

## Abstract

### **Dis/ability and gender in diversity management: the discursive legitimization of different forms of inclusion/exclusion**

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Although disability is often addressed through specific practices of diversity management in organizations, there is little research within the field of diversity studies (e.g. Thanem, 2008; Woodhams and Ardha, 2000). When disability is neglected as a central inequality category in diversity research, it does not only perpetuate the marginalized status of disability in social sciences, but also inhibits new insights for organization studies. Hence, by deconstructing the organizational production of abilities and disabilities we can learn more about ongoing mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in organizations in general.

Against this background, this paper presents an analysis of dis/ability compared to gender in diversity discourses in five Austrian and German organizations. The reason for this comparative approach is twofold: First, by simultaneously focusing on several inequality categories, underlying practices of de-/normalization and thus en-/disabling become more apparent. Secondly, in practice women are mostly associated with unused potential that should gain more attention from (diversity) management. In contrast to this, people with disabilities are usually regarded as being a burden rather than a benefit for the organizations. Hence, a comparative analysis can provide more detailed information about how different claims for inclusion are dealt with.

Early findings show that gender-related activities focus more on structural adjustments, while disability-related measures address the individual organizational member with disabilities. This may be connected to the fact that the lacking inclusion of women in powerful positions is explained as a result of an unequal society, whereas the exclusion of people with disabilities is mainly ascribed to their individual deficits.

## References

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