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THE MANAGEMENT OF MULTILINGUAL DIVERSITY AT WORK: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS IN THE SPANISH CONTEXT

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IR - Multi*Ling*
Industrial relations in multilingual environments at work

CONCEPT OF 'MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY'

➢ Advisory Group ➜ "Management of diversity" as broader concept

➢ Definition (Keil et al., 2007):
 ▪ "[...] managerial process of accepting and using <u>certain differences and similarities</u> as a potential in an organisation [...]"
 ▪ "[...] a process which creates <u>added value to the company</u>".

➢ The multilingual diversity ➜ origin, ethnic, gender, culture, etc.

  Language discrimination: hardly separable from other categories associated with migrant status

➢ Management of Diversity clauses ➜ 12 pioneers collective agreements
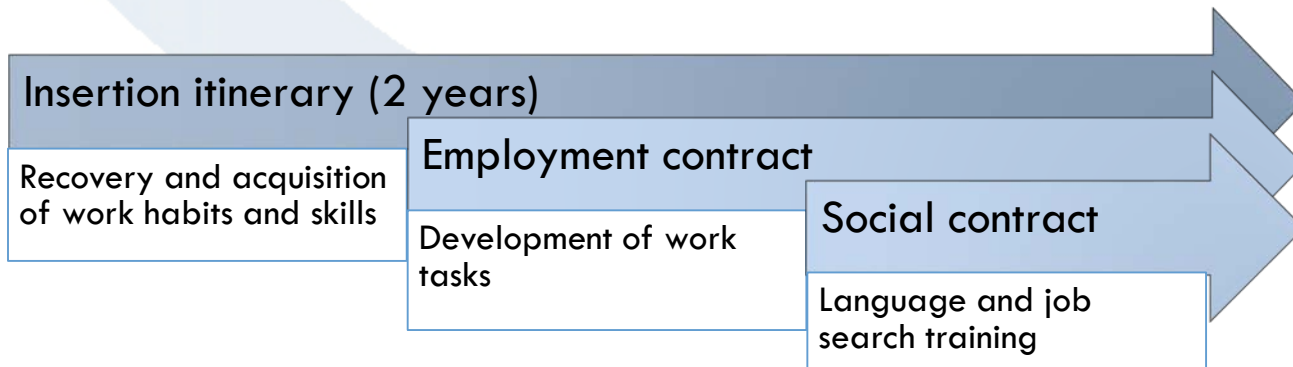
METHODOLOGY AND MODEL

➤ Organisational analysis ⟶ Case study methodology

➤ Three cases: work centres (Yin, 1994).

➤ Selection variables:
  ▪ Sectoral level, level of Qualification, the Size and type of Company, Trade union role, Share of migrants and Women.

➤ Analysis axis:
  ▪ <u>Languages and relations at work</u>
  ▪ <u>Understanding of labour rights</u>
  ▪ Training management
  ▪ Representation and representativeness
  ▪ Initiatives

➤ 18 interviews:
  ▪ Management and HR (4) | Committee (3) | Workers (11)

CASES STUDY

	CASE I	CASE II	CASE III
Sector	Construction	Contact-Center	IT Development
Position	Operators (Painters)	Customer service agents	Developers
Languages	Spanish and Catalan	Mother tongue, Spanish and Catalan	English and mother tongue
Company	Inclusion company	Supplier company	Start-up
IR	Committee | No affiliation	Committee | Low affiliation	No committee| No affiliation
Size	200	750	43

CASE STUDY I: CONSTRUCTION

➢ Sector: declining employment

  ▪ Collective agreement: multilingualism → Health and Safety issues

➢ Company: Convergence between third sector and private sector

  ▪ 30% of migrants | High rate of men | Low qualified

Insertion itinerary (2 years)

Recovery and acquisition of work habits and skills

Employment contract

Development of work tasks

Social contract

Language and job search training

CASE STUDY I: CONSTRUCTION

➢ Languages and relations at work:
- Spanish as *lingua franca*
- Arabic as the language for verification of information between Moroccan
- Different interpretations between Management and migrant workers
  - Coexistence vs. Flexibility
  - Perception of "ghettos"
- Mild conflicts regarding language
- Use of Spanish as a mechanism of control and mutual respect

➢ Understanding labour rights:
- Interdependence of workmates of the same origin
- Support of the Committee (Moroccan president)

CASE STUDY II: CONTACT-CENTER

➢ Sector: Coordination of outsourcing practices at global level
- Recognition of diversity in the collective agreement (salary Plus and Non-discrimination clauses)

➢ Company:
- USA's multinational | Multilingual hub
- 75 % migrants | 70 % women | Medium qualification

➢ Languages and relations at work:
- Spanish and English as common languages
- National distribution of space
  - Cultural and linguistic bubbles
  - Reproduction of linguistic and cognitive frameworks of the country of origin
- Little interaction between nationalities
  - Exception in the only department without national distribution of the space

➢ Representativeness
- Lack of representation of migrant workers

CASE STUDY III: IT START-UP

➢ Raise of IT Start-ups in Spain ➜ network in Barcelona
- Digital business
- "Pull effect" of international, young and high qualified profiles

➢ Company: Start-up focused on the development of on-line interfaces for companies.
- 32% migrants | 11% women | High qualification

➢ Horizontal corporate culture
- No visual hierarchy
- Opened work space
- Work dynamics of autonomous and flexible work

➢ Self-management of linguistic diversity
- Multiple courses of languages per week
- "Off-site" activities

CONCLUSIONS

➢ Presence of linguistic pairs ➔ "Catalyst" of the committee as mediator

➢ Labour conflicts:
▪ Contexts with higher religious and cultural differences
▪ Networks and trajectories characterized by precariousness

➢ Qualification as facilitator factor

➢Training as indicative dimension of the "MoD"
▪ Different levels of adaptability depending of the case

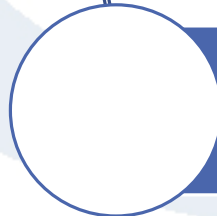| Taylorism	Suppression of workers' subjectivity
Posfordism	Management and channelling of the subjectivity

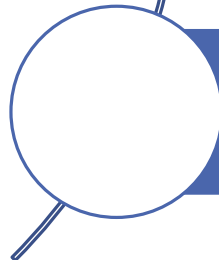# CONCLUSIONS

I. CONSTRUCTION — Assimilationist model

II. CONTACT-CENTER — Cohabitation model

III. START-UP — Integrative model

CONCLUSIONS

Three different models of multilingualism scenarios at work:

- <u>Assimilationist model</u>: Scenario where a dominant language is implemented by the Management prohibiting or denying the use of the migrant workers mother tongue.

- <u>Cohabitation model</u>: Work environment characterized by the existence of diverse cultural and linguistic communities using their mother tongue but with low interaction between each community due to varied HR strategies.

- <u>Integrative or "Bottom-Up" model</u>: Work scenario characterized by high workers participation in decision making with high flexibility and adaptability in the use of diverse languages during the work process.