ANSE Konferenz

Timisoara

17. - 19.10.2008

Verena Bruchhagen

Intercultural Affairs and lifelong learning:
What´s the issue in Supervision and Coaching?

Introducing Aspects:

- **Intercultural affairs** challenge personal, social and work life **are stressing the "normal case". Supervision has to face the dynamics** of this challenge on different levels of individual, group and organizational processes.

- Therefore Supervision needs to dig deeper:
    - We need special knowledge of cultural construction of differences and their effects in daily (work) life.
    - We have to face problems of how to deal with homogeneity and heterogeneity in personal and social systems.

- The theoretical and political discourse of **Managing Diversity offers some approaches on the issues of homogeneity and heterogeneity** which could be used in the field and profession of Supervision.

- The specific transfer of this concept into a context of national and international organizations/ networks for Supervision also needs **different levels of learning** (individual – group – organization). These levels are multiple, interdependent and …the learning process is never ending.

Supervision Case:

How can Supervision focus on diversity to bring up a more inclusive organization? (or even society?)

What are tasks and targets of supervision as part of organizational and personal learning in this context?
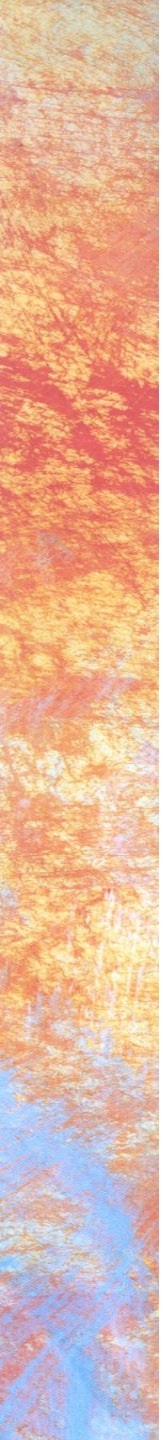
What is Managing Diversity (MD)?

First MD is a management orientation concerning HRM and organizational change.

MD aims at

- reducing advantages of dominant groups and
- deconstruct elitarian standards of hegemonic groups in organizations.

Diversity managers are willing to focus on the personal variety rather than homogeneity and developing and using diverse personnel and organizational potential.

MD makes differences relative, strengthens them and focuses on the construction and use of social differences. It forces equal treatment of non-equity.

In US **Managing Diversity** started in the late 80s, in Germany **the discourse and practice** started not until the mid 90s. Since 2000 we picked up and combined ideas of MD to found our own approach, called

DiVersion: Managing Gender & Diversity (MGD)

- MGD offers a theoretical approach to the debate on how to work with social differences <u>and</u> how to achieve and to secure equal opportunities.

- MGD combines the social and organizational aims of (gender…) democracy and a sociological model of non-binary, symmetric (gender…) relation in both, private and public contexts.

- MGD intends to connect anti-discrimination politics and organizational issues.

Leading questions are:

- How are differences constructed?

- How do they become a distinction of inclusion or exclusion?

- What is the way from distinction to discrimination, marginalization, dominance and hierarchy?

How much Diversity
is bearable for a system?

How much Diversity is bearable for a system?

It depends on the ability to use heterogeneity…

- …as communication competence of a system and its members, such as avoiding
  - dominance and social categorization and
    - hierarchy to regulate standardized tasks but discriminates alternative solutions.

- …by irritating emotions as signals and finding ways to connect them interdependently with cognition/ rationales.

- …as capacity to use irritations as stimulations.
  - sense is a construction made by the included members, related to the designed contexts – „outsiders" or „minorities" may add valuable communication
  - „normalcy" can only be felt in its absence – insecurity is an interesting signal for the perception beyond boundaries
  - to accept ambivalence (of emotions, cognition, meaning) is a resource for a wider perspective

Thesis 1:
Regulative und Constitutive Norms are results of constructed differences

- regulative norms are dealing with behavior or attitudes towards social constructed minorities concepts of anti-discrimination deal mainly with regulative norms and have the tendency to change attitudes only at the surface

- constitutive norms classify differences and reproduce them by **avoiding and repulsing learning**

- constitutive norms are found in structures of work, assumptions about functions, organizational culture, evaluations, decisions, …. where ever distinctions on the basis of differences have to be made…

- MD tries to change constitutive norms

Thesis 2:
MD as deconstructing practice

The process of managing diversity initiates a change process to deconstruct constitutive norms, dominance and minorization.

Thesis 3:
Managing Diversity as a semantic

Discrimination can be viewed as a semantic

… which arises in the case of depriving demands, whether they are justified or not justified ….

Why does discrimination occur?

All systems have deficits of legitimacy …

due to inclusive and exclusive rules of entrance, difference between private profit and common duties, bounded rationalities and declared goals, published images and latent culture or simply blind spots in proceeding and communicating

… and need to be stabilized by hierarchical power, dominance and homogenization.

Managing Diversity might be a semantic **to report discrimination as a process of using and producing** social differences to produce **homogeneity** (… which is in some respect functional for systems).

Thesis 4:
Avoidance of Heterogenity as Reduction of Complexity

Systems (individuals and organizations) tend to reduce complexity to avoid irritation and ambivalence.

Systems prefer homogeneity in case their perception needs normalcy, orientation and security.

Thesis 5:
What´s normal?
Cross-Cutting Categories

In this context diversity-based Supervision has to look at work structures of „cross-cutting" categories (Brewer 1996)

- female leadership, masculine assistance

- focusing on functional instead of representative diversity

- sequential cooperation of socially diverse people to reduce group stereotyping (Northcraft et al 1996)

Thesis 6:
Heterogeneity in Systems

- is the other side of the communication which is mostly kept in the latent part of reality

- homogeneity and heterogeneity are the two sides of reality and can never be observed at the same moment
  - only from a higher level of observation

- too much heterogeneity forces the system to construct social dilemmas (e.g. distribution of resources) in order to avoid paradoxes

- forces individuals and organizations to decide within ambi-valence. This is extremely difficult and almost impossible

- the ability of dealing with complexity in systems depends on the level of differentiation of and within subsystems and the necessity to form alternative niches of decisions
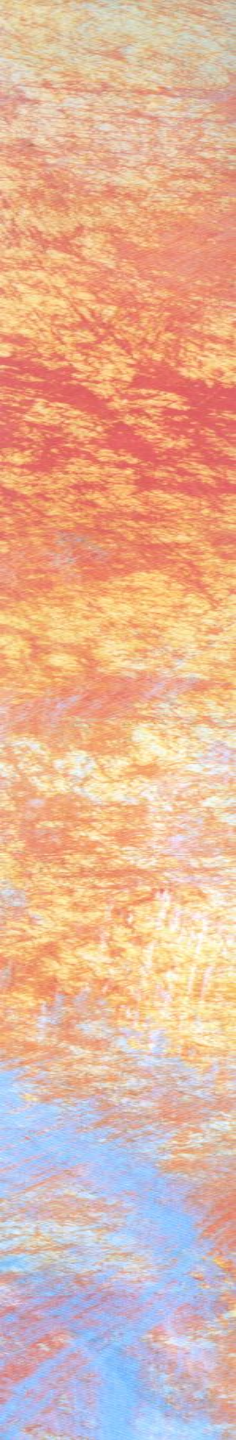
Thesis 7:

Homogenization is functional for legitimacy, evaluation and control.

What are the functions of discrimination within homogenization?

- building and legitimizing social hierarchies to proceed communication
- evaluation of performance, people, rationales (means and goals)
- control of decision making process and criteria of decisions
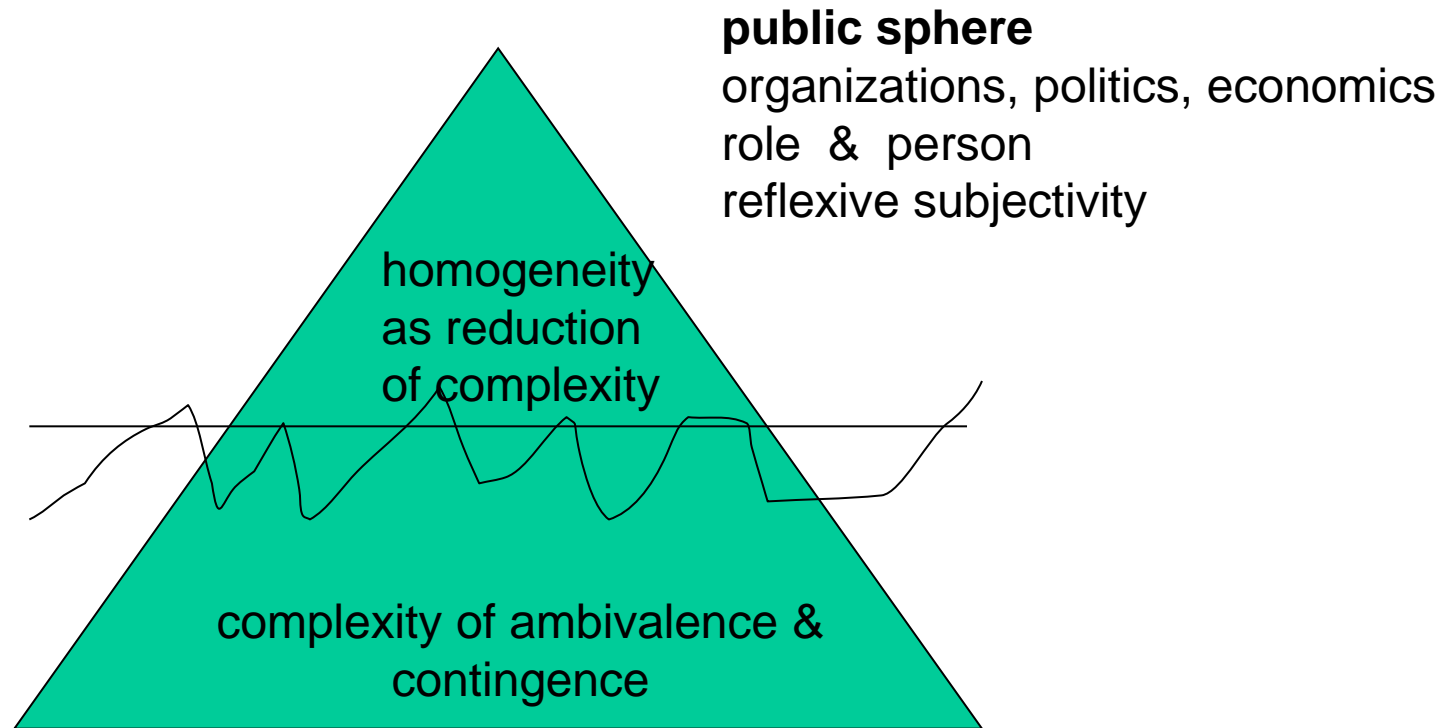
Find functional equivalents!

Thesis 8:
Supervision is more than optimizing the status quo (norms and normalcy)

Concepts on Learning Diversity or intercultural competences used in the field and context of Supervision not only optimize the business case but widen personnel and organizational options by facing the critical impact of using homogeneity and heterogeneity.

Supervision has to confrontate as well as to balance the effects of homogeneity/ heterogeneity/ diversity in organizational and personnel development.

Triangulation of Learning Diversity

public sphere
organizations, politics, economics
role & person
reflexive subjectivity

homogeneity
as reduction
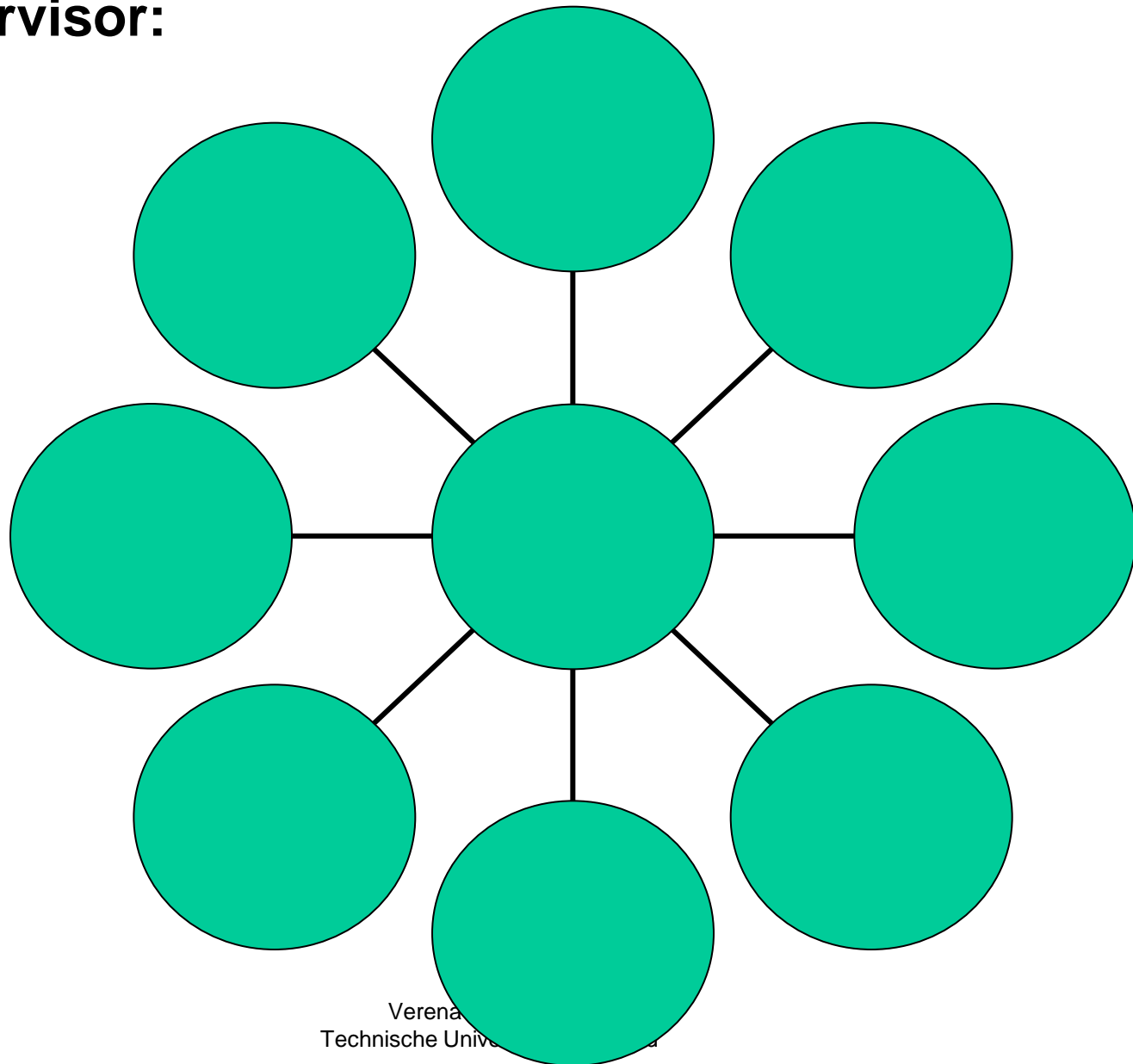of complexity

complexity of ambivalence &
contingence

private sphere
construction of personality /
identity,
social relations,
group & milieu affiliation

intimate sphere,
untamed subjectivity,
diversity of inner self

Verena Bruchhagen
Technische Universität Dortmund

20

We have to ask supervisors (as well as clients) to link…

- their personal and biografical stories (narratives) of *education, work, career, work-life-balance, justice, discrimination etc. with*

- their professional identity in the context of socio-political, economical, and historical developement, and with

- their cultural and intellectual habits of action and reflection, of social constructing and communicating their „Doing Difference".

My Approaches, Roots, Influences as a Supervisor:

Our (Managing Gender & Diversity) Approaches, Roots, Influences as a Group of Change Agents:

Feminist Science:
Power

Theory of Social System:
Homogeneity vs Heterogeneity
Inclusion & Exclusion
Complexity & Avoidance

Feminist Movement:
Emancipation, Independence

Deconstructivism:
Differance
Representation & Identity
Performance & Supplement

MGD:
Growing up from Social Science and **Social Movements**

Womens Rights Movement:
Social Equality

Theory of Social Constructivism:
Construction of Reality

New Social Movements:
Anti-Discrimination

Women Studies/ Gender Studies:
Gender Bias

How to become a change agent?

Diversity change agents will be enabled to observe and deal with complexity instead of mostly reducing it.

Learning diversity follows the perspective that

- homogeneity & heterogeneity are interdependent to secure stability and enhance change
- systems (individuals and organizations) tend to reduce complexity to avoid irritation and ambivalence
- systems prefer homogeneity in case their perception needs normalcy and security
- there is a system-immanent tendency to transform environmental influences into an internal order
- change in organizations occurs, because reality is more divers than linear and rational - there is a surplus of sense in communication, which can be used for change

Learning affairs in Supervision

Supervision has…

- to be efficient and rational (developing personnel resources, problem solving capacity, getting in contact with heterogeneous perspectives, develop more creativity in the business case),

- to relieve anti-discrimination and democracy in the focus of bringing up a better work life culture and better strategies of work-life-balance,

- to be a good container for change- and challenge-related emotions which are forced when we leave normalcy and reach *terra incognita.*

Particular Problems of Learning Diversity in Supervision

Learners´ expectation…	Supervision´s offer…

(Most) people and (many) supervisors expect
 	
    tools,
 	
    instruments,
 	
    prescription and recipes
 	
to clear or heal problems, frictions, conflicts and ambiguities resulting from heterogeinity/ complexity.
 	
Most people and (many) supervisors expect practical advices and hints for optimizing their professional efforts and performances.
	Supervision could offer the development of competences in
	
	    observing,
	
	    reflecting,
	
	    containing*
	
	homogeneity and heterogeneity (change agents).
	
	Supervision could offer conceptional, insights to face Diversity challenges.
	
	Supervision could offer experience-based „working out" of the question how to apply theoretical basics of heterogeneity to social, emotional and managerial problems in organizations.

Following Questions for this conference:

- What are our different ressources and conditions?

- What does it mean for cooperation in learning partnerships like this?

- Who is attractiv to whom? Who are the great ones, who are the little ones? Who is (more) in, who is (more) out?

- What is the symbolic, offen unconscious attribution and transference of power, image, importance?