

8th Equality, Diversity and Inclusion International Conference
6-8 July, 2015, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv (Israel)

Stream Title:

Organizing Emancipation through, despite or against (Diversity) Management?

Stream Conveners:

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Emancipation is not only a central theme for (critical) social science research in general but is also addressed in various forms in modern management theories (Alvesson/Willmott 1992). In the context of organisation studies, processes of emancipation have recently been discussed on a micro-level, where individuals engage with bureaucratic control in a way that momentarily allows them to escape from domination (e.g. Zanoni/Janssens 2007). However, this growing body of literature evoked an ongoing discussion on which practices can be defined as (micro-)emancipatory: On the one hand, the term can refer to forms of explicit resistance which can also be connected to struggles on a meso-level. On the other hand it may also encompass less obvious practices such as assimilation or compliance in a certain context. In addition, previous scholars criticize an increasing focus on insignificant and marginal acts of resistance, overestimating the impact of tactical manoeuvres (e.g. Huault et al. 2014). Others even argue that some identified micro-emancipatory processes strengthen dominant structures by partially releasing the pressure and therefore work in favour of management means and logics (e.g. Fleming/Spicer 2003).

Against this background, we think that it is particularly interesting to take a closer look at the relationship between the workforce diversity in organisations and the relevance of/opportunity for emancipatory practices. Over the last decades the topics of equal and inclusive participation of historically disadvantaged groups at the workplace have been increasingly framed as a legitimate management responsibility and are thus explicitly addressed by various forms of diversity and equal opportunity policies on a practical level. In this context the crucial questions arise: If emancipation is necessarily opposed to domination, can it be

fostered or stimulated by a top down approach? Can (diversity) management create conditions enabling an emancipatory environment or is that a contradiction in itself?

With this in mind, we are interested in how emancipation can be conceptualized, which forms of emancipatory practices are to be found in organisational settings and how they are enhanced or hindered by diversity policies. We welcome theoretical, empirical and methodological papers across various trans/inter/national contexts that deal with emancipation on the individual, organisational and societal level.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Which different concepts of emancipation are relevant in organizational as well as diversity studies and thus which problems gain attention and which are blanked out?
- Which practices have an emancipating impact on individuals on the large scale between resistance and compliance in organisational settings?
- How can organisational change be enhanced in terms of an emancipatory approach? And what role do organisational diversity policies play in this context?
- What is the relationship between individual emancipatory acts and broader organisational and social struggles?
- How do measures of diversity policies have to be structured in order to enable or at least not hinder emancipatory identity constructions of marginalised group members?

References

- Alvesson, M./ Willmott, H. (1992): On the Idea of Emancipation in Management and Organizational Studies. *Academy of Management Review*, 17(3), 432- 454.
- Fleming P./ Spicer, A. (2003): Working at a Cynical Distance: Implications for Subjectivity, Power and Resistance. *Organization*, 10(1), 157-179
- Huault, I./ Perret, V./ Spicer, A. (2014): Beyond macro- and micro-emancipation: Rethinking emancipation in organization studies. *Organization*, 21(1), 22-49.
- Zanoni, P./ Janssens, M. (2007): Minority Employees Engaging with (Diversity) Management: An Analysis of Micro-Emanicaption. *Journal of Management Studies*, 44(8), 1371-1397.

Submission of abstracts/papers

Submissions to the conference can be in the form of long abstracts (5 pages minimum) and full papers by the deadline of March 1, 2015.

All submissions will be subjected to peer review organized by stream chairs. Deadline for reviews: April 15, 2015 (acceptance/rejection).

Abstracts and papers should be submitted electronically: www.edi-conference.org