

**Summary of forthcoming report:  
Research project on diversity in the workplace  
Country report Germany**

**Verena Bruchhagen  
Andreas Merx  
Dr Joana Vassilopoulou**

Diversity management, has been a topic in Germany since the late 1990s. Both, governmental and economic interest for the concept of diversity management and related diversity policies rose only in recent times, particularly due to the implementation of the German Equal Treatment Law. Germany was required to implement the Equal Treatment Law as member of the European Union (EU). However, employers' associations and churches were particularly opposed to the implementation of the EU race directive. This resistance delayed the implementation of the general equal treatment law by six years, making Germany one of the last European countries to implement it (Merx & Vassilopoulou 2007).

The EU promotes diversity management as a useful tool to combat discrimination all over the European Union. Like other European member countries, the German government started promoting diversity management as well (Cormack & Bell 2005). Multi-national companies (MNCs), such as Motorola and Ford were the first to implement diversity management and related organizational policies in Germany, even previous to the introduction of the Equal Treatment Law. However, since then a large number of German MNCs have followed suit, such as Daimler Chrysler, Deutsche Bank and Deutsche Telekom, as well as small and medium enterprises, with some of them implementing an array of diversity policies in their organizations. The Federal Government endorses and supports this development. Consequently, terms such as 'valuing diversity' have increasingly appeared in the political as well as in the public debate. However, such governmental interventions have not yet had a significant impact on organizational practice and policy, neither in the public nor private sector. One reason might be that their interventions predominantly concentrate on changing discourse only and by doing so fail to target structural barriers that for example ethnic minorities or women encounter at the workplace (Vassilopoulou 2017).

The notion and development of diversity management and related policies in Germany differ to how diversity management is understood and practiced in for example the UK and the USA. In Germany, diversity management has not only no human rights background, but also does not promote the elimination of discrimination at workplace, contrary to for instance countries such as the UK or the USA. Instead, diversity management entered research and also organizations in Germany directly as a HRM concept (Koall & Bruchhagen 2002, Vedder 2006, Krell 2008).

Another difference is that the gender issue dominates the discourse on diversity management in Germany (see Koall & Bruchhagen 2002, Hermes & Rohrman 2006). The first scholars to introduce the notion of diversity management in the academic field in Germany were women that originally engaged solely in feminist studies. Quickly, diversity management became a more fashionable term in the field of equality, compared to feminism. As a result, many feminist scholars moved to the academic field and discourse of diversity. Consequently, the agenda of female emancipation and the struggle for equality was retained as central foci of their work on diversity management. This is not surprising, considering that in Germany woman studies have been created by, and for majority German women (Bednarz-Braun 2004). We can find a very similar history in the USA, where black feminists and

migrant women still criticise the exclusiveness of gender studies and the absence of race related issues in feminist movements. Also, black feminists called attention to the interconnection of race, class and gender, for which Crenshaw (1989) developed the term 'intersections'.

Gender related issues are also dominant in current public and private organizational diversity policies and at the same time the management of for example ethnic diversity is often not viewed as pertinent (Köppel et al. 2007). Despite this dominance of gender, both the public and private sector have implemented a plethora of instruments and policies promoting diversity for different diversity categories at work.

However, diversity policies do not appear as a concrete set of programs or actions in both sectors. Also, some policies and measures do not run under the label of diversity and are not recognised as diversity policies as such. The concept of intercultural opening, which aims at including minority ethnic workers, mostly in the public sector is one example. Another example is the label of integration and the various policies it entails. This can be explained, by the fact that diversity management only travelled to Germany in recent years and that some of the policies had been developed prior to its arrival on German shores. The result is that now one can find different sets of policies running under different labels, but with the very same aim of fostering diversity at the workplace. Knowing this, we are including such policies running under different labels than diversity in our country report.

Moreover, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the implemented measures and policies, since very little research in Germany has indeed tried to measure their outcomes. One challenge is the ongoing absence of monitoring diversity in organizations, through for example the systematic collection of equality data, which complies with data protection standards, as compared to for example the UK. Without such data, it is difficult to evaluate the track record of organizations in relation to for example race equality at work.

Lastly, the management of diversity and related policies need a more nuanced approach in Germany, one that takes the diversity of individuals into account, meaning their possible intersectionality. Thus far, policies, instruments and measures aiming at the inclusion of the different diversity dimensions, such as for example sexual orientation, gender, disability and race seem to be working isolated from each other, only focussing their policies and measures exclusively on one dimension. One reason for that can be the fact that different diversity advocates find themselves in competition for resources. Also, the field of diversity management in Germany appears to be not very interconnected. This is apparent when looking at the rare connections between the private sector, public sector, NGOs and welfare organizations and other non profit organizations.

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