject positions are, to a certain degree, open to other 'diversity markers'; however, the subject positions thereby created are based on the 'additive assumption' (Hancock, 2007, p. 70) of multiple disadvantages and therefore result in a deficient status (e.g. women with migration background particularly affected by discrimination).

In contrast, being labelled as 'disabled' seems relevant irrespective of the context, and is connected to the assumption of some form of deviance. Only in the rare case of a statement by the HR Manager at Bancorp, wherein she describes disabled people as particularly useful in terms of their employability, is their deviant status attached to positive characteristics (see also Woodhams and Danieli, 2000). However, even in such cases, the focus on one 'diversity marker' takes 'on *master status*, and subsequent information about the person is dominated by the nature of this category' (Stone and Colella, 1996, p. 360; emphasis in original). One consequence is that the overshadowing significance of 'disability' undermines the status of 'full subjects in the modern sense of the word' (Zanoni and Janssens, 2004, p. 62). This is because being marked as 'disabled' refers to supposedly unchangeable, essential characteristics that conflict with contemporary ideas of autonomy, self-determination and invulnerability (see also Wendell, 2010). Moreover, by linking the desirability of disabled people to an expectation of their over-achievement reveals the fragility of their status as legitimate organizational members. Anyway, in the majority of the cases, the attributed deviance of disability-related subject positions is framed as negative based on implicit ableist assumptions, 'wherein the able body is

privileged and preferred while the disabled body is deemed too different and too problematic to be included' (Thanem, 2008, p. 584). Disability is perceived as a 'personal tragedy' (Oliver and Barnes, 2012, p. 20) that needs to be 'prevented, treated or cured' (*ibid*.). The interview partners hardly differentiate between disability and an assumed definite, embodied impairment. This perspective on disability as an individual deficit leads to its 'depoliticization' (Foster and Fosh, 2010, p. 579), whereby 'disability-related employment concerns […] become personalized' (*ibid*.). This is also reflected in the practices that the interview partners describe as gender- or disability-related: they refer mostly to 'ad-hoc activities', by which the disabled organizational members should be supported in their needs. Practices that address the topic of dis-/ability as a cross-cutting issue that concerns the whole organization because of its inherent enabling and disabling function for *all* of its members remain unmentioned.

Two aspects seem particularly important regarding this brief recapitulation of the different constitution modes of gender and dis-/ability within the diversity-management dispositive. First, it is necessary to take a closer look at the potential reasons for this disparity and the actual role that the 'diversity paradigm' plays in it. Second, I want to discuss whether and under what circumstances the diversity-management dispositive can address the topic of dis-/ability in terms of unconditional inclusion efforts, as is already the case — at least at the discursive level — with respect to the undisputed gender-equality norm at the organizations investigated.

As to the first point, it is not to be expected that the diversity-management dispositive simply substitutes for the non-/discursive practices already in place in the organizations (see also Kamp and Hagedorn-Rasmussen, 2004). Rather, it is probable that the 'effects of the dispositive are embedded in the institutions and organizations it reshapes' (Raffnsøe *et al.*, 2014, p. 8). In the context of this study, this means that the dissemination of diversity rhetoric and related practices into organizations encounters various gender- and disability-related activities already dealing with questions of equal opportunities. For instance, public as well as for-profit organizations have to comply with various gender- and disability-related legislation (e.g. maternity leave, compulsory employment quota of disabled employees) that have been developed since the 1950s (Bruchhagen *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, gender and dis-/ability are addressed by differently shaped fields of discourses on the macro level. The issue of gender equality has become 'mainstream' in public as well as scientific discourses, consolidated by its cross-cutting institutionalization in public entities (Krell *et al.*, 2011; with regard to a simultaneously occurring backlash — the so-called anti-genderism — see Hark and Villa, 2015). In contrast, dis-/ability — in spite of a steady disability-rights movement and the recent establishment of critical disability studies as a research field — is debated primarily in relatively segregated discourses with a prevailing deficit perspective (e.g. rehabilitation, health, special education) (Köbsell and Waldschmidt, 2006; Waldschmidt and Schneider, 2007). Against this background, it appears likely that the diversity-management dispositive is not originally or mono-causally responsible for the dominance of the negative image of disability-related subject positions. The diversity-management dispositive does not unfold transformative potential, in the sense of a 'displacement' (Squires, 2005, p. 372) of the essentialized and ableist disability/non-disability dichotomy, which represents a core organizing principle of the societies under study. Rather, it builds on the non-/discursive practices already enacted and, thereby, very likely perpetuates 'prejudicial, oppressive, and disempowering' (Garland-Thomson, 2005, p. 1567) narratives, which 'dominate our collective understanding of disability' (*ibi*d.).

This brings me to the second point about the inclusionary potential of the diversity-management dispositive: Is this the end of the 'happy' diversity story? Does the interpretation of 'disability as human variation rather than an essential inferiority' (*ibid*.) inherently conflict with the diversity rhetoric and its corresponding practices? If we take the dispositive analytical perspective seriously, the answer is 'no'. This perspective is based on the assumption that the interplay of the various dispositional elements is characterized by a basic openness. Or, in the words of Butler (1995): '[a] given network of power/discourse […] is open to resignification, redeployment, subversive citation from within, and interruption and inadvertent convergences with other such networks' (p. 135). The understanding of diversity as a 'quality' of every human being is a central component of the discursive repertoire

of the diversity-management dispositive in the research context (Dobusch, 2015, p. 151). Consequently, the diversity-management dispositive definitely provides a platform for more dynamic concepts of dis-/ability in terms of a 'lifelong work ability continuum' (Lederer *et al.*, 2014, p. 257) or as a 'part of the spectrum of human variation' (Garland-Thomson, 2005, p. 1568), which can feed into non−/discursive practices labelled as diversity-related (for a more critical assessment, see Woodhams and Danieli, 2000). At the same time, such an individualist approach towards diversity is criticized for potentially 'belittling group differences based on power' and 'discounting histories of societal oppression' (Ragins and Gonzalez, 2003, p. 129). However, a transformation of ableist and dichotomous norms, which underlie the categorization of both gender and dis-/ability, cannot be achieved by playing off equality- and difference-oriented policy efforts against each other (see also Liff and Wajcman, 1996; Squires, 2005).

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author declares no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

Funding

This research was supported by a Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme Fellowship within the 7th European Community Framework Programme.

Notes

1. Three components are important for the definition of inclusion and exclusion as used here. First, inclusion and exclusion are understood as constitutively *relational*. As Goodin (1996) explains: 'for every "inside", there is something which is "outside". Expand its catchment as we may, inclusion as a practice only makes sense against the background of something or another simultaneously being "excluded"' (p. 349). Second, because of this relational understanding, it is necessary to specify *normatively* which forms of inclusion and exclusion, and of whom, are socially desired and thus regarded as legitimate. Third, inclusion and exclusion are characterized by a certain *quality* of different aspects (see e.g. Mor Barak and Cherin, 1998) that are subject to change and not in a static condition (see also Vobruba, 2000).
2. Although there are sociocultural commonalities throughout the German-speaking countries (Austria, Germany and Switzerland), this study focuses on the Austrian and German context because of their particular parallels regarding their social structure as well as their histories of immigration.
3. By using the terms 'women', 'men' and 'disabled people', I do not intend to reproduce the idea of a dichotomous order of sex/gender, or the dominant picture of genderless or asexual disabled people. Rather, I understand these terms in the sense of 'subject positions' that are socially relevant and thus need to be addressed.
4. For instance, the German Federal Government adopted a law on equal participation of women and men in leadership positions in the private and public sectors in 2015. In Austria, the Federal government made a self-commitment to increase the proportion of women up to 35 per cent in supervisory boards of government-related companies in 2011.

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