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Have Fun but Don't Fight: Ambivalences and Opportunities to Use Celebration as a Strategy to Advance Gender Equality in Organizations

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Title: Have Fun but Don't Fight: Ambivalences and Opportunities to Use Celebration as a Strategy to Advance Gender Equality in Organizations

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Abstract:

This communication proposes a reflection on celebration as a strategy to advance equality in organizations. Celebration has been important for several social movements (e.g. LGBTQ+) as a strategy for empowerment and to raise awareness about inequalities. Indeed, fighting for equality does not have to be synonymous with guilt, boringness and sadness. Celebration has a strong potential in creating belongingness, federating people around positive affects and emotions such as happiness. Yet, celebration can often be used as a way to depoliticize an issue, to undermine the critical dimension of the demands. It is easily captured by a *tyranny of positivity* (Ehrenreich, 2010) that will silence and exclude those who express illegitimate emotions (e.g. anger, unfairness, despair) in stigmatizing them as *killjoys* (Ahmed, 2017, 2010). I draw on my still on-going ethnographic experience as a volunteer in a non-profit organization which aims to promote gender-equality in public and private organizations through training, consulting and research. The non-profit organization is asked to animate *fun and disruptive* training sessions more and more frequently, and to make gender-equality an *organizational event*. In order to open a discussion on how we can articulate celebration in an ambitious promotion of gender-equality strategy, I present three theatre fragments that I wrote during my ethnographic inquiry, inspired by performance ethnography methods.

Ahmed, A. (2017). *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham and London : Duke University Press. 322 pp.

Ahmed, A. (2010). *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 328 pp.

Ehrenreich, B. (2010). *Smile or die: How positive thinking fooled America and the world*. London: Granta.
