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Discourses on diversity in the Belgian and Flemish public sector

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we look at the way that the meaning of the concept of diversity is being shaped in the Diversity Action Plans of the federal Belgian and in the Flemish public sector. Studying the Action Plans as texts is important, because being able to define the meaning of diversity, equals defining the way that diversity is concretized and incorporated in public organizations. We will see that the concept of diversity contains several contradictions. The most important ones are that the focus (still) lies on individual *merit* as a basic principle, and the final goal is *unity* in the public sector. Finally, the way that diversity is shaped, also has consequences for the roles of leaders in the practical diversity management.

Introduction

This paper is part of a work in progress, namely a Ph.D. research project that through critical discourse analysis investigates (primarily) the discourses on equality and diversity in the Belgian public sector. For this paper, however, we look at the way that diversity is conceptualized in the Belgian (federal) and the Flemish administration. We are not going to look at or explain the presence or absence of target groups in both administrations, nor are we going to focus on the content or impact of specific policies that have been implemented in the framework of action plans for diversity. Instead, we are going to focus on the way that the meaning of the concept of diversity is shaped in the action plans in these two levels of government:

- 1) the action plan for diversity in the Belgian federal public service
- 2) the action plan for diversity in the Flemish public service

In these documents, the vision is pronounced of political and public sector leaders on how ‘diversity’ should be incorporated in the Belgian and Flemish public sector. What is diversity? Who is it for? Why is it needed? How is it going to be achieved? Whose responsibility is this? In other words, the action plans are the location where the meaning of diversity is formed. They are the basis for the actual diversity management in the different public organizations. By doing a close reading of the action plans, it becomes clear what the assumptions are on which the concept of diversity is based, and what the (implicit) goals are. We will come to two conclusions:

- a) diversity in the context of the Belgian and Flemish administrations is based on the assumption that everybody has to be judged by their own competencies. In fact, the action plans do not question the validity of a commitment to *meritocracy*.
- b) the final goal of diversity is to come to more *unity* in the public sector.

I. Ways of knowing: interpretative and critical research in PA

Although there has been some interest in interpretative and critical research in public administration and related fields, the explanatory approach still dominates the research scene, and this limits our ability to change administrative or policy situations (White 1999). The interpretative approach stresses the centrality of meaning in social actions. Social reality is constituted through the words, symbols and actions that people invoke. Language use, as well as the meanings enacted from verbal and non-verbal messages, creates and sustains social reality (Tietze et al 2003).

We see discourse as a social practice, more precisely as “systems of meaningful actions that form the identities of subjects and objects” (Foucault 1972: 47). The social realities and actions that make the discourse are intrinsically political, and connected to power relations (Foucault 1972, Wodak 1989). The discourse that is dominant consequently defines concrete applications and actions, or, in the case of this paper: the dominant discourse on diversity defines the way that diversity management and diversity policy programs are developed and executed. Controlling the dominant discourse equals defining what is ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ and making it easier to execute political agenda’s (Fairclough 1989, ’92; Wodak et al. 1985, Wodak 1989, Wodak et al. 1997).

Or to put it with Fairclough (1989): “*The stake is more than ‘mere words’; it is controlling the contours of the political world, it is legitimizing policy, and it is sustaining power relations.*”

Though we attach great importance on the role of language, discourse, for PA research, we also want to point at Campbell (2003), who makes an important observation when he states that the concept of seeing an organization as a social construction *is in itself a social construction*. Despite the importance of discourse, language and constructivism for PA, it is dangerous to take a one-sided view of organizations - that is, that they are only social constructions – and lose sight of everything else that an organization “is” (Campbell 2003).

Campbell refers to Bruno Latour (1993) for some new ideas to help us through the dilemma of ‘constructed’ world versus ‘material’ world (which cannot and must not be separated from each other). Latour suggests that our experiences reside within three domains. Each domain represents a different aspect of our total experience, and each has its own language and concepts to describe the world around us. Campbell rephrases these domains as follows: one domain is the domain of the material and scientific, and the language to explain this domain is the language of facts. Another is the domain of social construction, and its language is social discourse and rhetoric. The final domain is that of the political, which uses the language and the operation of power. According to Latour, each domain has its own characteristics distinct from the others, but none of these domains should be explored without reference to the others.

This makes it easier to place the socially constructed organization in context. It becomes one perspective among a range of perspectives (Campbell 2003). Finally it is not our goal to *replace* explanatory research by interpretative or critical research, but to promote more interaction between these ways of knowing in our attempts to describe and explain the world.

II. Discourses on diversity, competencies, merit & the implications for leadership

We are going to look at the way that the meaning of the concept of diversity is shaped in the action plans of the federal Belgian administration and the Flemish administration. We will notice how talking about diversity implies assumptions on and consequences for competency management, the merit principle and finally leadership.

III. 1. Conceptualizing diversity

A. Diversity vs. equal opportunity

Although the word ‘diversity’ can refer to a great number of meanings, in recent years in the field of PA, diversity refers to including and managing people in the workforce who have traditionally been marginalized because of their gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and/or disability (Zane 2002). This also goes for the Belgian and Flemish administrations.

We distinguish diversity from other concepts such as equal opportunity, to make clear that these concepts, although very often used together and even as interchangeable, indeed are based on very different assumptions.

Gagnon and Cornelius (2000:79) provide a review of the traditions regarding how people and equity issues within organizations have been conceptualized.

- Liberal tradition: central is the principle of *equal opportunity* in order to eradicate disadvantage, and for some provide support through positive encouragement. Methods include policies, recruitment procedures, monitoring of activity and training.
- Radical tradition: based on the principle of *positive discrimination/affirmative action*, to secure equality of outcome. Methods include preferential selection processes and the use of quotas.
- Managing diversity: based on the principle of maximizing individual potential so that recognizing and using this *diversity* adds value to the workplace experience and profits. Methods used include visions statements, audits, accountability processes, and cultural change.

Of course, these traditions and policy instruments can take different forms depending on the context (legal frameworks, organizational culture,...). Also, the instruments are not always directed at the same social groups. In EU-countries, women have been the main target group since the 1980's, whereas at the same time in the United States affirmative action was principally directed at Afro-Americans.

As for the **Belgian situation**, we come to a slightly different overview. We like to include the introduction of the merit-principle in the organization of the public sector as the first way to come to more equality (as well as to come to more efficiency). As for equal opportunity and diversity, we take over Gagnon's and Cornelius' view, but we briefly sketch the Belgian (federal) and Flemish situation.

More equality through merit:

In order to eradicate nepotism and arbitrariness from the civil service, and to take a step in the direction of a competent and neutral civil service, examinations were introduced in the Belgian national civil service (at least for lower staff) (Hondeghem 2000). This was in the beginning of the 20th century, and thus merit began to replace lineage as the criterion for recruitment. The crucial element in the shift towards a merit bureaucracy seems to be that civil servants were recruited on the basis of their capabilities. Finally, in the course of the second half of the 20th century, the merit principle not only signified that civil servants should be appointed according to their capabilities, but also that they should be recruited from all segments of society (representative bureaucracy). So, the merit principle stood for the search for a greater efficiency as well as more equality.

More equality through equal opportunity:

- *The liberal tradition* in equal opportunity: emphasizes fair procedures. The formula for eliminating discrimination thus centers on the use of procedures which formalize methods of access to jobs and encourage employers to assess applicants on their merits and to exclude considerations of other aspects. Unequal outcomes in the distribution of jobs and resources would then be the result of unequal merit.

- *The radical tradition* in equal opportunity: emphasizes positive discrimination and the redistribution of jobs and resources in favor of those previously disadvantaged. This model views the meritocratic principle as ideology and seeks the politicization of decisions (Webb 1997).

In Belgium, equal opportunity policies for women have been implemented since 1985, mainly under international pressure of the UN-conference in 1980 and the European Union directory of 1976, and it is not until 1992 that equal opportunities became a portfolio. Since 1990, European legislation allows affirmative action, also in the public sector. In the Belgian public sector, the affirmative action program (within the framework of the equal opportunity policy) entailed that there was (at least) one public servant in every public organization who took on the responsibility of making sure that equal opportunity policies were being followed up.

Belgian equal opportunity policies fitted into the liberal tradition. Even the affirmative action programs were aimed at improving women's *starting* positions, there was never any mingling with the outcomes.

More equality through diversity:

In February 2005, the action plan for the improvement of diversity in the Belgian federal public service was presented. It is called "Action plan 2005-2007 for the improvement of diversity. The federal government: a diverse employer". Diversity is defined as follows: "*Respect for the variety in behavior, values, cultures, lifestyles, competences and experiences of each member of a group.*"

It is interesting to see that the diversity action plan contains 'a policy of *affirmative action*' (p. 15), the 'affirmative action officials' are replaced by 'diversity intermediaries' (p. 18). Their profile and tasks remain practically the same as those of the former affirmative action officials. (What is more, in a lot of cases, the same persons were re-appointed.) In the Action Plan, three target groups are explicitly mentioned: emigrants (or people of emigrant descent), women, and people with disabilities.

In 2005 also the Flemish government presented its action plan for diversity in the administration of the Flemish government. It is called "Policy Plan of the Department for Emancipation, 2005-2010. 'Diversity works.'", and in the text it is referred to as the 'Action Plan'. It contains the vision of the Department for Emancipation on why and how to come to more diversity in the Flemish public sector. The Action Plan is directed at five target groups: women, emigrants (or people of emigrant descent), people with disabilities, people with basic education (until maximum the third year of secondary school) and people over 45 years old. In the Action Plan, diversity is mentioned together with equal opportunity and affirmative action.

In both the federal and the Flemish action plan, diversity is put forward as the logic consequence of the equal opportunity programs. There is an increase in the number of target groups, and next to improving the situation of the target groups, the benefits for the public sector (as an employer and as a deliverer of goods/services) are highlighted more. Finally, it is stated that the focus lies more on valuing difference, than on finding ways to eradicate them. It remains unclear however,

in what way a diversity plan aimed at getting more women in top positions differs from an equal opportunity program aimed at the same goal.

B. Why is diversity needed?

Diversity management originated in the private sector, where the arguments for diversity were mainly economic, and research on what might be called ‘managing for diversity’ did not appear in public management until the late 1980’ s and early 1990’ s (Pitts 2006). During that time, two broad demands started to affect public service in particular. On the one hand there is the demand for increased performance, where-by diversity becomes a performance requirement; the other is a legitimization demand, where-by diversity stems from political and ethical mandates for representative bureaucracy in a democratic context (Ospina 2001). These two demands produce a strong incentive to pursue diversity and to manage it effectively.

- Diversity as performance requirement:

Schneider and Northcraft argue that resistance to social diversity limits opportunities to hire the most qualified applicants by reducing the labor pool. Therefore, constraining social diversity de facto constrains functional diversity, and promoting social diversity may promote functional diversity and thus increase diversity in perspectives, access to external networks, etc. So, there is a pragmatic reason to promote social diversity in the workforce. This also goes for public organizations given the contemporary trends in public management theory and practice (e.g. NPM). Flattened hierarchies, the introduction of modern management systems that increase accountability, etc. are practices that augment the demand for functional and thus social diversity in public organizations.

- Diversity as an ethical requirement:

Here, the focus lays on understanding and valuing differences, instead of excluding them, so that every employee feels he or she is treated as a unique individual whose multiple identities and abilities are respected and appreciated for their potential contributions to the organization (Ospina 2001). This already raises the question, however, to which extent those differences will be valued which are not believed to contribute to profitability. Another ethical dimension of diversity in the public sector is the aspect of representation. The public workforce should mirror the society it works for. Although according to some authors who apply a more limited definition of diversity management, paying attention to representation is more correctly identified as equal opportunity/affirmative action programs.

The action plans mention both economical and moral arguments for diversity. Examples from the Belgian (federal) & Flemish context:

BELGIAN FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE:

- Moral arguments for diversity:
 - respecting differences in behavior, values, cultures, lifestyles, competences and experiences of every member of a group

- improving social equity
- battle against discrimination and inequality
- reflecting the diverse composition of society → more democracy
- public sector should give the right example
- Economical arguments for diversity:
 - providing better services
 - stimulating creativity and innovation
 - diversity in the population is a richness for the state as an employer

FLEMISH PUBLIC SERVICE:

- Moral arguments for diversity:
 - reflecting the diverse composition of society → more democracy
 - public sector should give the right example
 - social justice: taking care of those who are weaker (without patronizing them)
- Economical arguments for diversity:
 - coming to better results
 - stimulating creativity
 - shortage of labor (especially in the future); becoming a competitive employer
 - more efficiency and effectiveness

Finally, the federal Action Plan also mentions that diversity is needed to tackle *inequality*. In the Flemish document, this point is hardly made, at least not explicitly, although there are more references to equal opportunities than in the federal plan.

C. How is diversity going to be achieved?

Diversity management in the Belgian/Flemish public sector focuses greatly on awareness, understanding and respect as one of the primary strategies for managing diversity. For example:

FLEMISH ACTION PLAN

- one of the aims to come to a *mental click*
- there has to be a *shift in organizational culture*
- *attitudes* have to be changed
- *respect* has to be central
- *other cultures and backgrounds have to be valued as an enrichment*
- *reciprocity, encounter and dialogue are the most important ways to come to valuing differences and treating everybody equally*
- organizing lunch meetings to *talk about 'interculturality' in the Flemish administration*

BELGIAN FEDERAL ACTION PLAN:

- publicizing a federal '*Diversity Charter*'
- *sensitize* and *train* the public servants
- integrating the principle of diversity in the *management plans* of the top officials
- publicizing *research results* on the situation of the target groups in the federal public service
- organizing meetings to *discuss* and *reflect* on the research results and to propose actions
- creating a *network* of public servants with disabilities

- organizing a *survey* on the vision of the public servants on equal opportunities in their department

It is interesting to see how in the Flemish action plan, the change in culture is thought to be more important for some target groups than for others. It is stated that each target group needs a specific approach. *“As for gender, what is most needed is a change in culture. We also need to create an open culture for people with disabilities, but also structural adjustments. As for ethnic minorities, here we especially need to pay attention to the inflow policy. For people with basic education the most important task lies in adjusting the career policy.”* (p. 27). Next to these specific approaches, there is also a general, common initiative namely *stimulating a change in culture*.

By being mindful of awareness, understanding, perception, and reactions to difference, but stopping there, it is assumed that negative attributions are due to ignorance, fear, and misunderstanding (Zane 1996). One can even say that such an assumption treats diverse groups as if they were ‘really’ alike, “if one just gets to know them better.” Thus, understanding itself becomes the pathway to mutual respect and trust.

D. Who is responsible?

- *“Everybody”*

In the Action Plans, it is stressed that, since everybody is unique, diversity is a matter for the *entire personnel* of all levels to be involved in.

Lorbiecki and Jack (2000) point out that if diversity is talked about in terms of the total workforce, the need to reduce discrimination against women, ethnic minorities and other repressed social groups, is diminished. If, however, these groups remain targeted, as is the case in the federal and the Flemish administration, it is they, rather than ‘everyone’, who carry the full burden of being diverse, abnormal, or different (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998, Lorbiecki and Jack 2000). This way, distance is created between ‘those who manage’ and ‘those who are diverse’, so that they are split into two distinct groups.

- *“Human Resource Managers”*

The prime responsibility for implementing diversity management initiatives has been placed on HR practitioners. In this sense, diversity management becomes programmable, as it can be incorporated into the routines and procedures of human resource management. In other words, diversity becomes *do-able* (Prasad and Mills 1997).

In the Flemish action plan, we can read that *“The HR-managers, line managers and all personnel members have to put into practice the spirit of these instruments. It is not enough just to implement structures and instruments.”* The instruments that are referred to are personnel and organization (P&O)-instruments (HRM, competency management, training & education). And the so-called spirit of these instruments is to *“make a positive use of the different competencies of personnel members. (...) This is a responsibility of all P&O-professionals and of all line managers.”*

Also in the federal action plan, the main responsibility lies with HR managers. The co-ordination of the diversity management is done by the Diversity Cell, which is embedded in the Ministry of P&O.

- the manager vs. the managed

Managing, or management, is presented as the privileged subject which sees diversity as an object to be managed. It is only the 'managed' who carry the characteristics of being diverse. Drawing a boundary around the 'managed diverse' group, allows diversity to be identified and controlled as it is located in one space, and it is this group that bears the stigmatization of difference (oppressed groups). Also, masking out the diversity of 'those who manage' is also a control mechanism because it serves to erase any questionable human differentials within this powerful group. As Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) note, diversity, though couched in the language of tolerance, is really about managing the negative side effects of undiverted and unaccepted diversity, but from the point of view of the most economically and politically privileged segments of society.

E. What is *not* talked about?

It can be stated that diversity seems to be more about ethnocentrism (viewing one's own group as better), prejudice (making unfounded and negative prejudgments about the other), and stereotyping (attributing to individuals negative characteristics assumed for a group), etc. than it is about *discrimination* (or power, for that matter). The former deal with assumptions, feelings, perceptions and beliefs about others, while discrimination is about actions, behaviors or deeds. To address discrimination, requires a change in behaviors, the structures that create and reinforce them, and in outcomes. Of course, this is more difficult than it is to work on creating more awareness, understanding, information sharing, etc. It is possible that aspects of discrimination law are not incorporated in the Action Plans because diversity professionals do not want to be put in the position of providing legal advice.

What is also not mentioned, is the way that the processes and instruments of exclusion are being reproduced in and outside the public organizations. While talking about the benefits of a diverse public workforce, an individually driven vision for change is put forward. It is assumed that if each person were to treat all others with respect and kindness, interpersonal and organizational conflicts would dissipate (Morrison 1992, Zane 2002). The focus lies on changing attitudes and opinions (and finally also behavior), but what is ignored is the centrality of group and intergroup dynamics, institutional oppression, and the long-standing impact of sexism, racism and other forms of prejudice. It is not talked about how people have differing access to resources and decision making, and how this affects the way in which organizational members are to create a climate of respect. Diversity management's focus on individual differences, rather than on power differentials, is seen by Prasad and Mills (1997) as an attempt to depoliticize the gender conflicts, racial tensions and cultural frictions that are an endemic feature of contemporary organizational life. Breaking the barriers of access to power at the very least requires assimilation to the values and lifestyle of the more privileged. This becomes very clear, for example, in the part of the Flemish Action Plan where it is stated that the Flemish government wants all its personnel members to live and work by "four central values", namely client

orientation, reliability, continuous improvement, and collaboration. The instruments of the competency management policy (the competency framework, the Charter of Values, the evaluation procedure,...) as well as the integrity policy of the Flemish Minister of P&O are all based on these four value-based competencies (Flemish Action Plan, p. 20).

F. Conclusion: diversity is about merit and unity

- Diversity is about merit

In contrast affirmative action policies, the emphasis in diversity management is upon expanding diversity to ‘multiple diversities’ (Thomas Jr. 1992). The focus lies on *individual* enablement. Diversity management is, at least in its original form, framed by the language of economic rationalism. The argument runs that ‘deregulation’ will enhance competitiveness and this will generate commercial incentives to ‘reward merit regardless of other factors’ (Niland & Champion 1990: 5). In effect, diversity management undermines the starting premises of anti-discrimination law that groups like women, ethnic minorities, those with disabilities, etc. are the targets of discriminatory practices and therefore ought to be the targets of reform. There is thus a shift away from any sense that specified groups experience ‘disadvantage’. The result is the production of a discourse which, in the end, holds individuals responsible for their own success or lack of success. An example from the Flemish action plan makes this very clear:

“In all target groups, there will be looked at competencies. A person’s competencies will define whether they get to get or keep the job. Just as this goes for persons who do not belong to any of the target groups.”

- Diversity is about unity

The instruments that are mentioned to come to or to manage a more diverse public personnel, are based on the principle of uniformity for all. Diversity is a task of HR-management, and – according to the action plans – has to be incorporated in all stages of the HRM-cycle. An important part of this cycle is the evaluation system. This aims to ‘measure’ and control a worker’s (yearly) output. Such a tool is key not only to managing by objectives, but also to setting and measuring conformance to behavioral norms (Storey and Sisson 1993, Rees 2003).

Next to this, there is the notion of ‘integrity’ of the Flemish public servants. In the Action Plan, it is stated that respecting differences has to be part of the integer attitude of the public workforce. But it is not said how – given that also the integrity policy is based on the before-mentioned four central values – there can be room for respecting differences, when the entire workforce has to comply with the same notion of what ‘integrity’ is.

Then, there is the fact that diversity management is linked to competency management. The competence-based organization may very well represent a further step in attempting to ‘govern’ individuals so that they are moving collectively towards the organization’s aims. This also becomes clear in the way that in the Flemish action plan it is stated that

“the at first sight heterogeneous composition of the personnel (men, women, emigrants, older workers, starters, disabled people,...) will become one homogeneous unity because we all work for one goal. The organization has to be characterized by one common culture, in which there is room for valuing differences.” (my markings)

Finally, the way that the Action Plans classify differences into clearly demarcated categories, emphasizes the controlling nature of diversity management. Ordering difference, according to Bauman (1993) is a vain attempt, for all it does is ‘to replace diversity with uniformity, ambivalence with a transparent order – and while doing so this turns out unstoppably more divisions, diversity and ambivalence than it has managed to get rid of’.

III. 2. Implications for leadership

In literature on diversity, leaders have been conceived of more as the targets of influence rather than the agents of influence. For example, it is frequently said that leaders must be committed to and provide support for diversity programs, but the programs otherwise take place elsewhere. However, for e.g. race and gender relations to change in an organization, leaders as well as the relevant organizational and identity groups need to co-construct a common understanding of what they mean when they are talking about “diversity” (Zane 2002). In the action plans, it becomes clear that the meaning of diversity was not so much ‘co-constructed’ as it was set out by the respective departments for Emancipation (on the Flemish level) or P&O (on the federal level). Especially the Flemish action plan contains a great amount of references to the person of the Commissioner for Emancipation (the leading manager of the department for Emancipation in the Flemish administration):

- *“the commissioner wants to go out to the work floor, be visible within the organization and represent the added value of the equal opportunity and diversity policy”* (p. 20).
- *“for the next five years, the commissioner wants to focus on creating an open dialogue between personnel on the work floor, on stimulating an open organizational culture that values differences”* (p. 18).

The way that diversity is conceptualized and the way that meaning becomes attached to it, has an important impact on its connection to leadership. If diversity is defined as ‘just good management’, ‘understanding and respecting our differences’, then leadership comes down to offering support and commitment.

However, if diversity comes with more difficult issues, such as anger, hatred, violence, misunderstanding,... that are often embedded in unequal resource distributions, and therefore, create the conditions for their own reproduction, then leadership implies an active engagement, even a conversion experience at a personal level.

Otherwise, while an organization may have an expressed commitment to diversity, this may not have an impact on changing the composition of leadership, in part, because the images of competence are embedded in the culture of current leaders. Leaders, therefore, must make extra effort to break out of the patterns that are otherwise sustained by the streams of action and inaction in which they participate. They need to confront directly the perceived incompetence of excluded candidates through involvement rather than avoidance (DiTomaso and Hooijberg 1996).

Also, diversity management is not only human resource management. If organizational leaders want to bring about a transformation in which diversity brings value, they will have to address the larger issues of social, political and economic inequality (DiTomaso and Hooijberg 1996).

III. Conclusion

We assume that the attitudes, values, beliefs, and therefore, behaviors, of individuals are socially constructed within a context of group and intergroup relations and that people act through social, political, and economic institutions that create, embed, and reproduce *'the inequality among people which we then call diversity'* (DiTomaso and Hooijberg 1996). In this paper, we looked at the way that the concept of diversity is constructed in the Belgian and the Flemish administrations. We did not look at what has actually been *done* so far, but instead focused on what was *said* that was (going to be) done or has to be done. We did this by examining the federal and Flemish Diversity Action Plans, which are the documents that are used to spread the responsible minister's / top manager's vision on diversity within the federal and Flemish administrations.

For now we only looked at the *content* of language, not its *form*. As this asks for a rather specific kind of linguistic analysis, we thought it better to limit ourselves to a focus on the content of action plans' language. We do want to stress here, however, that we believe that a closer look at the syntax, the deictic elements, the modes,... will reveal even more that what is behind the concept of diversity is not what it is promoted to be (respect for difference, an attitude of openness,...) but instead a reinforcement of a commitment to meritocracy and unity.

The drive to keep order and to control people remains (just as it was the case in 'older' bureaucratic structures produced by rationalism), but the emphasis is now on restricting agency through *culture*. The many references to culture in the action plans, and the strong connection to HRM and competency management we find in both plans show that there is a focus on the means by which people are selected, appointed, sorted and placed in ways that connect the self as follower with the organizational vision and mission (Gunter 2006). The underlying knowledge claims remain rational but this is made more humane through the use of a team that enables participation without autonomy. Leadership and leading remain firmly located in formal leader roles, but a hybrid model is being popularized known as 'distributed leadership' (Gunter 2006). Others do leading through delegation or are licensed through empowerment. The leader remains supreme, is charismatic, and can build commitment to organizational unity and securing externally determined outcomes.

Campbell (2003) states that the central dilemma of working in organizations is that we seek some kind of unity while remaining unique and different from our colleagues. It is necessary that we hold on to these contrary forces within ourselves, and that we not retreat into a narrative about ourselves that is built upon unity and understanding. There has to be space for disunity, disagreement, and, particularly, lack of understanding of the other. Or, to put it with the anthropologist Geertz (1979), we have to keep on "*...figure out what the devil they think they are up to*", because the suppression of true dialogue happens when one partner in a dialogue is seeking fusion into "one-ness". Therefore, we should be very careful about embracing definitions

of diversity management, competencies and leadership that are concerned to control, rather than embrace the reality of complexity.

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