

# **Diversity and (in)equality in organizations: A critical perspective on doing differences**

Kumulative Dissertation

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## **Abstract**

Despite extensive legal and organizational measures to promote diversity, inequalities in organizations, e.g. based on gender, class, or sexual orientation, persist or are (re)produced. This cumulative dissertation comprises six manuscripts that examine issues of diversity and inequality in organizations from a critical perspective. What are differences and inequalities and how are they maintained and (re)produced in daily work practices? The focus is on different aspects of doing difference and diversity as well as on specific contexts of work, management and organization, such as equal participation through e-voice in a digital alternative organization, intersections of gender and class in service work in the luxury segment, barriers and success factors for women's entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism industry, and gay leaders in management. In the dissertation's frame, the studies' research perspectives and their critical, politicizing aim are reflected in order to position them within the research field of Critical Management Studies with a focus on diversity and (in)equality as well as in the field of Critical Diversity Studies with a focus on management and organizations.

## **Keywords**

Inequality, doing difference and diversity, organizations, gender, class, homosexuality, CMS, CDS, critical

## **Abstrakt**

Trotz umfangreicher gesetzlicher und organisationaler Maßnahmen zur Förderung von Vielfalt bestehen Ungleichheiten in Organisationen, z. B. aufgrund von Geschlecht, Klasse oder sexueller Orientierung, fort oder werden (re)produziert. Den Kern dieser kumulativen Dissertation bilden sechs Manuskripte, in denen Fragen zu Diversity und Ungleichheit in Organisationen aus einer kritischen Perspektive beleuchtet werden: Worin bestehen Unterschiede und Ungleichheiten und wie werden sie aufrechterhalten und in täglichen Arbeitspraktiken (re)produziert? Im Fokus stehen dabei je verschiedene Aspekte des ‚doing difference and diversity‘ sowie spezielle Kontexte von Arbeit, Management und Organisation, bspw. chancengleiche Teilhabe durch E-Voice in einer digitalen alternativen Organisation, Verschränkungen von Geschlecht und Klasse bei Dienstleistungsarbeit im Luxussegment, Barrieren und Erfolgsfaktoren für ein Entrepreneurship von Frauen in der Gastgewerbe- und Tourismusbranche und Karrierestrategien schwuler Führungskräfte im Management. In der Mantelschrift werden Forschungsperspektiven der Studien und ihr kritischer, politisierender Anspruch reflektiert um sie im Forschungsfeld der Critical Management Studies mit einem Fokus auf Diversity und (Un)gleichheit sowie im Feld der Critical Diversity Studies mit einem Fokus auf Management und Organisationen zu verorten.

## **Schlüsselwörter**

Diversität, Ungleichheit, doing difference and diversity, Vielfalt, Organisation, Gender, Class, Homosexualität, CMS, CDS, kritisch

## **Inhaltsangabe der kumulativen Dissertation**

Themen von Diversity und (Un)gleichheit in Organisationen und damit verbundenen Fragen wie angemessene und inklusive Beschäftigungsmöglichkeiten werden als große gesellschaftliche Herausforderungen des 21. Jahrhunderts angesehen. Trotz umfangreicher gesetzlicher und organisationaler Maßnahmen zur Förderung von Vielfalt bestehen Ungleichheiten in Organisationen, z. B. aufgrund von Geschlecht, Klasse oder sexueller Orientierung, fort oder werden gar (re)produziert. Studien zu Diversity in Organisationen zeigen, dass eine vielfältige Belegschaft Vorteile haben kann, bspw. in Form von mehr Kreativität, Innovation oder höherer Entscheidungsqualität, und bei einem „richtigen“ Management einen Wettbewerbsvorteil schaffen kann. Diversityforschende zeigen aber auch potenzielle Nachteile auf, wie bspw. zwischenmenschliche Konflikte, Misstrauen, nachlassende Performance oder (innere) Kündigung.

Die Mainstream-Forschung zu Diversity am Arbeitsplatz bezieht sich typischerweise auf bestimmte fixe und messbare Diversity-Dimensionen der Mitarbeitenden. Kritische Wissenschaftler\*innen betonen jedoch, dass eine Betrachtung des ‚doing difference and diversity‘ Ansatzes in täglichen Arbeitshandlungen und -praktiken in Organisationen und Gesellschaft von zentraler Bedeutung sei. Sie argumentieren, dass Diversity-Dimensionen sozial konstruiert werden, mit organisationalen und gesellschaftlichen Einflüssen und Machtverhältnissen verflochten seien und Ungleichheiten (re)produziert und erhalten werden.

Angesichts meines akademischen Hintergrunds in Betriebswirtschaftslehre und meines Forschungsschwerpunkts in Personal, Management, Organisationen, Chancengleichheit und sozialer Gerechtigkeit positioniere ich meine Forschung im Rahmen der Critical Management Studies (CMS) mit einem Fokus auf Diversity und (Un)gleichheit. Damit verbunden besteht auch eine klare disziplinäre Verortung in den Critical Diversity Studies (CDS) mit Fokus auf Management und Organisationen durch die deutliche Verflechtung von CMS und CDS. In dieser Dissertation forsche ich zu Diversität und (Un)gleichheit in Organisationen. Ich habe in verschiedenen Forschungskonstellationen mit (inter)nationalen Wissenschaftler\*innen zusammengearbeitet, um zu analysieren, worin Unterschiede und Ungleichheiten bestehen (bspw. in einer Bestandsaufnahme zu Unternehmerinnen in der Gastgewerbe- und Tourismusindustrie) und wie sie aufrechterhalten und in täglichen Arbeitspraktiken (z. B. aufgrund von Geschlecht, Klasse, sexueller Orientierung oder Alter) (re)produziert werden.

Meine kumulative Dissertation umfasst sechs Manuskripte.

- Bernauer, V. S., & Kornau, A. (2024). E-voice in the digitalised workplace. Insights from an alternative organisation. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 34(2), 369-385. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12460>
- Bernauer, V., & Mucha, A. (2019). Reflexion von Diversität im Kontext der Hochschullehre in einer explorativen Lernumgebung – Erfahrungen aus einem hochschuldidaktischen Workshop. In C. Schomaker & M. Oldenburg (Hrsg.), *Forschen, Reflektieren, Bilden. Forschendes Lernen in der diversitätssensiblen Hochschulbildung* (S. 88-100). Schneider.
- Bernauer, V. S., Sieben, B., & Haunschild, A. (2023). “You can call me Susan!” Doing gendered class work in luxury service encounters. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 42(4), 494-511. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-10-2021-0272>
- Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K. (2024). Women’s entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism industry: A systematic literature review and future research directions. In M. P. Swart, W. Cai, E. C. L. Yang, & A. N. Kimbu (Hrsg.), *Routledge Handbook of Gender in Tourism: Views on Teaching, Research and Praxis* (pp. 270-288). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003286721-24>
- Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K. (2024). Women’s education in tourism entrepreneurship: Trends and issues emerging from Africa. In A. M. Morrison, & D. Buhalis (Hrsg.), *Routledge Handbook of Trends and Issues in Tourism. Sustainability, Planning and Development, Management, and Technology* (pp. 220-231). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003291763-22>
- Tamm, G., Bernauer, V. S., Joecks, J., & Reimer, T. (2022 eingereicht bei *Human Relations* und im Peer Review Verfahren abgelehnt, jetzt in Vorbereitung). Career strategies of gay leaders: Is homosexuality a superpower or kryptonite?

In der Mantelschrift diskutiere ich, wie ich mit diesen Beiträgen zu den CMS mit einem Fokus auf Diversity und (Un)gleichheit beitrage. Die Struktur und Reflektionen meiner Diskussion basieren dabei grundlegend auf zwei theoretischen Konzepten: Zum einen dem Kompass der Diversitätsforschung, einem multiparadigmatischen Analyseraster von Krell und Sieben (2007) und zum anderen Colliens (2018, 2021) konzeptioneller Triade aus ‘being critical, reflexive, and political’.

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### **Abbreviations**

AA.....Affirmative Action  
AGG.....General Act on Equal Treatment  
CDS.....Critical Diversity Studies  
CMS.....Critical Management Studies  
DiM.....Diversity management  
E-voice.....Electronic voice  
EEO.....Equal Employment Opportunities  
H&T.....Hospitality and tourism  
UN.....United Nations  
SDGs.....Sustainable Development Goals

## Introduction

Diversity and (in)equality issues receive much attention in organizations and in society. Due to globalization and migration, societies are becoming more diverse, especially in the Western world, a trend that is also reflected in the workforce diversity (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2015). Resulting inequalities and a lack of decent and inclusive employment are seen as major societal challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Ferraro et al., 2015; George et al., 2016). Despite extensive legislative measures, such as the enactment of the General Act on Equal Treatment (AGG) in Germany in 2006 (Liebscher, 2019) and organizational diversity initiatives (Özbilgin et al., 2013), inequalities in organizations, e.g., based on gender, class, race, or sexual orientation, have been relatively persistent over time (Acker, 2006).

Several scholars are addressing this evolving field of research on gender and diversity studies (Jungwirth, 2019). Research on diversity issues in organizations shows that workforce diversity can be beneficial, e.g., in terms of greater creativity, innovation, or higher decision-making quality (for an overview, see Harrison & Klein, 2007), and generate a competitive advantage if managed well (Krell & Sieben, 2007). At the same time, diversity scholars point to potential disadvantages of workforce diversity, such as more interpersonal conflict, distrust, lower task performance, or withdrawal (for an overview, see Harrison & Klein, 2007).

Mainstream research on workplace diversity typically refers to certain fixed and measurable social demographic and social identity categories of employees and focuses on studies on single-level explorations (e.g., organizational performance). Critical scholars argue that these categories are socially constructed and intertwined with organizational and societal influences and power relations that are often ignored in these studies (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2015). A ‘doing difference and diversity’ perspective is rather important. Differences are considered to be (re)constructed in social practices based on taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs

about various diversity categories such as gender, race, class, and so on. Such practices often lead to the establishment, (re)production, and perpetuation of inequalities through everyday actions and activities in work life and society and can make a difference in terms of privilege and power (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2015; West & Fenstermaker, 1995).

Given my business administration background and research focus on management, organizations, equal opportunities, and social justice, I position my research in Critical Management Studies (CMS) with a focus on diversity and (in)equality. Also, I disciplinarily position my research in Critical Diversity Studies (CDS) with a focus on management and organizations through the interrelationship between CMS and CDS. In this dissertation, I conduct research on diversity and (in)equality in organizations. In different research constellations, I have collaborated with (inter)national scholars to understand why differences and inequalities based on (e.g., gender, class, sexual orientation, or age) are maintained and how they are (re)produced in daily work life practices. My cumulative dissertation consists of six manuscripts.

I have published or submitted three articles to peer-reviewed journals:

Bernauer, V. S., & Kornau, A. (2024). E-voice in the digitalised workplace. Insights from an alternative organisation. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 34(2), 369-385. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12460>

Bernauer, V. S., Sieben, B., & Haunschild, A. (2023). “You can call me Susan!” Doing gendered class work in luxury service encounters. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 42(4), 494-511. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-10-2021-0272>

Tamm, G., Bernauer, V. S., Joecks, J., & Reimer, T. (2022 submitted to *Human Relations* and after review rejected, now in progress to be submitted). Career strategies of gay leaders: Is homosexuality a superpower or kryptonite?

Additionally, I have published or submitted three chapters to edited books:

Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K. (2024). Women’s entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism industry: A systematic literature review and future research directions. In M. P. Swart, W. Cai, E. C. L. Yang, & A. N. Kimbu (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Gender in Tourism: Views on Teaching, Research and Praxis* (pp. 270-288). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003286721-24>

Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K. (2024). Women's education in tourism entrepreneurship: Trends and issues emerging from Africa. In A. M. Morrison, & D. Buhalis (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Trends and Issues in Tourism. Sustainability, Planning and Development, Management, and Technology* (pp. 220-231). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003291763-22>

Bernauer, V., & Mucha, A. (2019). Reflexion von Diversität im Kontext der Hochschullehre in einer explorativen Lernumgebung – Erfahrungen aus einem hochschuldidaktischen Workshop [Reflecting on diversity in the context of university teaching in an exploratory learning environment – Experiences from a university didactic workshop]. In C. Schomaker & M. Oldenburg (Eds.), *Forschen, Reflektieren, Bilden. Forschendes Lernen in der diversitätssensiblen Hochschulbildung [Studying, reflecting, educating. Research-based learning in diversity-sensitive higher education]* (pp. 88-100). Schneider.

In this dissertation's frame, I discuss how I contribute to CMS on diversity and (in)equality. I use two frameworks that guide my reflections. First, the compass of diversity research introduced by Krell and Sieben (2007) and second, the triad of being critical, political, and reflexive laid out by Collien (2018, 2021).

This dissertation is structured as follows. First, I introduce critical management research on diversity in organizations by providing an overview of research on diversity and (in)equality in organizations and the key characteristics of critical research streams. Second, in the following chapter I describe the two previously mentioned frameworks by Krell and Sieben (2007) and Collien (2018, 2021) that guide my positioning within CMS. Third, I provide an overview of my six manuscripts, describing each paper in detail in terms of publication details, my individual contributions, abstracts, and individual research summaries in regard to critical research. Fourth, I discuss my contribution to CMS on diversity and (in)equality, structured according to Collien's (2018, 2021) triad of being critical, reflexive, and political. Finally, I end this dissertation with concluding remarks. The original published or submitted manuscripts are included in the appendix.

### **Critical management research on diversity and (in)equality in organizations**

My research intentions and goals are strongly guided by questions around diversity and (in)equality in organizations, e.g., how social class distinctions and status differences are (re)produced or how individuals deal with their sexual orientation at work in order to build their careers. In doing so, I follow the tradition of (critical) management studies on diversity and (in)equality. In the following, I therefore introduce research and critical research streams on diversity and (in)equality in organizations.

#### *Research on diversity and (in)equality in organizations*

Diversity can be understood as differences in social demographic and social identity categories, such as gender, class, sexual orientation, age, or educational level (for an overview see Gotsis & Kortezi, 2015; Risberg et al. 2019). According to Harrison and Klein (2007), it is not an individual person who is diverse, but merely a social unit in a group, organization, or society that can be diverse because of the different social and cultural identities of its members (see also Cox, 2001). Individuals, however, may identify with or be classified in more than one social category. For instance, Butler (2007) points out: “If one ‘is’ a woman, that is surely not all one is” (p. 4). The study of the interwovenness of differential dimensions such as gender and race originated in (critical) feminist and race studies. Crenshaw (1989) introduced the concept of intersectionality in 1989, which helped explain the oppression of Black women. Since then, this intersectional lens has been widely applied to the analysis of social categories on multiple axes, focusing on power, structural inequalities, and discrimination (e.g., Acker, 2006).

The triad of gender, class, and race is often the central line to the analysis of differences, but other dimensions such as sexuality, age, or religion can also be the basis for inequalities in organizations (Acker, 2006; Winker & Degele, 2009). Acker (2006) defines “inequality in organizations as systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals,

resources, and outcomes; workplace decisions such as how to organize work; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations” (p. 443). According to Acker (2006), they are reflected in organizations in what she calls inequality regimes: “loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations” (p. 443).

Earlier studies of diversity in the 1960s to 1980s were motivated by the U.S. social justice movement against inequality and oppression in the 1950s to the 1970s and the anti-discrimination legislation they initiated – the enactment of the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 (Vedder, 2006). Subsequently, anti-discrimination directives have also been enacted in Europe, such as Germany’s enactment of the AGG in 2006, which has had an empowering effect on the prevalence of discrimination in the private and public sectors (Liebscher, 2019). To comply with the laws, organizations have implemented Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) and Affirmative Action (AA) (also known as Positive Discrimination) policies (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2015). The objective of the so-called ‘fairness case’ for diversity is to prevent discrimination and promote equal treatment of all employees in the work environment (Georgeac & Rattan, 2023) based on a matter of social justice and moral reasons (Noon, 2007). At that time, scholars focused on discrimination in management practices such as selection, training, performance appraisal, or promotion (c.f., Cox & Nkomo, 1990).

The diversity approach in organizations, and therefore research on diversity, has changed with the emergence of demographic and economic changes, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. Cox and Blake (1991) highlighted the potential to gain a competitive advantage through diversity management (DiM). The so-called ‘business case’ for diversity includes a number of profit- and efficiency-oriented arguments, such as access to a larger pool of high potentials, meeting the demand of diverse customers, marketing reasons, increased creativity,

etc. (Cox & Blake, 1991; Krell 1996; Krell et al., 2018). At that time, research on diversity began to focus on work teams, the business case (Mannix & Neale, 2005), and how to implement an efficient DiM to generate a net-added value (for an overview see Shore et al., 2009).

Proponents of DiM tend to adopt either a confrontational or an integrative stance. In a confrontational stance, a focus on the business case, and thus profit-oriented DiM, hinders the pursuit of social justice and vice versa (Loden & Rosener, 1991). In the integrative stance, on the other hand, economic, moral, and justice motivated reasons for DiM are seen as complementary and mutually reinforcing (Cox, 1993; Krell, 2008). For instance, business case arguments may convince decision-makers to implement DiM in organizations, and legal regulations ensure that DiM continues even in times of economic stress (Sieben & Bornheim, 2011). In contrast to the United States, Europe tends to take a more integrative position (Klarsfeld et al., 2012).

Harrison and Klein (2007) distinguish three types of diversity in organizations to examine and operationalize within-unit differences (independent of the social identity category under study): (1) separation, (2) variety, and (3) disparity. Each of these types is based on certain assumptions and theories and leads to different outcomes. First, studies on diversity as *separation* refer to unit members' differences in positions or opinions on team goals or processes based on beliefs, values, and attitudes. Researchers in this field typically rely on theories of similarity attraction, social categorization, or attraction-selection-attrition to explain difficulties such as conflicts, distrust, or poor performance within heterogeneous social units.

Second, the construct of diversity as *variety* shifts the problem-centered focus of diverse groups of workers to a positive view of diversity as a resource. Scholars who study diversity as *variety* focus on unit members' kind, source, or category of information, knowledge, or experience. They rely on theories such as variation, selection, and retention or information

processing to predict positive outcomes of diverse teams. The variety of accesses typically enables these unit members to be more creative, innovative, flexible, and improve the decision quality (Harrison & Klein, 2007). Diversity as *variety* reflects Cox's and Blake's (1991) "value-in diversity hypothesis suggest[ing] that work team heterogeneity promotes creativity and innovation" (p. 50).

The third construct of diversity as *disparity* identified by Harrison and Klein (2007) focuses on the concentration or inequality of unit members in terms of socially valued or desired assets or resources such as pay, (social) power, prestige, status, or decision-making authority that privilege a few over many. Diversity as *disparity* is more often studied in sociology, which draws on theories of stratification, but also in the organizational literature, which builds on theories of distributive (in)justice and (in)equality, or status hierarchy. Scholars taking this approach typically address within-unit competition, resentful deviance, reduced member input, withdrawal, or voice and silence (Harrison & Klein, 2007). Diversity as disparity, however, integrates a critical lens – which both approaches of diversity as *separation* and *variety* ignore – by focusing on the underlying problems of existing inequality, power relations, and structures that critical management and diversity scholars stress (e.g., Alvesson & Deetz, 2021; Krell & Sieben, 2007; Sieben, 2007a, b; Zanoni et al., 2010; Zanoni & Janssens, 2004).

Management research on diversity typically views diversity "as something to deal with or manage" (Shore et al., 2009, p. 127) and focusses on its antecedents and outcomes, such as prejudice and discrimination against marginalized groups or effects on performance and efficiency (Shore et al., 2009). This mainstream literature on diversity in organizations and management "imposes prescriptive and normative understandings of what diversity is, how it ought to be studied, and how it should be put into practice" (Ahonen et al., 2013, p. 272). Critical scholars decry the lack of examination of power and context (Zanoni et al., 2010). Furthermore, they criticize that "[d]iversity is no longer linked to histories of discrimination,



colonialism, diaspora and economic exploitation, but rather to individualizable, productive sources upon which competitive advantage can be secured” (Ahonen et al., 2013, p. 272). Following this critique, I will characterize critical management research on diversity in organizations in the next section.

### *Characterizing critical research streams on diversity and (in)equality in organizations*

Like Critical Management Studies (CMS), Critical Diversity Studies (CDS) is generally an interdisciplinary scientific field. Fournier and Grey (2000) highlight the plurality of critical traditions in CMS, e.g., the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, post-structuralism, or feminism. The same is true for CDS, which draws on similar bodies of theory and literature but focuses more on critical engagement with diversity (management) issues (Zanoni et al., 2010). Bührmann (2021) calls for a ‘reflexive diversity research’ approach. She argues for an intersectional research perspective with a multi-level and multi-method research design that focuses on what is being researched, how diversity research is conducted, and its intended and unintended consequences. Alvesson and Deetz (2021) emphasize the importance of work, organization, and management to “most disciplines in social science, from psychology to public administration” (p. ix). In addition, they stress that critical researchers direct their critique towards fundamental societal issues and cultural orientations, but also pay attention to social problems, oppression, inequality, and disadvantaged groups (Alvesson & Deetz, 2021).

Critical scholars have criticized diversity management practices in organizations, as well as research on them. CDS emerged in the mid-1990s due to the aforementioned focus on the business case and performance improvement through diversity management (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2015), as well as the “re-appropriation of equal opportunities by business through the notion of diversity” (Zanoni et al., 2010: p. 9). The reviews of Milliken and Martins (1996), who point out the short- and long-term consequences of different types of diversity, or van

Knippenberg and Schippers (2007), who stress how diversity affects group processes and performance, show that this emphasis on diversity research is based on a business logic of how best to manage a diverse workforce, which critical researchers began to question. Scholars such as Zanoni and colleagues (2010) highlight the perspective underlying critical approaches to diversity as a non-positivistic and non-essentialist understanding of diversity in which diverse identities are understood “as socially [constructed and] (re)produced in on-going, context-specific processes. [Moreover, both] reflect existing unequal power relations within a given context and contribute to maintaining, resisting and/or transforming them” (p. 10; see also Gotsis & Kortezi, 2015).

According to Zanoni and colleagues (2010), critical diversity scholars focus their energy on three fundamental criticisms of diversity research. First, scholars challenge a positivistic ontology of identity to understand phenomena in which identities are viewed as easily measured, fixed, and given categories (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2015; Janssens & Zanoni, 2005; Litvin, 1997, 2002; Nkomo & Cox, 1996), i.e., in this sense, identities are not viewed as socially constructed and reproduced. On the one hand, this essentialist interpretation of identities helps to classify and objectify people; on the other hand, it helps to perpetuate status and power differences (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2015). Rather, attention should be focused on how differences and social categories are ‘done’ in everyday social practices and actions. The perspective of ‘doing differences’ (e.g., doing gender or doing diversity) enables researchers to uncover (re)productions of (e.g., gender-based) differences or inequalities that contribute to oppression or (disguised) discrimination in everyday practices (Nentwich & Tienari, 2019). In organizations and society, not only are gendered identities established and maintained, but also gendered hierarchies and structures in which men and masculinity are regularly privileged (Acker, 2006). Often, the white, heterosexual, Western, (upper) middle-class, able-bodied man is presented as the norm, e.g., as the ideal manager, which in turn contributes to “privilege one

side while devaluing the other” (Nentwich & Tienari, 2019, p. 132) and to the constitution of ‘othering’ marginalized and disadvantaged groups (Calás, 1992).

Second, researchers seeking to make sense of diversity processes and meanings must not neglect or downplay organizational and/or societal contextual influences (Janssens & Zanoni, 2005). For instance, Gotsis and Kortezi (2015) point to the hegemony of the Western cultural paradigm that dominates study contexts (see also Jonson et al., 2011; Syed & Özbilgin, 2009). Scholars call for studies in less typical contexts, such as transnational and global contexts (Özkazanç-Pan & Calás, 2015), but also in alternative (non-typical business) organizations (Zanoni et al., 2010, 2017) based on non-capitalist criteria such as participation, solidarity, and equality (Cheney, 2014; Parker et al., 2014a, b; Reedy & Learmonth, 2009).

The third criticism is directed at the inadequate theorization of power: particularly in managerial perspectives, which focus on how best to manage diversity. Thus, differences are presented here as valuable and how they could be instrumentalized by the powerful (employment) party within the work relationship to gain a competitive advantage (Zanoni & Janssens, 2004; see also Kamp & Hagedorn-Rasmussen, 2004). Furthermore, scholars criticize that the structurally unequal access to and distribution of assets and resources due to social group membership is disregarded, which may lead to a (re)production of social inequalities (Prasad et al., 2006). Kersten (2000) emphasizes that diversity management discourses risk hiding or denying the need to challenge structural inequalities inherent in our society by attempting to manage and contain identity conflicts by neutralizing differences in social identities (e.g., race or gender) and competing interests.

### **Concepts to position my critical management research on diversity and (in)equality**

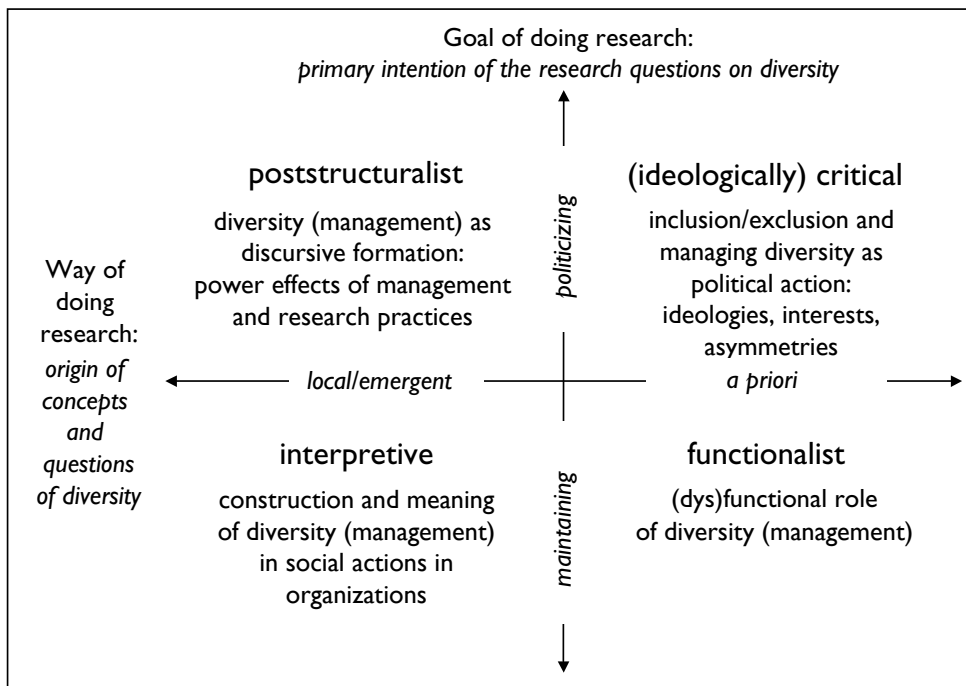
In this section, I will outline two frameworks that help characterize diversity (management) research. Both concepts have been developed by self-identifying critical diversity

(management) researchers (Collien, 2021; Krell et al., 2018). first, the compass of diversity research introduced by Krell and Sieben (2007), and second, the triad of being critical, political, and reflexive laid out by Collien (2018, 2021). Over the course of my dissertation, both frameworks will guide my reflections on how I contribute to and advance CMS on diversity and (in)equality through my manuscripts.

### *The compass of diversity research*

With the compass of diversity research, Krell and Sieben (2007) provide an analytical framework that helps characterize research in the field of diversity management. The compass is rooted in the tradition of critical management research: it builds on Sieben's (2007a, b) compass of management research, which in turn is based on Deetz's (1996) revision of Burrell's and Morgan's (1979) classical framework for sociological paradigms and organizational analysis. While Burrell and Morgan (1979) acknowledge the existence of diverse perspectives in organizational research, they adopt an isolationist view by focusing on competing and incommensurable research paradigms (Sieben, 2007b). In contrast, Deetz's (1996) revised framework highlights the flexibility of research perspectives and the (re)production of programmatic differentiations through researchers' processes and practices of doing research. Following this approach, Sieben's (2007a) compass of management research treats research perspectives as 'discursive orientations' that can be flexibly combined within single studies or research projects (Sieben, 2007a, p. 566).

Krell and Sieben (2007) apply Sieben's (2007a, b) compass of management research as a multi-paradigmatic analytical framework to diversity research. Figure 1 displays the compass of diversity research, which serves as an orientation for research on diversity (management).



**Figure 1** Compass of diversity research  
(Krell & Sieben, 2007, p. 245 (translation from German (VB) adapted from Sieben, 2007a, b)

The compass comprises two axes: the way and the goal of doing research (Krell & Sieben, 2007, p. 244ff.; see also Sieben, 2007a, p. 566ff., 2007b, p. 107ff.):

- The *way of doing research* addresses the origin of concepts and with how the questions of diversity are generated. This dimension is divided into *local/emergent* and *a priori*. The former, *local/emergent*, means that concepts and problems emerge during the research process as one engages with the research data, with the aim of a comprehensible understanding: what is understood or what meanings and effects are attributed to diversity practices and management. The latter, *a priori*, refers to theory-driven or concept-based research, in which the concepts and problems are predefined. The aim may be a (generalizable) systematic overview to explain phenomena, e.g., testing hypotheses on certain diversity dimensions such as gender or race.
- The *goal of doing research* refers to the primary intent of the research question on diversity. This dimension distinguishes between *maintaining* and *politicizing*. *Maintaining* refers to studies that explore aspects of diversity (practices) while preserving the existing social order in order to derive recommendations that support organizations. On the other hand, *politicizing* combines studies that critique existing social orders that foster power imbalances, discrimination, or hidden conflicts to promote resistance and social change in organizations.

Based on these two dimensions, Krell and Sieben (2007) distinguish four perspectives of diversity research, the four discursive orientations: functionalist, interpretive, poststructuralist, and (ideologically) critical (pp. 246ff.; see also Sieben, 2007a, p. 568, 2007b, p. 105):

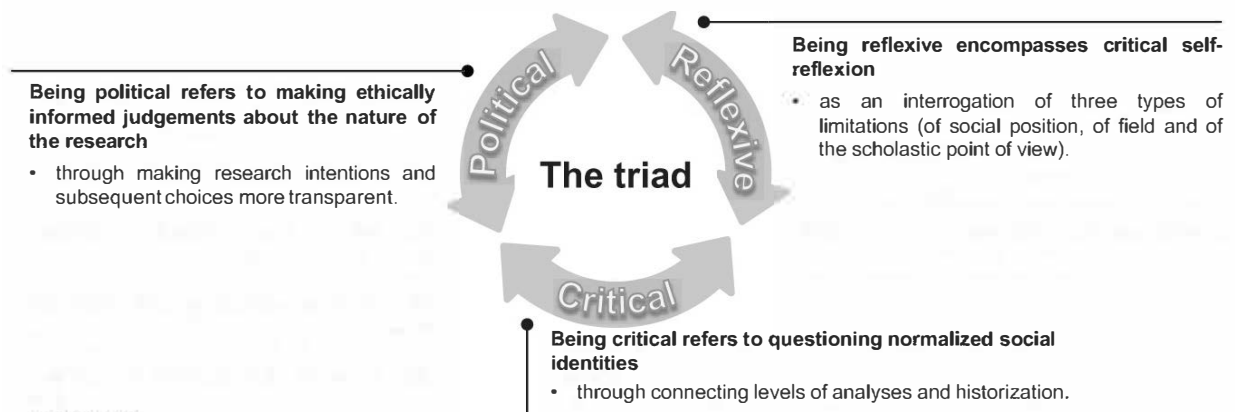
- *Functionalist* approaches analyze the (dys)functional role of diversity (management) in organizations or of specific phenomena. Scholars may test their predefined hypotheses to explain and predict the effects of diversity or propose recommendations with instrumental utility for organizations.
- *Interpretive* approaches focus on the construction and meaning of diversity (management) in social actions in organizations. Scholars may study how a social order is established in work-related interactions.
- *Poststructuralist* approaches (critically) link power and knowledge. In this context, diversity (management) is understood as a discursive formation. Researchers focus on the normalizing, objectifying, and subjectifying effects and how these are constructed and (re)produced through discursive practices, rather than the meaning and sense attributed to them.
- *(Ideologically) critical* approaches also focus on power and domination, but with an emphasis on structural patterns such as gender, class, or sexual orientation and related inequalities. Researchers note how ideologies and interests are negotiated in phenomena or organizations as political sites and how practices of in-exclusion and managing diversity (re)produce asymmetries.

Consistent with the flexible nature of the compass, it should also be noted that Krell and Sieben (2007) emphasize that a particular understanding of diversity is not a fixed characteristic of a perspective, e.g., diversity as socially constructed can also be brought into functionalist-oriented studies and would not be limited to an essentialist view, as one might expect. Overall, the compass can serve as a basis for discussion, for structuring, or for an orientation as a sensitizing concept for diversity and its practices or for systematic analyzes of existing diversity research (Krell & Sieben, 2007), as applied by Sieben and Rastetter (2017) to analyze management research on gender and diversity in German-speaking countries. Another prominent example is the study by Kornau and colleagues (2020): They characterize studies on international human resource management by drawing on Sieben's (2007a, b) compass of management research.

### *The triad of being critical, political, and reflexive*

Collien (2018) calls „for a stronger theoretical and empirical engagement of power-sensitive organizational learning research with societal power relations and issues of persisting dominance” (p. 132). She develops a conceptual framework: the triad of being critical, being

reflexive, and being political, as displayed in Figure 2. She further argues that these are essential elements of CDS to dismantle dominance structures and social inequalities in organizations (Collien, 2018, 2021).



**Figure 2** The triad of being critical, political, and reflexive in CDS

(Adapted from Collien, 2021, p. 43; see also Collien, 2018)

Collien (2018) highlights three aspects that are necessary for *being critical* in CDS. First, she points to the need to challenge “normalized social identities and related assumptions, beliefs, and practices, which legitimize and stabilize systems of domination” (p. 139) and social inequalities. Second, she emphasizes the importance of a multi-level approach to uncover the interrelatedness and dynamics of structure and agency. Third, in the CDS tradition, Collien (2018) reminds scholars to pay attention to historicizing organizational and/or societal contextual influences on identities and practices.

Drawing on Bourdieu (1992), Collien (2018) refers with *being reflexive* to researchers’ self-reflection of their own social positioning, the research field, and the scholastic point of view. Researchers should be aware of their own social positioning – e.g., their own identity, their embeddedness in power relations or the field – and the potential implications for their research. In addition, the academic field and the scholastic point of view may shape the perspective, goal, or manner in which researchers conduct research and should therefore be considered in the process. *Being political* means that researchers are transparent about their

ideological underpinnings in order to inform and provide readers an understanding of their research intentions, aims, or chosen methods and practices (Collien, 2018).

Collien's (2018) triad of being critical, being reflexive, and being political offers a comprehensive theoretical framework to critically characterize and reflect on research within the field of CDS.

### Overview of my six manuscripts

In this section, I present my contributions in terms of both form and content. I provide an overview of the publication details and my respective contributions (see Tables 1 and 2) as well as the abstracts and research summaries (see Tables 3 and 4) of each manuscript in my cumulative dissertation.

#### *The manuscripts' publication details and my contributions*

With (inter)national co-authors from Germany and Australia, I submitted three manuscripts to double-blind peer-reviewed journals. While Bernauer and Kornau (2024) and Bernauer et al. (2023) have already been published, Tamm et al. was submitted to *Human Relations* in November 2022 and rejected in March 2023 after a review process by an editor and three expert reviewers. We are currently revising the article and will submit it to *Human Resource Management (US)*. The three articles in international peer-reviewed journals are:

Bernauer, V. S., & Kornau, A. (2024). E-voice in the digitalised workplace. Insights from an alternative organisation. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 34(2), 369-385. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12460>

Bernauer, V. S., Sieben, B., & Haunschild, A. (2023). "You can call me Susan!" Doing gendered class work in luxury service encounters. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 42(4), 494-511. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-10-2021-0272>

Tamm, G., Bernauer, V. S., Joecks, J., & Reimer, T. (submitted in Nov. 2022 to *Human Relations* and after review rejected in March 2023, now in progress to be submitted to *Human Resource Management (US)*). Career strategies of gay leaders: Is homosexuality a superpower or kryptonite?



I also submitted three other manuscripts with (inter)national co-authors from Germany, South Africa, and Singapore to edited books. I submitted one chapter with Swart and Thirumaran to a double-blind, peer-reviewed Routledge Handbook. It has been assessed by two anonymous reviewers and the editors; it was published in 2024. Another chapter with Swart and Thirumaran was also published in 2024 in a Routledge Handbook after being peer-reviewed by an anonymous reviewer and the editors. A third practice-oriented chapter, co-authored with Mucha, has already been published in 2019. The three chapters in the edited books are:

- Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K. (2024). Women's entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism industry: A systematic literature review and future research directions. In M. P. Swart, W. Cai, E. C. L. Yang, & A. N. Kimbu (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook on Gender in Tourism: Views on Teaching, Research and Praxis* (pp. 270-288). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003286721-24>
- Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K. (2024). Women's education in tourism entrepreneurship: Trends and issues emerging from Africa. In A. M. Morrison, & D. Buhalis (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Trends and Issues in Tourism. Sustainability, Planning and Development, Management, and Technology* (pp. 220-231). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003291763-22>
- Bernauer, V., & Mucha, A. (2019). Reflexion von Diversität im Kontext der Hochschullehre in einer explorativen Lernumgebung – Erfahrungen aus einem hochschuldidaktischen Workshop [Reflecting on diversity in the context of university teaching in an exploratory learning environment – Experiences from a university didactic workshop]. In C. Schomaker, & M. Oldenburg (Eds.), *Forschen, Reflektieren, Bilden. Forschendes Lernen in der diversitätssensiblen Hochschulbildung [Studying, reflecting, educating. Research-based learning in diversity-sensitive higher education]* (pp. 88-100). Schneider.

Tables 1 and 2 provide details of the manuscripts, such as publication status, journals or edited books, or where preliminary versions have been presented. In addition, based on Allen's and colleagues' (2019) contributor role taxonomy (CrediT), I present there in great detail how I contributed to each manuscript.

**Table 1** Publication details and my contributions to articles in double-blind, peer-reviewed journals

NO.	1	2	3
AUTHORS	Bernauer, V. S., & Komau, A.	Bernauer, V. S., Sieben, B., & Haunschild, A.	Tamm, G., Bernauer, V. S., Joecks, J., & Reimer, T.
TITLE	E-voice in the digitalised workplace. Insights from an alternative organisation	"You can call me Susan!" Doing gendered class work in luxury service encounters	Career strategies of gay leaders: Is homosexuality a superpower or kryptonite?
PUBLICATION STATUS	Published 2024	Published 2023	Submitted in Nov. 2022 & after review rejected in March 2023
JOURNAL	Human Resource Management Journal (UK)	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal	Human Relations (in progress to be submitted to Human Resource Management (US))
RANKING	AJG (ABS): 4*; H-index: 82; Impact Factor: 5,667; ABDC: A; JQ3 Org/Pers: B	AJG (ABS) 2; H-index: 29; Impact Factor: 2,36; ABDC: B	AJG (ABS): 4; H-index: 142; Impact Factor: 5,658; FT 50: 11; ABDC: A*; JQ3 Org/Pers: B (HRM: AJG (ABS): 4; H-index: 100; Impact Factor: 6,235; FT 50: 12; ABDC: A*; JQ3 Org/Pers: B)
PRELIMINARY VERSION PRESENTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Autumn Workshop of the Section Personnel in the German Academic Association for Business Research (VHB), Duesseldorf, Sept. 2020</li> <li>36<sup>th</sup> European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS) Colloquium, virtual, July 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Symposium on Emotions in Worklife (APSEW), Melbourne, Dec. 2017</li> <li>5<sup>th</sup> Workshop of the Critical Organization Research Forum, Duisburg-Essen, Oct. 2017</li> <li>Autumn Workshop of the Section Personnel in the German Academic Association for Business Research (VHB), Paderborn, Sept. 2017</li> <li>33<sup>rd</sup> European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS) Colloquium, Copenhagen, July 2017</li> <li>Symposium „State, Work, and Affects“, Vienna, Jan. 2016</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management (AOM), Seattle, Aug. 2022</li> <li>24<sup>th</sup> Colloquium on Personnel Economics (COPE), Aarhus, March 2022</li> <li>9<sup>th</sup> Prout at Work Conference, virtual Keynote, Nov. 2021</li> </ul>
CONCEPTUALIZATION	Equally	Equally	Equally
DATA COLLECTION	Predominantly: Interviews (development of semi-structured interview guides, recruiting interview participants, conducting 9 out of 20 interviews, supervision of a research assistant conducting 9 interviews and research assistants creating the transcripts) Questionnaire (development, recruiting participants and conduction with Unipark)	Completely: 18 interviews (development of two different semi-structured interview guides, recruiting interview participants, conduction, and transcription of interviews)	Predominantly: development of a semi-structured interview guide Equally: recruiting (10 out of 36) interview participants, conduction of (13 out of 36) interviews and supervision of research assistants, checking (10 out of 36) transcripts (created by an automatic transcription service)
DATA ANALYSES			
CODING & DATA STRUCTURE	Predominantly: open coding of 14 interviews, supervision of a research assistant openly coding 6 interviews, generating first-order codes, axial coding grouping first-order codes to second order-themes Equally: building aggregated dimensions and discussion of final data structure	Completely: open coding of 18 interviews, generating first-order codes, axial coding grouping first-order codes to second-order themes and building aggregated dimensions Equally: discussion of final data structure	Equally: open coding (I coded 10 interviews) Predominantly: generating first-order codes, axial coding, grouping first-order codes to second-order themes, and building aggregated dimensions (typology) Equally: discussion of final data structure
MODEL BUILDING	Equally: discussion of model Predominantly: visualization of model	Equally: discussion of model Less involved: visualization of model	Predominantly: building typology Equally: discussion of model Less involved: visualization of model
WRITING – ORIGINAL DRAFT	Completely: theoretical background, methods, and findings sections Equally: discussion section	Completely: abstract, method, findings, discussion, and conclusion sections	Completely: method and findings sections
WRITING – REVISION & EDITING	Equally: abstract, introduction, theoretical background, methods, findings, discussion, and conclusion sections	Equally: abstract, introduction, method, findings, discussion, and conclusion sections Less involved: theoretical background section	Predominantly: abstract and discussion section Equally: introduction, theoretical background, method, findings, and conclusion sections
SUBMISSION PROCESS	Completely: submission Predominantly: writing response letter	Completely: submission Predominantly: writing response letter	Not involved: submission

**Table 2** Publication details and my contributions to chapters in edited books

NO.	1	2	3
AUTHORS	Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K.	Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K.	Bernauer, V., & Mucha, A.
TITLE	Women's entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism industry: A systematic literature review and future research directions	Women's education in tourism entrepreneurship: Trends and issues emerging from Africa	Reflexion von Diversität im Kontext der Hochschullehre in einer explorativen Lernumgebung – Erfahrungen aus einem hochschuldidaktischen Workshop
PUBLICATION STATUS	Published in 2024 (double-blind, peer-review process)	Published in 2024 (peer-reviewed by one anonymous reviewer and the editors)	Published in 2019 (peer-reviewed by the editors)
EDITED BOOK	Routledge Handbook of Gender in Tourism: Views on Teaching, Research and Praxis	Routledge Handbook of Trends and Issues in Tourism. Sustainability, Planning and Development, Management, and Technology	Forschen, Reflektieren, Bilden. Forschendes Lernen in der diversitätssensiblen Hochschulbildung
EDITORS	M. P. Swart, W. Cai, E. C. L. Yang, & A. N. Kimbu	A. M. Morrison, & D. Buhalis	C. Schomaker, & M. Oldenburg
PRELIMINARY VERSION PRESENTED	Virtual Research Seminar Series of the Asia Pacific Centre for Hospitality Research (APCHR), virtual, July 2022	-	-
CONCEPTUALIZATION	Equally	Equally	Equally
DATA COLLECTION	Equally: screening process (523 articles identified through database search (I screened EBSCO (24) and Web of Science (131)), I excluded 145 duplicates, all authors screened 378 articles on the basis of title, abstract, and keywords and excluded 265 articles), I screened 41 out of 113 full texts, after extensive discussions with all authors, we included 73 articles)	Equally: screening process (523 articles identified through database search (I screened EBSCO (24) and Web of Science (131)), I excluded 145 duplicates, all authors screened 378 articles on the basis of title, abstract, and keywords and excluded 265 articles), I screened 41 out of 113 full texts, after extensive discussions with all authors, we included 70 articles)	Equally in the workshop
DATA ANALYSES	Equally: analyses of articles and discussion of model Less involved: visualization of model (figure 3) & development of table 3	Equally: analyses of articles and discussion of model Less involved: visualization of model	Equally (I analyzed predominantly the dimensions age and class)
WRITING – ORIGINAL DRAFT	Completely: abstract, methodology, discussion and conclusion sections & visualization of tables 1 and 2 & figure 1	Completely: conclusion section	Predominantly: theoretical background (age and class) and findings (age and class) sections Equally: "Our workshop" and conclusion sections
WRITING – REVISION & EDITING	Predominantly: introduction, Findings, "Types of businesses and geographical foci", "Determining factors to success (or failure) for women's entrepreneurship", "Women's entrepreneurship motivations in hospitality and tourism", "Women's entrepreneurship barriers in hospitality and tourism", "Non-government support strategies for women's entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism", "Government intervention policies to support women's entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism", "Discussion and conclusion" sections Equally: visualization of figure 3 Less involved: Takeaway points, visualization of table 3 & figure 2	Equally: all sections	Equally: abstract, introduction, theoretical background, methods, findings, and conclusion section
SUBMISSION PROCESS	Not involved: submission Predominantly: writing the response letter	Not involved: submission Predominantly: writing the response letter	Completely: submission Predominantly: writing response letter

*The manuscripts' abstracts and research summaries*

In this section, I present the abstracts of the published or submitted manuscripts and the research summaries. I also characterize my diversity foci in terms of Harrison's and Klein's (2007) typology of diversity and my research perspectives with reference to Krell's and Sieben's (2007) compass of diversity research.

*Article No. 1* is published as:

Bernauer, V. S., & Kornau, A. (2024). E-voice in the digitalised workplace. Insights from an alternative organisation. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 34(2), 369-385. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12460>

**Abstract**

Digitalisation permeates all aspects of organizational life, especially the ways we communicate with each other. Drawing on a case study of an alternative organization – the German collective Premium, which is almost entirely digitally organized – we seek to explore contextual factors that facilitate or hinder the expression of electronic voice (e-voice). Based on 20 semi-structured interviews with different members of the collective, we identified various contextual facilitators and barriers to e-voice expression: Collective belief in the value of diverse voices, cautious online and complementary face-to-face communication facilitate e-voice, while less formalised structures, power and knowledge asymmetries, and information overload hinder it. These findings demonstrate that despite an alternative organisation's firm intention and self-reflective efforts to create an inclusive and participatory digital space, tensions arise. Further, our study contributes to employee voice theorising by outlining contextual factors that are specifically relevant to e-voice practices.

**Keywords:** Alternative organisation, Collective, Digitalisation, E-voice, Electronic voice, Employee voice

**Practitioner notes**

What is currently known?

- Being able to voice concerns and ideas has a positive impact on employees and the success of the company.
- Digital tools such as social media are important channels through which employee voice is expressed.
- The conditions under which electronic voice (e-voice) is facilitated or hindered are unclear.

What this paper adds?

- Identification of facilitators and barriers to e-voice.
- Collective belief in the value of diverse voices, cautious-online, and complementary face-to-face communication facilitate e-voice.

- Less formalised structures, power and knowledge asymmetries, and information overload hinder e-voice.
- Empirical insights from a unique case study.

The implications for practitioners:

- Train your employees to be cautious, self-reflective, and deliberate in their online communications.
- In highly digitalised work environments, implement practices that ensure opportunities for complementary face-to-face communication and building personal relationships.
- Assign roles and responsibilities to strengthen accountability and ensure that electronic voices are heard, and appropriate ideas are effectively put into practice.

### Research summary

The aim of this qualitative study is to theorize employee voice in a digitalized context by explaining the specific conditions under which e-voice occurs. In doing so, facilitators and barriers to e-voice in the organizational context of an alternative organization (a highly participatory and digitalized (work)place) are presented. For this single, in-depth case study Kornau and I conducted a survey and interviews. The online questionnaire helped us understand Premium's organizational context, develop our interview guide, and select interview participants – 36% (54) of the Board members (Premium's online forum) participated. In a second step, we conducted 20 in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Using the so-called Gioia methodology, we began our analysis with open coding. In the next step of the analysis, we were inspired by predefined theoretical concepts, which led to six second-order themes and two aggregated dimensions in the final step.

We focus on equality as one of the main principles of Premium – the alternative organization under study, based on ecological, economic, and social principles with a non-hierarchical 'consensus democracy'. Referring to the three types of diversity distinguished by Harrison and Klein (2007), we examined diversity as disparity, e.g., by looking at differences in inherent status, power, and knowledge asymmetries among members. However, we also focused on diversity as variety by drawing attention to the collective belief in the value of

diverse voices, cautious-online, and complementary face-to-face communication that facilitate e-voice in the organization.

In keeping with the flexible nature of the compass of diversity research by Krell and Sieben (2007), we have adopted an interpretive and an ideologically critical orientation. On the one hand, our way of doing research reflects an interpretive approach in that we are open to emerging meanings and concepts in analyzing the in-depth interviews and understanding the organization through the survey. We also pursue maintaining intentions with our goal of doing research by demonstrating what facilitates e-voice and thereby making organizations inclusive. At the same time, we have also taken an ideologically critical approach. We drew inspiration from predefined theoretical concepts with which we examined our data (though we are still open to emerging additional concepts). By understanding organizations as political arenas with different actors and differences in interests, resources, or power, we pursued a politicizing goal. We critique existing structures of information overload, power and knowledge asymmetries, and less formalized structures that hinder e-voice.

*Article No. 2* is published as:

Bernauer, V. S., Sieben, B., & Haunschild, A. (2023). "You can call me Susan!" Doing gendered class work in luxury service encounters. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 42(4), 494-511. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-10-2021-0272>

#### Abstract

**Purpose** – With a focus on service encounters in the luxury segment of hospitality and tourism, the authors analyse how inherent social class distinctions and status differences are (re-)produced and which role gender plays in this process of “doing class”.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The authors combine concepts of class work and inequality regimes with a focus on intersections of class and gender. The empirical study is based on interviews in Germany with first- class flight attendants, five-star hotel employees, and luxury customers on how they perceive and legitimize luxury services, working conditions and status differences.

**Findings** – The authors identify perceptions and practices of status enhancement and status dissonance among luxury service workers, as well as gender practices and meanings such as specific feminized roles service workers take on. The authors also conceptualize these intersecting patterns of inequality reproduction as “gendered class work”.

Originality/value – The study broadens empirical accounts of labour relations in the service industries. The concept of organizational class work is extended towards worker–customer interactions. With the concept of gendered class work, the authors contribute to research on the intersectionality of class and gender and the reproduction of inequalities.

Keywords: Class, Status, Gender, Interactive service work, Luxury services

#### Research summary

The aim of this qualitative study is to analyze how social class distinctions and status differences are (re-)produced in the context of luxury service work and what role gender plays in this process of ‘doing class’. In doing so, Sieben, Haunschild, and I found the theory of inequality regimes in organizations (Acker, 2006) and the doing of gendered class work particularly useful for our analysis. We drew on 18 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with luxury workers and customers and applied the so-called Gioia methodology for our analysis. The process of open coding and grouping the first-order informant-centered codes through axial coding by being informed by theoretical concepts resulted in 10 second-order theory-centered themes. In a final step, we identified three aggregated dimensions for the workers and two for the customers perspective.

In the sense of Harrison and Klein (2007), we studied diversity as disparity by analyzing the (re)production of inequalities through gendered class work. In line with Krell’s and Sieben’s (2007) compass of diversity research, we applied a poststructuralist perspective. We aimed to achieve a politicizing goal of doing research by focusing on class work in luxury service encounters and demonstrating how the (re)production of status differences and inequality is linked to gender practices of status-related self-perception, identity-formation, and legitimization. In this study, we “question existing structures, processes, and practices” (Sieben, 2007a, p. 568) in luxury service encounters, such as how service workers and customers perceive and legitimize luxury services, working conditions, and status differences. As part of

the research process, we paid attention to emergent concepts, and we identified the practices with that workers and customers are doing gendered class work in luxury service interactions.

*Article No. 3* was submitted to *Human Relations* in Nov. 2022 and after review rejected in March 2023:

Tamm, G., Bernauer, V. S., Joecks, J., & Reimer, T. (submitted in Nov. 2022 to *Human Relations* and after review rejected in March 2023, now in progress to be submitted to *Human Resource Management (US)*). Career strategies of gay leaders: Is homosexuality a superpower or kryptonite?

Abstract (status Nov. 2022)

Previous research on invisible stigma has tended to examine the barriers and discrimination of individuals indicating that it seems more difficult to reach leadership positions. Little is known about how individuals with invisible stigma (e.g., gay people) actually deal with their stigma (e.g., homosexuality) to build their careers. Do they experience it as a weakening kryptonite or yet as a strengthening superpower? Based on 36 semi-structured interviews with gay leaders in high-level positions from Germany and Australia, this study identifies a typology of four strategies gay leaders use to build their careers: the Meritocrat, the Boys Club Member, the Gay Mafioso, and the Inclusion Hero. While the first two rely on a denial or passing strategy regarding their sexual orientation, the last two use or reveal their gay identity to embrace their careers. Another dimension in which gay leaders rely on is individual or group power. We contribute to the theorizing of sexual orientation at work and leadership career development.

Keywords: Homosexuality, Sexual orientation, Leadership, Career strategies, Stigma, Gay, Passing, Revealing (status Nov. 2022)

Research summary

The aim of this qualitative study is to explore how gay leaders deal with their sexual orientation at work in order to build their careers. Together with Tamm, Joecks, and Reimer, I conducted 36 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with gay leaders in management from Germany and Australia, which we analyzed using the so-called Gioia methodology and build on the theory of identity management. We started with open coding and grouped the initial first-order codes through axial coding, resulting in 12 second-order themes. In a final step, we identified four aggregate dimensions that led to a typology of how gay leaders deal with their sexual orientation to build their careers.



According to Harrison's and Klein's (2007) types of diversity, we primarily studied diversity as variety focusing on career strategies of gay leaders based on their work and career experiences and their network ties related to their sexual orientation. Additionally, diversity as disparity was a relevant driver to the intent of our study, as gay leaders regularly face discrimination in the workplace based on their sexual orientation, such as being promoted less often (Drydakis, 2019) or paid less than their heterosexual counterparts (La Nauze, 2015). In the sense of Krell's and Sieben's (2007) compass of diversity research, we took an interpretive approach. Aside from the barriers and discrimination faced by this marginalized group, little is known in the literature about their career strategies. Therefore, we took a local/emergent approach and were open to arising concepts in our interview data to understand their career strategies. Since we are investigating the success strategies of this marginalized group that could be relevant and help others to act similarly, we pursued a maintaining goal with this study.

**Table 3** Research summaries of my articles in double-blind, peer-reviewed journals

NO.	1	2	3
AUTHORS	Bernauer, V. S., & Kornau, A.	Bernauer, V. S., Sieben, B., & Haunschild, A.	Tamm, G., Bernauer, V. S., Joecks, J., & Reimer, T.
TITLE	E-voice in the digitalised workplace. Insights from an alternative organisation	“You can call me Susan!” Doing gendered class work in luxury service encounters	Career strategies of gay leaders: Is homosexuality a superpower or kryptonite?
DIVERSITY FOCUS	Diversity as disparity and variety	Diversity as disparity	Diversity as variety and disparity
DIVERSITY DIMENSIONS & ASPECTS	Equality (alternative organization based on ecological, economic, and social principles with consensus democracy)	Reproduction of inequalities through gendered class work (doing gendered class work)	Sexual orientation (career strategies of gay leaders)
RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE	Interpretive and (ideologically) critical study	Poststructuralist study	Interpretive study
AIM / RESEARCH QUESTIONS	The aim is to contribute to the literature on employee voice by explaining the specific conditions under which e-voice occurs—presenting facilitators and barriers to e-voice in the specific organizational context of an alternative organization (a highly participatory and digitalized environment).	The aim is to analyze how social class distinctions and status differences are (re-)produced in the context of luxury service work and what role gender plays in this process of “doing class”.	The aim is to explore how gay leaders deal with their sexual orientation at work in order to build their careers.
THEORY	Theorizing of employee voice in a digitalized context	Inequality regimes in organizations: doing gendered class work	Identity management
RESEARCH CONTEXT	Alternative organizations in digitalized (work)places	Luxury service work	Gay leaders in management in Germany and Australia
RESEARCH METHOD	Qualitative (single, in-depth case study)	Qualitative (semi-structured interviews)	Qualitative (semi-structured interviews)
DATA COLLECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey: Online questionnaire 54 participants (36% of the Board members)</li> <li>• 20 in-depth, semi-structured interviews</li> </ul>	18 in-depth, semi-structured interviews	36 in-depth, semi-structured interviews
DATA ANALYSIS	Gioia methodology (6 2 <sup>nd</sup> order themes & 2 aggregate dimensions); interpretive, social constructivist perspective	Gioia methodology (10 2 <sup>nd</sup> order themes & 3 aggregate dimensions); interpretive perspective	Gioia methodology (12 2 <sup>nd</sup> order themes & 4 aggregate dimensions); interpretive, social constructivist perspective

*Chapter No. 1* is under review as:

Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K. (2024). Women’s entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism industry: A systematic literature review and future research directions. In M. P. Swart, W. Cai, E. C. L. Yang, & A. N. Kimbu (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Gender in Tourism: Views on Teaching, Research and Praxis* (pp. 270-288). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003286721-24>

#### Abstract

Research often portrays women as weaker entrepreneurs in the hospitality and tourism (H&T) industry. Our systematic literature review sheds light on women’s entrepreneurial success in H&T by examining four determining factors to success (or failure) for women’s entrepreneurship, namely (1) motivations that lead women to become entrepreneurs, (2) barriers they face, (3) non-government strategies, and (4) governmental policies. Our findings suggest that financial and legal support, training,

political, social, and cultural backing are among the consistent success factors examined in previous studies. However, authors are silent on how the four key themes can be aligned to support women to succeed in H&T entrepreneurship. As a key contribution, this systematic literature review provides a template for future research that starts from the identifiable success factors. In addition, this work provides practitioners such as policymakers and industry leaders with a better understanding of how to reduce barriers to women's entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurs, Tourism and hospitality, Motivations, Barriers, Strategies, Policies

#### Research summary

This qualitative study's objective is to present a critical analysis of the current state of research on women's entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism (H&T). We carve out: (i) which factors motivate women to become entrepreneurs, (ii) what barriers they face, (iii) which strategies, and (iv) which governmental policies need to be aligned in order to support women's success in entrepreneurship. Through database searches Swart, Thirumaran, and I identified 523 articles, of which we included 73 articles after several screening processes and analyzed them with a qualitative content analysis.

Our original motivation for this systematic literature review was the underrepresentation of women among entrepreneurs in the H&T industry, following calls for more feminist approaches to this topic (e.g., Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2020; Wilson-Youlden & Bosworth, 2019). Guided by this motivation, we studied diversity as disparity (Harrison & Klein, 2007) with the aim to empowering the women themselves, but also enhancing their opportunities for support. According to Krell's and Sieben's (2007) compass of diversity research, this study can be characterized as ideologically critical and interpretive. On the one hand, we pursued a politicizing goal of doing research, for example, by aiming for an (ideologically critical) descriptive stocktaking of what scholars have highlighted about women's motivations, as well as their barriers and possible support options, on the path to entrepreneurship. A priori, we pre-defined categories such as motivations, barriers, strategies, and policies to analyze the relevant articles we identified. At the same time, our study was

influenced by an interpretive approach, in the sense that we aimed for the maintaining goal of identifying and highlighting what supports women in becoming successful entrepreneurs. In our analysis, we were open to emerging themes within our four predefined categories that guided our research process.

*Chapter No. 2* is accepted for publication (2023, forthcoming):

Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K. (2024). Women's education in tourism entrepreneurship: Trends and issues emerging from Africa. In A. M. Morrison, & D. Buhalis (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Trends and Issues in Tourism. Sustainability, Planning and Development, Management, and Technology* (pp. 220-231). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003291763-22>

#### Abstract

Over the past decade, international organisations have highlighted the important role of women as drivers of tourism entrepreneurship. The challenges and opportunities are documented in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Report on Women in Tourism, and the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap. In addition to these systemic challenges, African women in tourism have limited education, particularly in areas related to entrepreneurship. Although peer-reviewed publications on women's entrepreneurship in tourism are widespread, this topic remains underrepresented in Africa, with studies evident from South Africa, Tanzania, and Burkina Faso. Although the need for education is a consistent recommendation in most of these publications, it is only a mainstream suggestion that does not address the specific educational needs of women entrepreneurs in tourism. The need for entrepreneurial education has been exacerbated by the recent pandemic, as many women in tourism have lost their jobs and have been forced by circumstances to start a new business. The emerging trends highlight the need to profile women entrepreneurs in tourism by developing flexible and self-directed training programmes based on their current level of education and entrepreneurial needs.

Keywords: Africa, Education, Women, Gender, Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurship, Trends, Issues

#### Research summary

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify (i) key trends and issues impacting the education of African women to become tourism entrepreneurs, (ii) what motivates women to become tourism entrepreneurs, (iii) what kind of studies have been conducted on women entrepreneurs in tourism and where, (iv) what are the challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs, and (v) strategies for implementation over the next 30 years in Africa to achieve

certain United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through database searches, Swart, Thirumaran, and I identified 523 articles, of which we included 70 articles after several screening processes and analyzed them with a qualitative content analysis.

As described for the previous chapter 1, our initial driver for this systematic literature review was the under-representation of women among entrepreneurs in the H&T industry. In this study, however, we set a different focus. Here, we were interested in the specific field of women's entrepreneurship education in Africa in alignment with the UN SDGs. In accordance with Harrison and Klein (2007), we focused on diversity as disparity to critically address women's access to and distribution of assets and resources for successful entrepreneurship. Similar to the previously described chapter 1, this systematic literature review was examined with an ideologically critical and interpretive lens along the lines of Krell's and Sieben's (2007) compass of diversity research. Again, Swart, Thirumaran, and I pursued a politicizing goal of doing research by taking a descriptive stocktaking of what scholars have highlighted on major trends and issues impacting education, skills development, and training in women's entrepreneurship in the African H&T industry to suggest strategies for women in alignment with certain UN SDGs. These predefined categories in which we were interested guided our analysis a priori. On the other hand, we took an interpretive approach with the aim of maintaining what helps women and what needs to be done to achieve certain UN SDGs.

*Chapter No. 3* is published as:

Bernauer, V., & Mucha, A. (2019). Reflexion von Diversität im Kontext der Hochschullehre in einer explorativen Lernumgebung – Erfahrungen aus einem hochschuldidaktischen Workshop [Reflecting on diversity in the context of university teaching in an exploratory learning environment – Experiences from a university didactic workshop]. In C. Schomaker, & M. Oldenburg (Eds.), *Forschen, Reflektieren, Bilden. Forschendes Lernen in der diversitätssensiblen Hochschulbildung [Studying, reflecting, educating. Research-based learning in diversity-sensitive higher education]* (pp. 88-100). Schneider.

## Abstract

Lecturers in higher education are increasingly confronted with the requirement to deal with the diversity of their students. The normative idea is that they should constructively integrate this diversity constructively into their teaching activities, but at the same time they should not promote the categorization and essentialization of certain diversity dimensions. For the Diversity Day 2018 at Helmut Schmidt University – University of the Federal Armed Forces, Hamburg, we designed the workshop "Diversity in teaching". The aim was to familiarize participants with the concept of diversity and to show them how diversity dimensions such as gender, age, and class can be connected to their teaching at the university. In addition, diversity-sensitive teaching was explicitly addressed as an inherent normative teaching goal and put up for discussion. The World Café method was used as an exploratory teaching-learning approach that allowed the participants to reflect not only on possible fields for diversity in their own teaching, but also on their attitudes toward this concept. In this article, we present the experiences from the workshop and relate them to the conceptual foils of diversity and research-based learning. The open, explorative-constructivist workshop setting seems to have triggered a thought process among the participants that, according to the feedback, was found to be highly stimulating and enriching.

Keywords: Diversity-sensitive teaching, Higher education, Gender, Age, Class

## Research summary

This chapter is not a research manuscript in the classical sense. In this practice-oriented contribution, Mucha and I present experiences from a workshop on "Diversity in teaching" and contextualize them in relation to the concepts of diversity and research-based learning. Our guiding question was: how can a learning space for lecturers look like in which they can address the meaning of diversity to their teaching activities without being lectured or patronized?

In terms of Harrison's and Klein's (2007) typology, we studied diversity as variety by focusing on differences in knowledge or experiences based on gender, age, class, and diversity-sensitivity in the context of higher education teaching. At the same time, I can also identify elements of diversity as disparity that guided the workshop discussion, such as unequal opportunities based on differences and voices that tend to be overheard. In what follows, I apply the compass of diversity research by Krell and Sieben (2007) to the teaching/workshop setting. I can identify instances of the ideologically critical and interpretive orientation. Mucha and I pursued a politicizing goal by being sensitive to inequalities in higher education teaching based on social differences. Through the workshop, we aimed to raise awareness and build skills

among the participants for their own (diversity-sensitive) teaching. At the same time, we aimed for a maintaining goal by taking an interactive, reflective, and self-directed approach to diversity-sensitive teaching in the workshop: 16 participants were brought together in an open, explorative-constructivist workshop setting. The World Café method with a teaching-learning approach allowed participants to construct, reflect, and discuss their knowledge and experiences about diversity in the classroom.

**Table 4** Research summaries of chapters in edited books

NO.	1	2	3
AUTHORS	Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K.	Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K.	Bernauer, V., & Mucha, A.
TITLE	Women's entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism industry: A systematic literature review and future research directions	Women's education in tourism entrepreneurship: Trends and issues emerging from Africa	Reflexion von Diversität im Kontext der Hochschullehre in einer explorativen Lernumgebung – Erfahrungen aus einem hochschuldidaktischen Workshop
DIVERSITY FOCUS	Diversity as disparity	Diversity as disparity	Diversity as variety and disparity
DIVERSITY DIMENSIONS & ASPECTS	Gender (women's entrepreneurship)	Gender (education of women)	Gender, age, class, and being diversity-sensitive (in higher education teaching)
RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE	Ideologically critical & interpretive study	Ideologically critical & interpretive study	In teaching: Ideologically critical & interpretive orientation
AIM / RESEARCH QUESTIONS	The aim is to present a critical analysis of the current state of research on women's entrepreneurship in H&T. We carve out: (i) which factors motivate women to become entrepreneurs, (ii) what are the barriers they face, (iii) which strategies will support, and (iv) which governmental policies need to be aligned in order to support women's success in entrepreneurship.	The aim is to identify (i) the key trends and issues that have an impact on African women's tourism entrepreneurship education, (ii) what motivates women to become tourism entrepreneurs, (iii) what kind of studies have been conducted on women entrepreneurs in tourism and where, (iv) what are the challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs, and (v) strategies for implementation for the next 30 years in Africa to achieve certain United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	The aim is to present experiences from a workshop on "Diversity in teaching" and contextualize them in relation to the concepts of diversity and research-based learning. How can a learning space for lecturers look like, in which they can deal with the meaning of diversity for their teaching activities without being lectured or patronized.
THEORY	Descriptive stocktaking of motivations, barriers as well as strategies and governmental policies to support women's entrepreneurship in H&T	Descriptive stocktaking of major trends and issues impacting education, skills development, and training in women's entrepreneurship in Africa's H&T industry to propose strategies for women in alignment with certain UN SDGs	Interactive, reflective, & self-directed approach to diversity-sensitive teaching
RESEARCH CONTEXT / FOCUS	Women's entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism (H&T)	Education for women in Africa on entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism (H&T)	In teaching: Diversity-sensitive teaching in higher education
RESEARCH METHOD	Qualitative (systematic literature review)	Qualitative (systematic literature review)	Workshop method: World Café with a teaching-learning approach
DATA COLLECTION	523 articles identified through database search, after several screening processes, we included 73 articles	523 articles identified through database search, after several screening processes, we included 70 articles	Focus group (16 participants) in open, explorative-constructivist workshop setting
DATA ANALYSIS	Systematic literature review, content analysis of full-texts	Systematic literature review, content analysis of full-texts	In teaching: Participants construct and discuss knowledge about diversity



## **Positioning my manuscripts within Critical Management Studies on diversity and (in)equality**

I set out this cumulative dissertation with the fundamental aim of addressing issues of diversity and (in)equality in the workplace and raising awareness of the topic at various levels, such as research, teaching in higher education, or work practices in organizations and society. As outlined in the previous sections, my dissertation includes three peer-reviewed journal articles and three chapters in edited books. In what follows, I position my manuscripts within CMS on diversity and (in)equality. The discussion of how I contribute to this field of research is structured according to Collien's (2018, 2021) triad of being critical, being reflexive, and being political.

### *Being critical*

The characterization of my contributions according to Krell's and Sieben's (2007) compass of diversity research has shown that I, together with my co-authors, have not always and exclusively chosen a politicizing goal with adapting an (ideologically) critical or poststructuralist orientation. This reflects the original thought behind the compass as Sieben (2007a) does not understand the four identified research "orientations as mutually exclusive or irreconcilable. On the contrary, an ideal research program may rotate among these orientations." (p. 574). Overall, I can say that my research intentions and goals were strongly guided by questions around diversity and (in)equality in organizations with a politicizing aim regarding the social order. My intentions aim to uncover and critique existing power relations and practices in organizations. Nevertheless, my co-authors and I sometimes found it helpful to combine an ideologically critical and an interpretive perspective. We adopted an interpretive perspective to understand how meaning is constructed in the particular study context and to analyze what works well and what should be maintained. However, we were also interested in

identifying the inherent power relations, and an ideologically critical perspective helped us analyze this aspect.

For instance, in article 1 on e-voice, we combined two perspectives in line with Sieben's (2007a, b) compass idea and a critical diversity research understanding (e.g., Bührmann, 2021; Collien, 2018). Combining these perspectives allowed us to give voice to our interviewees to understand how they construct their reality and thus what facilitates or hinders e-voice in the specific context of a highly digitalized alternative organization. It also allowed us to analyze the alternative organization as a political arena where inherent and sometimes (un)intended power (plays) between individual and collective actors can lead to barriers to e-voice.

In article 3 on gay leaders, for example, our underlying goal reflects a politicizing goal of doing research. We strive to contribute to questioning existing structures of domination and inequality by providing a better understanding of gay leaders' experiences and strategies at work life and how they build their careers because of or despite a concealable stigma. The typology of gay leaders' career strategies identified in this study was a necessary first step to analyze, as little is known about how this vulnerable group successfully builds their careers. Nonetheless, our findings may (re)produce existing structures and processes of doing differences and reinforce the common constitution of 'othering' marginalized and disadvantaged groups. In future research, it would be worthwhile to explore more deeply the work realities of this vulnerable group and use our identified typology as a basis for an ideologically critical oriented study of how this marginalized group, as well as organizations and society, contribute to persistent social inequalities.

Collien (2018, 2021) emphasizes the questioning of normalized social identities as a central element of *being critical* and Zanoni and colleagues (2010) call for critical scholars to pay attention to how differences are done in everyday practices rather than following a positivistic and essentialist ontology of identities. My article 2 focuses on the doing differences

perspective. Together with my co-authors, I was interested in how doing gendered class work contributes to inherent social class distinctions and status differences in luxury service interactions and how this is intertwined with gender. In this article, we examined diversity as disparity from a critical stance (Harrison & Klein, 2007) that allowed us to address the (re)production of inequalities through gendered class work in luxury service encounters. In this dissertation's manuscripts my co-authors and I primarily studied diversity as disparity, further examples are chapters 1 and 2, in which my co-authors and I stress the unequal distribution of power, assets, and resources for women in entrepreneurship.

At times, however, my co-authors and I have combined diversity as disparity type with diversity as variety (Harrison & Klein, 2007). Not only does this multi-level approach again reflect critical research thinking (e.g., Bührmann, 2021; Collien, 2018; Sieben, 2007a, b), but my co-authors and I also follow Harrison's and Klein's (2007) own call to investigate the multi-level diversity effects of their identified diversity typology. Moreover, a salient characteristic of studying diversity as variety (Harrison & Klein, 2007) is the portrayal of differences as valuable. Zanoni and colleagues (2010) critique this institutionalization of diversity in their prominent guest editorial on CDS. They content that power imbalances are often not adequately considered and discussed in these studies. By studying diversity as variety and disparity, my co-authors and I address this criticism. We highlight the positive aspect of diversity as a valuable resource, but without ignoring the core problems of inequality and power imbalances. For instance, in article 1, we examined an organization that makes equality one of its highest principles and places great emphasis on the value of diverse voices. At the same time, the organization's e-voice practices suffer from unintended status, power, and knowledge asymmetries.

Zanoni and colleagues (2010) also criticize a lack of organizational or societal contextualization in diversity research. My co-authors and I have endeavored to describe the

studies' context in as much detail as necessary or possible. In article 1 on e-voice, Kornau and I followed critical scholars such as Zanoni and colleagues (2017) who called for studies in non-typical business organizations. We were interested in the extreme case of a digitalized alternative organization with strong principles such as equality, participation, or solidarity (Cheney, 2014; Parker et al., 2014a, b; Reedy & Learmonth, 2009) to understand what works well and what hinders when goals and implementations are very well-intentioned.

In addition, I respond to the calls of other critical scholars such as Özkazanç-Pan and Calás (2015) who call for studies in global contexts, beyond the usual dominant hegemony of the Western cultural paradigm (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2015). In our systematic literature reviews, Swart, Thirumaran, and I focus on women's entrepreneurship in the H&T industry. In chapter 2, we focused on women's entrepreneurial education in the understudied African context and how it aligns with certain UN SDGs. In our second literature review, chapter 1 of this dissertation, we look at the countries that have been studied worldwide. With a strong concentration on the United States of America, Scandinavia, the Baltic region, and Spain, but also on South and West Africa, India, and Southeast Asia, we can see a development in the literature on women's entrepreneurship in H&T away from the Western dominance.

In article 2, Sieben, Haunschild, and I link our findings from luxury service work in the European context to studies in other country contexts, e.g., while Chinese female workers are encouraged to conform aesthetically to Western standards (Otis, 2016), our findings show that European luxury workers attempt to sound more sophisticated and feminine. In article 3, my co-authors and I did not focus on a specific organizational context, but rather our aim was to understand the strategies of gay leaders in management in Germany and Australia more broadly. Through our personal networks, we had access to this marginalized group. Nevertheless, it would be very interesting to further explore possible relationships between our four identified strategies and specific organizational contexts, such as an inclusive climate or specific

industries, or other demographic factors, such as age, seniority, tenure, or department. Chapter 3 falls a little out of line, it is a practice-oriented contribution, but again, my co-author Mucha and I observed a particularly exciting and relevant field: We looked at the issue of diversity-sensitive teaching in higher education.

Overall, as discussed so far, my dissertation manuscripts have addressed issues and characteristics that critical scholars highlight as important aspects of CMS on diversity and (in)equality. At times, however, it was necessary to follow the mainstream diversity research approach to provide a foundation to be further evaluated in future (critical) studies.

### *Being reflexive*

Several scholars emphasize the importance of being reflexive in the research process in order to understand the goal, way, and consequences of the research (Bührmann, 2021; Sieben, 2007a, b). For instance, Collien (2018, 2021) emphasizes the need for researchers of *being reflexive* about their own social position, the logics of the scientific field, and the scholastic perspective. Similarly, Amis and colleagues (2020) stress our scholarly “responsibility [as researchers] to reconsider how we engage in research on and teaching about organizations” (p. 195) when studying the organizational reproduction of inequality. And Bührmann (2021), in her reflexive diversity research program, also underlines the importance of “explicit[ing] and reflect[ing on] one’s own research perspective and research style” (p. 8).

In this dissertations’ manuscripts, it was helpful that I worked in diverse research teams. For instance, in article 2 on luxury service work, I conducted semi-structured interviews with frontline workers. I have completed an apprenticeship in hotel management and have many years of work experience as a flight attendant. This fact was beneficial in two ways. First, as Zanoni and van Laer (2016) point out, in qualitative (diversity) research we rely on the ‘good’ stories of our participants. I had access to the field, our interviewees trusted me, and treated me

like an insider. Second, it also helped us in analyzing the interviews, because I knew our participants' professional lives. We stuck closely to their terms and narratives in our descriptions of their lived experiences. The risk of me being an insider and too close to their perspectives in the analysis was balanced in this study by extensive discussions of our findings on macro-social stratification, working conditions, and self-identification with the entire research team. As described by Gioia and colleagues (2012) on how to achieve qualitative rigor in inductive research my co-author Haunschild took a critical "outsider perspective – a devil's advocate" (p. 19). Another benefit of working together on this project was Sieben's and my strong interest in issues of gender, diversity, and (in)equality. In analyzing the interviews, we were particularly sensitive to gender-specific differences and dynamics in this highly feminized service sector.

For my article 3 on the gay leader's career strategies, collaborating with my co-authors was again advantageous. The research project benefited greatly from the in-depth discussions within the team about the participants' lived experiences with this sensitive topic from our insider and outsider perspectives in terms of sexual orientation and our national contexts. For instance, I am a heterosexual woman from Germany and one of my co-authors is a gay man living in Australia. As a (critical) researcher, I am interested in the intersections of different dimensions in different contexts. An analysis of the intertwining of being gay and age might be a fruitful way forward. Older gay men may have come out later in life as society and organizations have changed over time and are now more inclusive. In addition, I aim to study dimensions of diversity that are vulnerable to discrimination. Together with my three co-authors, I am already working on another article focusing on the career experiences of lesbian leaders and the nexus of their gender and their sexual orientation. Further studies could explore the differences between gay and lesbian leaders and highlight differences and privileges within the community.

In chapter 1 and 2 on women's entrepreneurship, I collaborated with two international colleagues whose research interests are primarily in tourism management. Here, Swart focuses on empowering tourism communities and women through community projects, while Thirumaran mainly studies service excellence, entrepreneurship, and luxury tourism. Because I am interested in CMS on diversity and (in)equality, have professional experience in H&T, and am sensitive to embracing diverse perspectives and promoting social justice, our interdisciplinary work complemented each other well. We have benefited greatly from each other in our systematic literature reviews. While Swart and I were primarily concerned with critically examining the marginalization and discrimination of women, Thirumaran was able to contribute with his academic expertise on the H&T industry.

Finally, my last chapter, the practice-oriented, benefited from both Mucha's and my experiences in higher education teaching and our shared research interest in CMS on diversity and (in)equality. In preparing the workshop, we drew on both our personal experiences and our theoretically grounded knowledge. We offered our participants an interactive, reflective, and self-directed approach to diversity-sensitive teaching and ensured that we were available to answer questions and provide input as needed.

Especially for early career academics in management research like me, there is a pressure to publish articles in leading international journals. Journal editors and selected scholars in the field conduct highly relevant reviews, to which we authors should then respond in detail and give good reasons why we do or do not implement the feedback. Since these scholars influence whether the article ends up being published, their views and expertise in peer-review processes also guide and influence my research.

As with article 3 on gay leaders, we initially submitted the manuscript to Human Relations. According to the editor in charge, he or she decided to send it to "highly qualified scholars" for external review. Unfortunately, this editor rejected our manuscript after receiving

three reviews. These reviews reflected the extensive discussions we had in advance within our research team, which were driven by the dynamics of the collaboration and the research interests of the individual authors. Our revised version, which will be submitted to Human Resource Management, will now be strongly influenced by the feedback from these reviewers. This will help us improve the quality of our article and strengthen one or two arguments within our research team. For instance, we had very extensive and detailed discussions: First, about the theoretical framework, the dynamics of the collaboration determined a focus on stigma instead of identity management in gay leaders' careers. Second, to ensure the anonymity of our participants, after further discussions, we decided against describing in detail the demographic and organizational context of our participants. And third, I in particular advocated for a critical perspective by strengthening the theoretical underpinnings of the power dimension of our matrix. We are currently working on a revision that incorporates our reflections and extensive discussions on the feedback we received. For example, in our theoretical framing, we will now focus on identity management, we include at least one paragraph on the power aspect and provide a brief contextualization of our participants' social identity.

In article 1 on e-voice, we were asked by one reviewer in particular to present more details about this unique organization. Given a word limit, we have attempted to describe the organizational context informatively, yet briefly. The reviewer's feedback helped us to improve our description of the research context without losing sight of the word limit.

Overall, my research is influenced by my own social position and that of my co-authors, as well as by our scholarly perspectives, and is strongly embedded in the logics of the scientific field.



*Being political*

With *being political* Collien (2021) asserts that researchers should “mak[e] ethical informed judgements about the nature of [their research]” (p. 80). Sieben (2007a) defines a politicizing goal as “question[ing] existing structures, processes, and practices” (p. 568) that foster power imbalances. As mentioned earlier, my overarching aim of this dissertation is to promote equal opportunities and social justice in organizations. I consider myself a critical management scholar with a focus on diversity and (in)equality issues. My collaborators and I have always been cognizant of the fact that our research could potentially impact some of society’s most vulnerable and marginalized communities, such as the gay community, a feminized workforce in the H&T industry with precarious working conditions, or women entrepreneurs who are less well off. To ensure that the lived experiences of our participants were reflected and given voice, we closely followed respondents’ narratives in the studies.

With my research, I strive not only for theoretical implications, but also to practical and societal. Together with my co-authors, I aim to raise deeper understanding and awareness of socio-political issues through everyday work practices in organizations and in society at large. Our findings can enrich debates about decent work conditions in specific contexts (e.g., digitalized work environments or the H&T industry) and about lived experiences of marginalized groups (e.g., women, gay community, or diverse students in higher education). In addition to my scientific contributions, I published a practice-oriented chapter. This contribution was based on a diversity awareness and skill building workshop that my colleague Mucha and I designed and conducted. In the workshop, we incorporated our own theoretical knowledge of gender and diversity as well as our practical experiences in teaching in higher education.

I am fortunate to work at a university (Helmut Schmidt University, University of the Federal Armed Forces, Hamburg) and in particular at a chair (Human Resource Management

of Prof. Sieben) that are open to promoting gender and diversity issues. I am able to regularly contribute my expertise in this area to Bachelor's and Master's teaching at this and other higher education institutions, as well as to training at the Centre for Postgraduate Education (of the Helmut Schmidt University – University of the Federal Armed Forces, Hamburg). In addition, I have had the opportunity to offer workshops and a keynote on diversity issues for professionals and managers to share and transfer my theoretical insights and knowledge into practice relevant settings. With my research on equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion in organizations, I aim to break down traditional, heteronormative practices and meanings, and promote fair and inclusive actions.

### **Conclusion**

This dissertation addresses diversity and (in)equality in organizations from a critical stance. In my six manuscripts, I show from different perspectives how differences are done in everyday working life. And in this dissertation's framework, I demonstrate and discuss how I contribute to CMS on diversity and (in)equality.

In my six dissertation manuscripts, I focus on different dimensions and aspects of diversity (e.g., equality, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, or diversity sensitivity) as well as different research contexts (e.g., digitalized alternative organizations, the H&T industry in general, with a focus on Africa, and luxury service work, and teaching in higher education). In article 1, Kornau and I identify contextual facilitators and barriers to e-voice expressions in a highly digitalized alternative organization and show that despite its members' strong intentions and efforts to achieve equality among all, tensions arise. In article 2, Sieben, Haunschild, and I conceptualize the intersecting patterns of reproducing inequality as gendered class work. We identify perceptions and practices of status enhancement and status dissonance among luxury service workers, as well as gender practices and meanings. In article 3, Joecks, Reimer, Tamm,

and I identify four strategies that gay leaders in management in Germany and Australia use to manage their (sexual) identities in the workplace in order to build their career. They deny or use their gay identity and rely on either individual or group power to advance their careers.

In addition to these three articles published or submitted to peer-reviewed journals, I have published or submitted three additional chapters to edited books. Together with Swart and Thirumaran, I conducted two systematic literature reviews on women's entrepreneurship in H&T. In chapter 1, we highlight motivations, barriers, and strategies and governmental policies to support women's entrepreneurship. In chapter 2, we identify major trends and issues impacting women's education, skills development, and training in entrepreneurship in the African H&T industry to suggest strategies for women that align with certain UN SDGs. The final contribution, chapter 3, is based on a workshop on raising awareness and building skills for diversity-sensitive teaching in higher education that I conducted with my co-author Mucha. We present the experiences from our open, explorative-constructivist workshop setting, which seems to have triggered a thought process among the participants that, according to the feedback, was found to be highly stimulating and enriching.

In this dissertation framework, I position my manuscripts within CMS on diversity and (in)equality. Collien's (2021) conceptual triad of being critical, being reflexive, and being political helps structure my arguments in this regard. As described in the 'being critical' section, I have used Krell' and Sieben' (2007) compass of diversity research and Harrison's and Klein's (2007) diversity typology to classify my research perspectives. In addition, I have adhered to several characteristics and aspects highlighted by critical scholars in my way of conducting research, such as a non-positivistic and non-essentialist ontology of identities, sufficient organizational contextualization, and a theorization of power (Zanoni et al., 2010). Despite my overarching goals that are consistent with an ideologically critical orientation, it was sometimes necessary to join the mainstream research conversation to provide a foundation for further

(critical) research and debate. In the ‘being reflexive’ section, I discuss how my research is informed by my own and my co-authors’ social positions, scholarly perspectives, and the logics of the field (Collien, 2021). Finally, in the ‘being political’ section, I explain how I seek to contribute to equal opportunities and social justice in organizations and beyond.

The ongoing debate and growing relevance of diversity issues in organizations and in society show that there is much more need for research on these issues. I hope that my work will inspire more scholars to address issues of diversity and (in)equality in organizations from different perspectives, such as different contexts (e.g., different countries or industries) or more diverse groups (e.g., different diversity dimensions or their intersections). Together, we can foster the pursuit of organizational change.

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### Appendix: The six manuscripts

Articles in double-blind, peer-reviewed journals:

- Bernauer, V. S., & Kornau, A. (2024). E-voice in the digitalised workplace. Insights from an alternative organisation. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 34(2), 369-385. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12460>
- Bernauer, V. S., Sieben, B., & Haunschild, A. (2023). “You can call me Susan!” Doing gendered class work in luxury service encounters. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 42(4), 494-511. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-10-2021-0272>
- Tamm, G., Bernauer, V. S., Joecks, J., & Reimer, T. (submitted in Nov. 2022 to *Human Relations* and after review rejected in March 2023, now in progress to be submitted). Career strategies of gay leaders: Is homosexuality a superpower or kryptonite?

Chapters in edited books:

- Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K. (2024). Women’s entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism industry: A systematic literature review and future research directions. In M. P. Swart, W. Cai, E. C. L. Yang, & A. N. Kimbu (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Gender in Tourism: Views on Teaching, Research and Praxis* (pp. 270-288). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003286721-24>
- Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K. (2024). Women’s education in tourism entrepreneurship: Trends and issues emerging from Africa. In A. M. Morrison, & D. Buhalis (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Trends and Issues in Tourism. Sustainability, Planning and Development, Management, and Technology* (pp. 220-231). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003291763-22>
- Bernauer, V., & Mucha, A. (2019). Reflexion von Diversität im Kontext der Hochschullehre in einer explorativen Lernumgebung – Erfahrungen aus einem hochschuldidaktischen Workshop [Reflecting on diversity in the context of university teaching in an exploratory learning environment – Experiences from a university didactic workshop]. In C. Schomaker, & M. Oldenburg (Eds.), *Forschen, Reflektieren, Bilden. Forschendes Lernen in der diversitätssensiblen Hochschulbildung [Studying, reflecting, educating. Research-based learning in diversity-sensitive higher education]* (pp. 88-100). Schneider.

*Article No. 1*

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This article is published as:

Bernauer, V. S., & Kornau, A. (2024). E-voice in the digitalised workplace. Insights from an alternative organisation. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 34(2), 369-385.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12460>

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*Article No. 2*

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This article is published as:

Bernauer, V. S., Sieben, B., & Haunschild, A. (2023). “You can call me Susan!” Doing gendered class work in luxury service encounters. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 42(4), 494-511. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-10-2021-0272>

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*Article No. 3*

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This article's version was submitted to Human Relations:

Tamm, G., Bernauer, V. S., Joecks, J., & Reimer, T. (2022 submitted to *Human Relations* and after review rejected, now in progress to be submitted). Career strategies of gay leaders: Is homosexuality a superpower or kryptonite?

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*Chapter No. 1*

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This chapter is published as:

Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K. (2024). Women's entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism industry: A systematic literature review and future research directions. In M. P. Swart, W. Cai, E. C. L. Yang, & A. N. Kimbu (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Gender in Tourism: Views on Teaching, Research and Praxis* (pp. 270-288). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003286721-24>

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*Chapter No. 2*

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This chapter is published as:

Swart, M. P., Bernauer, V. S., & Thirumaran, K. (2024). Women education in tourism entrepreneurship: Trends and issues emerging from Africa. In A. M. Morrison, & D. Buhalis (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Trends and Issues in Tourism. Sustainability, Planning and Development, Management, and Technology* (pp. 220-231). Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003291763-22>

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*Chapter No. 3*

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This chapter is published as:

Bernauer, V., & Mucha, A. (2019). Reflexion von Diversität im Kontext der Hochschullehre in einer explorativen Lernumgebung – Erfahrungen aus einem hochschuldidaktischen Workshop [Reflecting on diversity in the context of university teaching in an exploratory learning environment – Experiences from a university didactic workshop]. In C. Schomaker, & M. Oldenburg (Eds.), *Forschen, Reflektieren, Bilden. Forschendes Lernen in der diversitätssensiblen Hochschulbildung [Studying, reflecting, educating. Research-based learning in diversity-sensitive higher education]* (pp. 88-100). Schneider.

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