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The management of diversity in U.S. and German higher education**

The research on diversity and diversity management in German organisations has significantly gained relevance over the last years. The reasons for this are socio-political and economic changes that make diversity a highly relevant topic. In higher education, there is currently much discussion on these concepts and an increasing number of institutions is introducing policies targeting a diverse student body.
Taking a comparative approach, this paper analyses the origin of diversity management in the United States, discusses research on this topic in U.S. higher education and compares this with current developments in Germany.

Key words: **higher education, research in higher education, diversity management, diversity, U.S., Germany**
(JEL: I20, I23, J10, J24, J82, O30)

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Introduction

Diversity management (DiM) is a concept that originated in the United States business sector as a reaction to changing legal, structural and normative settings. In the U.S. American higher education sector, it has been of relevance for more than three decades, encompassing a wide range of different issues ranging from equal access for different minority groups to democratic citizenship and community engagement. How Diversity management is defined, is far from obvious. Which measures does it involve and how does it differ from previous equality concepts? What can one say about its effectiveness after more than 30 years of experience and are there any lessons that German institutions of higher education can learn from the treatment of diversity issues in the U.S. context? The former have only recently 'discovered' the diversity concept and over the last 5 years, it has become a buzzword in academic research and practice. Diversity programmes appear to be spreading so rapidly that researchers are already anticipating a 'Diversity Turn' (Bender, 2013). There are various reasons for this; the increasing diversity of the student body as well as an anticipated lack of qualified personnel due to processes of demographic change, but also legal developments, such as the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation in the form of the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) just to name a few.

The diversity trend manifests itself in an increasing number of conferences and workshops as well as a rising number of publications addressing the following issues: student and researcher diversity, challenges that institutions of higher education are facing in the light of demographic developments, the conceptualization of DiM and the question how this concept can be applied to research, teaching or the promotion of young talents (Zimmermann, 2007; Ridder, 2011; Heitzmann & Klein, 2012a, 2012; Bender, 2013; Krempkow, Pohlenz, & Huber, 2014). The question whether the new focus on diversity issues is a positive trend or rather reflects an economisation of difference has also been subject to a controversial discussion (Wetterer, 2003; Andresen & Koreuber, 2009).

Guided by a comparative approach, this paper seeks to analyse the development of DiM in the U.S. as well as its application in higher education and contrast it with current developments in Germany. The first part of this paper seeks to define the concept of DiM and traces its evolution in the U.S. context in more detail. The second part analyses the current discussion about diversity in German higher education, highlighting differences as well as commonalities with the US. The third part concludes and provides perspectives for further research.

Diversity and diversity management – Defining the indefinable

To define the concept of diversity is not an easy task; because it depends on the goals of the particular organisation, which dimensions of diversity are of relevance (Süß, 2010).

> "Obviously, a general theory of diversity is impossible – since the very object itself cannot be generalized. The starting point should therefore be a historically and socially marked approach to diversity" (Fuchs, 2007, p. 17, translated by the author).

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Despite the existence of various definitions, one can identify two main approaches: The first one understands diversity as differences (Loden & Rosener, 1991), viewing every individual as distinguishable from the other based on particular categories. The second, less rigid, variant views diversity as differences AND commonalities, thereby acknowledging that people usually belong to several groups and that differences exist even between members of a particular group (Thomas & Ely, 1996; Krell, 2011).

It is common to distinguish between demographic variables (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, nationality) on the one hand and organisational characteristics (training, function, position, duration of employment in the company etc.) on the other. In a more detailed approach, Gardenswartz and Rowe differentiate four diversity dimensions. These include the inner dimensions of the personality (the core of a person) and characteristics such as age, gender, colour, membership in an ethnic group, physical ability and sexual orientation, as well an outer dimension (income, habits, religion, work experience, parenthood, etc.) and an organisational dimension (function, work content, division, group, duration of membership, membership in a union etc.) (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1998). Theoretically, the list of possible dimensions is infinite; yet, research and practice concentrate on particular dimensions, those that are considered relevant for the organisations, and omit others. For example, research and practice in the U.S. mainly focuses on the 'Big 8' (i.e. race, gender, ethnicity / nationality, organisational role / function, age, sexual orientation, mental / physical ability, religion) as compared to Germany where 4-6 major dimensions include gender, migratory background, age, family situation / work-life-balance and at times disability and sexual orientation (Krell, Pantelmann, & Waechter, 2006).

The management of diversity or DiM stands for a particular philosophy or strategy of handling diversity in an organisation. The basic assumption usually is that members of an organisation differ in terms of certain characteristics, therefore have the right for different treatment and that organisations should become more inclusive (Cox, 1994). If the establishment of anti-discrimination and equal opportunity measures are part of DiM efforts depends on the particular view an organization has on diversity. Three different perspectives on diversity that also stand for different phases of development were originally presented by Thomas and Ely (1996) and later extended by the resistance (or homogeneity) approach (Dass & Parker, 1999), and the Responsibility- and Sensibility approach (Schulz, 2009). The different understandings of diversity are explained below:

- The resistance (homogeneity) approach
- Discrimination and fairness approach
- The access and legitimacy approach
- The learning and effectiveness approach
- The strategic responsibility- and sensibility approach

Only the last two of them (the learning and effectiveness perspective & the strategic responsibility- and sensibility approach) view DiM as a comprehensive and holistic management tool that has to be implemented and integrated in all structures and processes of the organisation (Warmuth, 2012).

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Organisations pursuing the *resistance approach* deny institutional diversity and treat their members as a homogenous group, they either discount or even supress diversity within the organisation. This perspective leads to a levelling down of differences and could even result in ignorance for characteristics that deviate from the norm (Warmuth, 2012).

The *discrimination and fairness approach* perceives discrimination as an organisational problem and puts special emphasize on disadvantaged groups within the organisation. It is a passive approach, which aims to prevent sanctions. In the U.S., it is primary based on legal decisions, particularly on affirmative action policies and equal opportunity legislation. German corporations that follow this approach do this mainly due to "import from abroad" and social demands for equal opportunity. This approach uses quotas or admittance of minorities and women to certain areas, but remains on a superficial level without genuine efforts for integration (Hansen, 2010).

The *access and legitimacy approach* tends to highlight economic rationales, such as the reductions of costs, reduced turnovers and greater profitability because of improved moral or team spirit, or heightened market value. Diversification is considered necessary to comply with business needs such as access to divers markets. Organisations following this perspective normally do so by matter of choice rather than due to legal obligations (Dass & Parker, 1998).

Stereotyping is likely since employees are reduced to their membership to a particular social group. Those attitudes and behaviours which are considered "typical" for this group are anticipated or even encouraged. Members of minorities are functionalized rather than accepted (Hansen, 2010).

The *learning and effectiveness approach* encourages active learning and adaptive change. Representing a pro-active approach, it seeks to find better and more efficient ways of compliance beyond those legally required and rests on the commitment of mutual education and learning. This also means that it affects work processes directly and work groups can apply it to rethink their main tasks, redefine their markets, strategies etc. In contrast to the first two approaches, it views both, similarities and differences, as aspects of diversity and links numerous outcomes to it, such as efficiency, innovation, customer satisfaction, employee development, retention and social responsibility (Dass & Parker, 1998; Thomas & Ely, 2001). The Learning and Effectiveness paradigm focuses not only on the use (or exploitation) of potential resources, but also on their development in the medium-term (Hansen, 2010).

The *strategic responsibility and sensibility approach* links the DiM within the organisation to the broader strategic leadership of an organization on the one hand, and to the diversity within the society that is external to the organisation, to the other. From this perspective, DiM can only take full effect if it is linked to the higher organizational goals, the strategies of the organisation as well as its environment. Social responsibility that companies seek beyond their boundaries are important aspects in this approach where DiM measures should not exist isolated and short-term, instead, the long-term strategic positioning of the organisation should be strengthened (Schulz, 2009, cited from Warmuth, 2012)

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Historically, DiM is linked to the American Civil Rights Movement and its struggles for equality during the 1950, 60s, and 70s, which created "a strong norm of equal opportunity". The social protests against the exclusion and unequal treatment of Afro-Americans (and women) led to major social transformations in U.S. society and the institutionalization of affirmative action measures through President John F. Kennedy and the congress (Dobbin, 2009, 2013).

However, already in the late 1970s, affirmative action faced the criticism that it would constitute a reversed form of discrimination. Kelly and Dobbin argue that DiM was invented by EEO and affirmative action specialists who developed new, efficiency-based arguments to preserve anti-discrimination measures (Kelly, Dobbin, 1998). Equal opportunity offices in many firms became DiM offices in the 1980s and equal opportunity policies were relabelled as DiM. A quote from Roosevelt Thomas (1990, p. 113), an early diversity consultant highlights the rationale behind this strategy:

> "A lot of executives are not sure why they should want to learn to manage diversity. Legal compliance seems like a good reason. So does community relations. Many executives believe they have a social and moral responsibility to employ minorities and women. Others want to placate an internal group or pacify an outside organization. None of these are bad reasons, but none of them are business reasons, and given the nature and the scope of today's competitive challenges, I believe only business reasons will supply the necessary long-term motivation."

During the early 1990s, the DiM industry continued to grow as a combined result of legal anti-discrimination obligations and the need to deal with massive demographic changes. A 1992 survey found that a diversity manager existed in two thirds of America's biggest companies (Dobbin, 2009). The big international companies first implemented DiM and were later followed by national consumer goods producers and service-oriented businesses, small and mediums enterprises, public administrations, universities, and non-profit organisations.

Diversity management in U.S. higher education

Today, most institutions of higher education in the U.S. have incorporated diversity principles into their structures. Race relations have been a conflict-ridden issue in higher education since the civil rights movement and sparked unrest at campuses during the 1980s. The earliest initiatives to increase minority access on predominantly white campuses, and later to enhance gender equity, were based on the perceived public responsibility of universities to open their doors to all citizens. Additional factors were a social commitment to reduce discrimination among minorities and the recognition of academic work supporting the notion that a racially diverse student body benefits all students (Mc Laughlin, Mc Laughlin, & Mc Laughlin, 2014).

As early as 1965, the comprehensive Higher Education Act increased the financial resources for higher education institutions, introduced major student aid programs and required universities to disclose information on student body diversity, i.e. gender & self-identified racial- or ethnic group. In the 1970s, institutions of higher education sought to integrate minority issues into the curriculum by creating courses in African American, women's and Chicano studies among other measures.

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One important element of DiM at colleges and universities was to change the composition of the student body by means of affirmative action. Many institutions introduced the consideration of race and ethnicity –as one among other factors – in admission decisions. However, the practice of granting preferential access to college based on different criteria has been controversial ever since. Pressure on these programs increased already with the Raegan administration's conservative backslash on affirmative action in the 1970s. Numerous lawsuits and decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court exemplify this: First, the landmark case Bakke vs. Regents of the University of California in 1978, which upheld affirmative action and allowed race to be one of several factors in college admission policies (Chang, 2002). Decisions that followed were the one on Hopwood vs. Texas striking down the admission process at the University of Texas School of Law as unconstitutional and Grutter v. Bollinger in 2003 upholding the constitutionality of affirmative action practices at the Michigan State University (Brown, 2004).

Legal proceeding on this issue are ongoing, as in the case of Fisher v. University of Texas which put off any final decision on affirmative action practices to the future, sending the case back for reconsideration in June 2013.

Because of this debate, the diversity discourse in the U.S. focused on legal aspects for the longest time (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002) and research has sought to prove the benefits of diversity for students, favouring quantitative studies with generalizable results and neglecting qualitative studies that are important for analysing details and processes. Moreover, research on diversity, student interaction and learning in higher education mainly focused on the attempt to demonstrate the educational value of *racial* diversity (e.g. Chang, 1999; Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado, 2008). Substantial arguments under which conditions the benefits that are commonly associated with diversity can be taken full advantage of have been missing in the limited public discourse.

A very common research approach is the linkage of structural representation - the physical presence of minority members - to learning outcomes. Patricia Gurin and Sylvia Hurtado (2002), for example, link diversity interactions in the classroom to a variety of educational and democratic outcomes. Examples for the first include active thinking skills and intellectual engagement; examples for the latter include perspective taking, citizenship engagement as well as racial and cultural understanding.

For a long time, the structural representation of previously underrepresented groups, also referred to as compositional diversity (Fries-Britt, Rowan-Kenyon, Perna, Millem, & Howard, 2011), was the principal way for institutions of higher education to monitor their progress on diversity goals. Structural representation is an important element of the campus climate and related to minority students' experiences with racism and perceptions of tensions on campus as well as their academic adjustment to college. It can be considered as increasing the possibilities for intergroup-contact, which will influence educational outcomes over-time (Chang, 1999). However, in line with the above discussion of the access- and legitmacy approach, structural diversity represents an insufficient approach to DiM, since it does not create a more inclusive environment by itself (Gurin et al., 2002). The composition of students and *faculty* in terms of race, ethnicity and gender has changed during the last 20 years. Hurtado et al.

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argue that this phenomenon alone "has allowed some campuses to claim progress when, in fact, little has been done to transform the culture and climate of the institution " (Hurtado, Griffin, Arellano, & Cuellar, 2008, p. 207).

Campus climate studies

Since the late 1990s, a body of research has linked the campus climate to educational outcomes. The campus climate framework represents a "multidimensional construct subject to and shaped by the policies, practices and behaviours of those within and external to colleges and universities". It has become a major area of interest for research in US higher education (Hurtado et al., 2008; see also: Hurtado, Millem, Clayto-Pedersen, & Allan, 1998). Campus climate studies have mainly focused on racial/ethnic groups, but studies for other diversity groups, such as women, disabled students and LGBTs exist as well. They highlight the ongoing gap between a rising participation of previously underrepresented minorities at many institutions of higher education and an institutional culture that puts minority groups at a disadvantage.

There is no doubt that the examination of the campus climate is of high relevance in order to relate training and initiatives to these findings. Yet, there appears to be a mismatch between a high investment in diversity initiatives and a low level of knowledge about what kind of curricular and extra-curricular practices exist at educations of higher institutions and which effects these practices have on students (Fries-Britt et al., 2011). Table 1 shows a classification of campus-based diversity initiatives, summarizing them into broad categories and subcategories based on the goals of the initiatives. This classification is based on a study involving 10 public universities, which were asked to list their campus programs, courses and events that promote diversity as a tool for learning (Hurtado, 2003). The range of measures subsumed under the heading "diversity initiatives" is very broad and includes categories such as academic support initiatives (mentoring, advising and tutoring), co-curricular initiatives (educational programs and activities outside of the classroom), community outreach initiatives (community partnerships and volunteer-work as well as programs for high-school students) or strategic initiatives (policy initiatives, institutional research activities and institutional task forces).

In a review of literature and more than 90 campus climate surveys, Hurtado et al. find that most surveys (85 per cent) referred to practice only in a "minimal manner" and mainly concentrated on participation in courses that somehow relate to diversity. Only two surveys that involved multiple campuses focused on diversity in particular and specifically analysed diversity *practices*. Only one of them followed a longitudinal approach. These results demonstrate that that "while institutional investment in diversity initiatives is significant", very little is known about the effects of specific diversity initiatives (Hurtado et al., 2008, p. 213). Research has clearly demonstrated that diversity can contribute to educational benefits, but is only recently shifting its focus on the conditions that maximize or prevent these benefits (Mitchell & Chang 2013).

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Table 1: Framework of campus facilitated diversity initiatives

Major Categories	Description	Subcategories	Goals
Academic Support Initiatives	Retention Services for under- represented students	Mentoring and Advising, Tutoring	To ensure that students of underrepresented populations have the necessary support for academic success
Co-curricular initiatives	Educational programs and activities that occur outside of the classroom	Rituals and Celebrations, Workshops and Retreats, Student Organization, Intergroup Dialogues	To increase awareness of self, others and self in relationship to others
Community Outreach Initiatives	Initiatives that link members of the institution with the surrounding community	Internships Assisting Under-Served Populations, Community Partner-ships, Volunteer-Work, Programs for High School Students, Distance Education for Under-Served Populations	To increase awareness of how individuals can change and improve the economic and social inequalities that exist on the local and national level
"Safe Space" Initiatives	Initiatives designed to provide space for the increased comfort level of underrepresented populations on campus	Comprehensive Support and Learning Centres, Residence Hall Initiatives (e.g. multicultural staff positions or hall space designated for social identity groups)	To provide academic and social support and thereby create an "insider" environment for students who experience 'outsider' level status on their campus
Integrative Learning Initiatives	Initiatives that involve multiple units for the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal development of students	High School to College Initiatives, Comprehensive Learning Programs, Study Abroad Experiences, Residential Living/Learning Programs	To combine the knowledge and expertise of staff, faculty and community members in order to enhance the educational process for students
Institutional Strategic Initiatives	Initiatives created by the top-levels of institutional governance for campus-wide transformation	Policy Initiatives, Curriculum Transformation Projects, Institutional Research Activities, Advisory Groups and Tasks Forces, Presidential Strategies	To enhance the student experience through the full inclusion of the unique and valuable perspectives of all of the members of campus

Source: (Hurtado et al., 2008, p. 211)

Remaining inequalities

The expansion of higher education in the U.S. often serves as an example for the strong public commitment to equal opportunities, with colleges and universities being more open to women and to racial and ethnic minorities than ever before. Higher education has developed from a privilege for (white male) children of the middle and upper classes to a normal part of life for a large section of the population. In 1950, women made up only 32 percent of enrolments in postsecondary institutions, this number had risen to 56 per cent by 2012. In 1975, only 10 per cent of black 25-to-29 year olds had a bachelor's or higher degree, compared with 20.5 per cent in 2013. In

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the same age group, 8.8 per cent of Hispanic students graduated with a bachelor's or higher degree in 1975, compared to 15.7 in 2013 (IES, 2013).

Despite these advances, the process of diversifying the student and faculty population and of creating a climate that supports this expansion, has remained slow. Graduation rates, for example, remain highly dependent on variables such as family income and SAT-scores. Even when one controls for academic ability, poor students are less likely to graduate (Bastedo & Jaquette, 2011). Representing 16 per cent of the entire population, Latinos only represented 6 per cent of all graduate-student in 2008 (Garces, 2012) and the racial gap between black and white students in nationwide graduation rates has remained at 20 per cent for the last 20 years (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2013). The annual report on minorities in higher education of 2011, published by the American Council on Education, also highlights that educational attainment for younger generations is not any longer much higher than for older generations. Some groups African Americans, Hispanics and American Indians have stagnating attainment rates. These trend differs by gender with young women in their late 20s surpassing their predecessors in all racial/ethnic groups and young racial/ethnic minority men (except Asian Americans) falling behind (Young, 2011).

Importantly, the expansion of the postsecondary system has gone hand in hand with a high level of institutional differentiation. The U.S. system of higher education consists of a small number of highly selective institutions at the top and a large number of institutions with only minor admission requirements at the bottom.[1]

DiM is a top-down approach and as such its implementation is more successful when it is an integral part of the university's self-image. The institutionalization at the top-level of the institutions' administration therefore is of high relevance and leadership practices that address issues, such as the need to recruit minority faculty are particularly important (Kezar, 2008).

Based on the assumption that teaching staff and other personnel should include members of all social groups, recruiting members of previously underrepresented groups is a major strategic goal in the implementation process of diversity concepts. Most HEIs have formulated strategies and aim to increase the proportion of women and ethnic minorities in their teaching staff with the underlying assumption that only a 'critical mass' of minority faculty members can promote certain changes in the organisational culture. Yet, faculty of colour remain underrepresented and unsuccessful in academia due to a complex set of factors, most importantly racialized structures, policies and practices of hiring, retention and promotion. Despite an increase by 50 per cent between 1993 and 2003, full-time faculty is still comprised of less than 20 per

1 Ann Mullen argues that it is insufficient to look at "who goes to college" but that "we need to look at who goes *where* to college" (Mullen, 2010, p. 5). Attending an elite institution is associated with many advantages, such as a higher likelihood to graduate, higher status positions and incomes after graduation etc., but access to these institutions is much more likely for students from the upper class, while students with low socio-economic backgrounds, racial and ethnic minorities and -to a lesser extent – women remain underrepresented.

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cent faculty of colour. In fact, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians together represented 15.5% of all faculty and instructional staff at colleges and universities in 2005. (Fries-Britt et al., 2011). The problem of hiring and retaining qualified minority personnel also applies to leadership positions in academic institutions. Minority academic leaders continue to be the exception with the percentage of minority presidents even having declined compared to 2006. As of 2011, only 13 (compared to 14), percent of college presidents belonged to a racial or ethnic minority and only slightly more than a quarter was female (Stripling, 2012). Questions related to the recruitment and hiring of diversity staff are therefore becoming increasingly important for researchers and practitioners.

Diversity management at German universities

In contrast to its history in U.S. higher education, DiM represents a relatively new concept at German universities where it currently receives much attention and is spreading rapidly. The following projects exemplify this: The Projekt "nexus - good practices for studying and research" has been initiated by the German Rector's Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz) to improve the quality of study programs, in particular teaching, diversity being one of the main topics of concern. The federal anti-discrimination agency that is seeking to establish institutions of higher education free of discrimination in the project "Diskriminierungsfreie Hochschule" (Czock, Donges, & Heinzelmann, 2012), and the Ministry for Innovation, Science and Research in North Rhine-Westphalia has implemented a comprehensive diversity strategy seeking to achieve a state-wide auditing of its institutions of higher education.

In Germany, the idea of a 'normal student' (born in Germany, in its 20s and full-time student, academic background, without children) has been very persistent and is only recently becoming outdated. Since the beginning of the millennium, HEIs have developed numerous diversity concepts and sought to create study formats that are suitable for the specific qualifications and life situations of students. This includes the development of improved supervision, mentoring programs, supplement courses and an expansion of study management services, especially in the orientation phase (Ridder, 2014).

The development of a strategic and top-down implemented DIM is still in its infancy and there is no established standard in this area. The openness of the concept also allows universities to adjust the concept to their specific needs. Many diversity-oriented measures target specific groups, such as mentoring programs for women or students with migratory background while others aim at a wider population of students.

So far, those HEIs that have approached the concept strategically have chosen varying forms of structural implementation. Typical is the extension of an already existing gender into a diversity strategy. The emphasis on gender issues in Germany stems from the fact that gender equality politics have a long history and are institutionalized through gender equal opportunity offices and commissioners at German institutions of Higher Education. Accordingly, some universities locate the topic with the equal opportunities and women's affairs officers while others have vice-rectories with subordinate experts or whole staff units for DiM.

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A number of measures that are now subsumed under the 'Diversity' roof have existed before (e.g. childcare facilities for students with children or classes that focus on intercultural competences). Moreover, the fairness and antidiscrimination perspective of diversity management had already been partly integrated into the practical work of universities through representatives for different minority groups (e.g. students with disabilities and foreign students). The universities have thereby met legal demands for the establishment of equal opportunities *without* considering potential benefits of a diverse student body. The integration of DiM could now lead to a shift of perspective from a deficit-approach to an approach that views the diversity of their students and staff as an asset (potential-approach).

CHE consult has published an online-tool covering more than 180 measures. This toolbox[2] is the result of a project that had the proclaimed aim to improve the data basis for diversity in Higher education institutions. The list of measures is not exhaustive and includes especially those practices that target the general student population and not particular target groups alone. Examples include:

- School visits by students or "buddy programs" that encompass a one-to-one counseling and aim at making access easier especially for those pupils without academic background.
- Self-assessment for prospective students, providing a feedback on personal strengths and weaknesses and support them with the choice of an appropriate study subject.
- Internships in HEIs to increase the commitment of prospective students and make them familiar with certain areas of research and/or practice.
- Awareness-raising campaigns and training for staff of HEIs (student counseling, teaching staff, tutors etc.) that highlight the demands and needs of a heterogeneous student body.
- Awareness-raising for students preparing them for the interaction of students with (culturally) diverse students on campus as well as on the labor market (soft-skills).

The examples above illustrate that many of the measures are still based on the notion of diversity as a problem that has to be fixed (deficit-approach). Pro-active measures, for instance seeking to increase the number of diverse students and staff or diversity-oriented hiring practices, remain the exception.

Factors driving the implementation of diversity management

The motives for the introduction of DiM in Germany differ from the US context where discrimination of racial minorities is a historic legacy and diversity policies are closely related to affirmative action. The linkage between diversity issues and the promotion of democratic values, greater inter-ethnic tolerance and the training of future leaders are normative principles that are lacking in the German context. The section below discusses the main reasons for the implementation of DiM in Germany.

2 http://www.che-consult.de/cms/?getObject=1027&getLang=de.

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Economisation and the entrepreneurial university

A number of OECD reports (OECD, 1999, 2001, 2007) have encouraged the member states to increase the labor market participation of women. Universities should be aware of their untapped resources (female students) and increase their efforts to remain compatible with requirements of the economy (Lutz, 2013).

Furthermore, Klein relates the EU's emphasis on the economic principle of employability to reforms of the Bologna process. The aim here is to tap into the unused labor market potential of underrepresented groups, such as female students and young researchers to increase the availability of human resources (Klein, 2013).

The higher education sector has been undergoing major transformations during the last decades. These were the result of the transformation into a knowledge society, the expansion of the higher education system, increased competition and internationalisation processes (Teichler, 1999). Universities face a high number of – often diverging – expectations and a diminishing level of trust concerning their capability to meet certain goals. Thus, the way European universities define and justify their existence has changed and led to the gradual alignment with the American model of the 'entrepreneurial university' (Clark, 2001). The adoption of management practices commonly found in the private business sector ('managerial revolution') and the current accentuation of institutional autonomy links to these wider processes. An essential element of the entrepreneurial university is "the management of higher education as mode of regulation, seeking to accomplish the defined organizational goals" (Pasternack & Von Wissel, 2010, p. 41, translated by the author). The new emphasis on measured outputs, strategic planning, performance indicators and quality assurance measures as well as key concepts, such as quality and excellence are inherent features of these modernization reforms. The CHE and the Association for the Promotion of Humanities and Sciences (Stifterverband) are organizations that support these kind of reforms and are among the main promoters of strategic DiM. Together with eight HEIs, these organisations developed the audit 'Vielfalt Gestalten', promoting the development of strategic diversity management concepts (see also De Ridder, 2014).

Increasing heterogeneity

A very widespread argument for the implementation of diversity strategies in institutions of higher education is the observation that the heterogeneity of the student population has been increasing and that the German 'normal student' is no longer in the majority (Leichsenring & Berthold, 2012; CHE, 2014).

The general participation rate in higher education has increased significantly during the last decades. The number of persons who leave secondary education with a qualification for studies at a university has increased from only about 6 per cent in 1960 to 58 per cent in 2012. Meanwhile, every fourth student has a migratory background and one out of ten students is coming from abroad (CHE, 2014). Yet, HEIs - and universities in particular - remain characterized by social disparities.

The biggest success of expansion efforts certainly is the increase in female students, who have represented more than half of the first-semester students during the last decade. However, participation rates of women in higher education depend on the

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career stage and the phenomenon of a gender-specific leaky pipeline is well known in the academic debate (Heitzmann & Klein, 2012b). [3]

Another well-researched phenomenon is the relevance of the category 'social background', i.e. the fact that the likelihood to enter higher education remains highly dependent on this. The social closure that is referred to as education funnel ('Bildungstrichter') in the academic debate occurs relatively early during the transition from secondary to upper secondary education and continues with the entrance to the university until graduation. The probability of children who have parents with an academic tradition to obtain the university entrance qualification is 3.3 times higher than for those who come from families without an academic background (Middendorf et al., 2012; Wolter, 2011).

Less research exists about students with migratory background. Recent survey data shows that the percentage of students with migratory background is 23 per cent across all forms HEIs in Germany, 11 per cent of these students have a German citizenship (Middendorf et al., 2012).[4] Students with a migratory background are more than four times as likely to have a 'low' educational background and among academic nationals, every second student (49%) has at least one parent with a non-academic background. The dropout rate for academic nationals is at 42 per cent as compared to 28 per cent for the whole bachelor student population (Heublein, Richter, Schmelzer, & Sommer, 2012). Not empirically proven, is the hypothesis stating that lower attainment is linked to the migratory background. Instead, a lower graduation rate for students with migratory background seems to be the consequence of a lower social background a resulting lack of adequate support structures. First studies on the experiences of students that belong to this category also indicate an increased level of discrimination (Klein & Rebitzer, 2012).

Particularly underrepresented in the student population are academic nationals (BildungsinländerInnen) who - per definition – are foreign citizens, but have obtained their university entrance qualification in Germany. As compared to the general student population with migratory background, their share among all first-semester students has stagnated at approximately 3 per cent between 1993 and 2011 (Middendorf, 2013).

Germany universities typically list the following diversity categories: gender, national background, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social background, age, mental and physical ability / disability, religion and / or belief. Although some survey-based data sets on student diversity in Germany exists, there is a lack of institutional data that would allow HEIs to analyse under which pre-conditions their students start their studies, how they develop during the process of studying and which effects diversity-oriented measures have. When students register themselves, the HEI records the type

3 While it is beyond the scope of this paper to analyse the motivations of these actors, it may be noted that some scholars consider the CHE, which is mainly funded by the private Bertelsmann Stiftung, to act as an instigator of neo-liberal reforms in the educational system (Butterwegge, 2007; Krautz, 2007).

4 Due to a new methodology, which now includes those students who are German but have at least one parent with a foreign citizenship, this number is twice as high as in previous reports and would be at 12% according to the old methodology.

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of university entrance qualification, age and sex, but this data fails to describe the full diversity of the student body and - for reasons of data protection - cannot be linked to data on the course of studies.

Legal developments

In contrast to Gender Mainstreaming, no body of legislation prescribes the implementation of DiM. Yet, there are a number of regulations that concern equal treatment and are therefore viewed as driving factors. On the EU-level this includes the equality directives which aim at establishing equal treatment between persons irrespective of their ethnic origin, race, gender, age, disability, religion / belief or sexual orientation. In Germany, anti-discrimination law has been implemented as General Act on Equal Treatment (Allgemeines Gleichstellungsgesetz or AGG) and only affects the staff of universities, but not their students (Heitzmann & Klein, 2012b; Lindner, 2011).

In the Maastricht Communiqué of 2004, the ministers responsible for vocational education and training of 32 European countries, the European social partners and the European Commission agreed that "(…) necessary reforms and investments should be focused on (…) the needs of low-skilled and disadvantaged groups for the purpose of achieving social cohesion and increasing labour market participation" (Maastricht Communiqué, 2004, p. 2).

In addition, the communiqués of the Bologna reform have emphasized the objective of improving the social dimension of the European Higher Education Area by "strengthening social cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities both at [a] national and European level" (Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers, 2003, p. 1). In London, the ministers responsible for higher education have stated that "the composition of the student body should represent the composition of the society and that students should not face barriers due to financial or structural reasons" (Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers, 2007, p. 5).

Gender and diversity

The question whether the 'diversity turn' at German HEIs is a positive development or not is currently subject to discussion. One can differentiate two basic positions: The first one is the rather pragmatic view that DiM represents a more wide-ranging approach to discrimination than gender politics and that it is important to take advantage of the currently positive climate for diversity and equal opportunities. The second position is more critical towards the concept and argues that, widely stripped of its context of origin, DiM leads to the recoding of gender politics in economic terms while obscuring social conflicts (Meuser, 2010).

Proponents of the first perspective point to the fact that discrimination does not only occur through the gender category, but that a number of additional categorizations have proven to indicate or cause inequalities and that it is necessary to integrate these into equality practice (Andresen & Koreuber, 2009; Heitzmann & Klein, 2012b). Despite the dominance of economic arguments for diversity, the concept has its roots in the civil rights movement and therefore is compatible with demands for anti-discrimination and equal opportunities. Not only in the U.S., but also in Germany, a merging of economic, legal and moral legitimizations for the concept are observed

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(Krell, 2011; Koall, 2007). This is also in line with research by Kelly and Dobbin who argue that the invention of DiM was like selling old wine in new bottles, since it were not the measures that changed, but the arguments of professionals. Similarly, Angelika Wetterer (2003) argued that the introduction of Managing Diversity (and Gender Mainstreaming) appear to represent a "rhetorical modernization" rather than a "paradigm shift". While she argues that this would mean a step backwards for the development of feminist theory, she also acknowledges that it is important to observe the implications that these new concepts have for the actual practice of equal opportunities.

The backwardness of the concept from a theoretical point of view is one major point of critique that has been referred to as ‚essentialization' of differences. This refers to the tendency of the diversity discourse to conceive of differences as inherent features of human beings rather than social constructions. That this, in turn, leads to stereotyping and, as has been demonstrated above with the example of the ‚access and legitimacy approach' of DiM, is in conflict with the idea of equal treatment. Daniela De Ridder argues that a diversity-oriented development of organisation should include a concept for change that is based on the idea of a learning organisation. It should be directed towards all members of the organisation so that new stigmatizations of particular groups can be prevented (De Ridder, 2014).

Another concern is that of a competition between the concepts 'gender' and 'diversity' at the expense of gender research and feminist critique in the academic system. This worry links to the observation that additional financial or personnel resources (Knapp, 2013; Andresen & Koreuber, 2009) do not always accompany the expansion of equality practice. Quiet to the contrary, in the light of limited financial means, there is a risk that university managers merge scientific institutions, for example those that conduct research on gender relations with those that analyse migratory processes, under the DiM roof (Lutz, 2013).

Other critical voices reason that DiM is "compatible with the logic of organisational self-monitoring", since it is implemented in a top-down way and lacks "critical distance to the organization's hierarchy and power structure" (Meuser, 2010, p. 320, translated by author). DiM and Gender Mainstreaming, in contrast to traditional women politics, are genuine management approaches firmly anchored in the institutions' strategy and principals. Some authors thus interpret DiM as a neo-liberal strategy used under the guise of equality to nurture the image of an organization and thus closely linked to the idea of the entrepreneurial university.

It is not possible to answer the question, whether DiM will advance the cause of equal opportunity, at this point of time, but it is important to keep in mind that the business case is not its only rational. The selling of demands for equal opportunity with the help of efficiency-based arguments could very well serve as a „rhetoric door-opener"(Krell, Riedmüller, Sieben, & Vinz, 2007; Krell, 2011). It is therefore important to have a differentiated perspective on current developments in this area.

Conclusion

Diversity management is a broad concept and has multiple meanings. In a very general sense, it represents a particular strategy to handle diversity in an organisation. The im-

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plementation of DiM and the delineation of its measures differs widely and depends on the particular characteristics of an organisation, its perception of diversity, but also on the national context with its legal, cultural and social dimensions.

In the U.S., diversity initiatives are firmly rooted in the American civil rights movement and their introduction has been a reaction to legal requirements as well as a fading support for affirmative action. A major characteristic of the American diversity debate in higher education is the dominance of legal disputes about admission policies that many HEIs have introduced to create a racially diverse student body. A large body of research has linked the (racially) diverse student body with a range of educational outcomes and a broad consensus about the importance of diversity for a democratic society has emerged. Nevertheless, despite the long history of DiM, American HEIs are facing challenges, such as recurring racial incidents and remaining structural inequalities. Despite the existence of numerous measures that aim at the improvement of the campus climate, there is no evidence about their effectiveness.

In Germany, to the contrary, the current debate about diversity in higher education largely remains deficit-oriented. The popularity of DiM in Germany reflects a broader perspective on heterogeneity than gender equality policies did, but pro-active measures that seek to create diversity remain the exception. Moreover, most HEIs have no knowledge about the diversity of their students and/or their staff. In contrast to the U.S., data collections on the dimensions gender, race/ethnicity, age and regional origin are still lacking. The obstacles to a systematic collection of data on different diversity categories are higher in the German context due to data protection issues. Therefore, surveys are crucial in order to gain more knowledge about the nature of the student and faculty population' diversity, as well as its relevance for the higher education context.

As regards the implementation of DiM, the American debate highlights the following issues: The structural implementation of the concept is important and this should include a leadership position, which highlights the relevance of diversity for the organisation, as well as additional actors who are responsible for its implementation at different levels of the institution. Another crucial factor is to establish a critical mass of diverse faculty. A personnel policy that is sensitive to the heterogeneity and individuality of the employees can signal inside and outside the organisation that the institution seeks to avoid negative discrimination and enable equal opportunities beyond the gender dimension. Economic arguments have been an important, but not the only, justification for the introduction of DiM. The actors, who implement diversity strategies in HEIs, currently decide how this concept is defined and which arguments are used for its implementation. As Uta Klein has pointed out (2013), the implementation of DiM should be supported by normative principles and thus be understood as a political endeavour rather than a pure management approach. Only a positive interpretation of diversity, one that goes beyond concerns for fairness and anti-discrimination, will eventually lead to organisational learning. Some universities in Germany are already testing different models of implementation. For the evaluation of DiM measures, longitudinal studies are of particular importance, but they require a long-term commitment of organizations and involve considerable costs. Since many diversity-oriented projects and measures are financed by means of third-party funds, it

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remains unclear at this point of time, if the implementation of effective and sustainable strategies in this area can be realized in the near future.

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