Inclusion in Grocery Retail: Between Moral Commitment, Organizational Capability, and Institutional Expectations

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Abstract:

This study examines how inclusion is understood, implemented, and organizationally embedded in grocery retail in Germany. Based on qualitative interviews with internal and external retail stakeholders, the findings show that inclusion is rarely perceived as a formal program or regulatory requirement. Instead, it emerges as a socially embedded practice shaped by the interplay of individual attitudes, organizational capabilities, and societal expectations. At the micro level, inclusion is driven by moral commitment and relational practices. At the meso level, it is moderated by organizational resources, economic constraints, and strategic considerations. At the macro level, it is framed as a necessity due to regulatory frameworks, and societal expectations. Therefore, inclusion in grocery retail can be understood as a dynamic negotiation between wanting, being able, and having to. The findings show that inclusive practices often emerge in fragmented, situational ways, highlighting the role of everyday human interactions in enabling participation in retail environments.