

Abstracts

Christina Möller

How open is the Professorship for Social Risers? Empirical Results about the Social Background of Professors at Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany)

Based on an online-survey conducted in summer 2010, this article analyses with the concept of social background groups the social background of 1.340 university professors in North Rhine-Westphalia. It focuses on the professional standing of the parents and is divided into four groups ‚low‘, ‚middle‘, ‚medium high‘, and ‚high‘. Since there are no similar data available for the social background of junior scientists the paper compares the latter with the social background of students. Moreover, this study analyses the relationship between social origin, locality (including discipline and status) and the sex of the professorship. Similar to other findings within educational research, the paper confirms a close relationship between the attainment of high education status and a privileged social background. 34% of the professors derive from the highest and only 11% from the lowest background group. The middle and the higher background group each represented 27% of the respondents. Accordingly more persons from privileged socio-economic families have reached a professorship. Time analysis shows that self-recruitment has intensified over the last twenty years through the increased appointment of incumbents from the highest society-groups, indicating a trend of social closure. Furthermore a statistically significant relationship between the social background and other variables like the disciplines, the status of the professorship, and the sex shows that the social origin of incumbents is very differentiated. For example higher concentrations of social risers are found in the Social Sciences. In effect, Universities can be seen as socially highly differentiated organizations offering dissimilar possibilities for social risers.

Natalie Mevissen and Dagmar Simon

‘Multifaceted Organizations’: Knowledge and Technology Transfer Challenging Non-university Research

Non-university research institutes are urged in particular to legitimize their existence vis-à-vis universities and need to develop unique features also known as profiles. In the last decade we have witnessed an increased pressure in science policy that research is expected to be of social relevance. Organizational studies discuss this development under the theme of ‘organizational development,’ especially focusing on universities. Until now discussion on ‘organizational development’ of non-university research institutes is sparse. The German Leibniz Association serves as an example to illustrate how non-university research institutes respond to external demands and how they process these demands internally. The paper is based on the micro-foundational concept of New Institutionalism revolving around the importance of language and daily routine actions within organizations allowing for insights into how external demands are handled internally. Two fundamentally competing systems of relevance can be identified: serving scientific communities and an alignment towards innovation. It is particularly in institutes catering for both systems of relevance, where organizational development is operational, as organizations need to find solutions in order to cope with areas of conflict. On the micro-level these organizational solutions are less formalized strategies but take shape in unstable

and isolated forms. The institutes are characterized by a polycentric identity. Following the term of ‘multiple-self’ organizations, we apply the concept of ‘multifaceted’ organizations on non-university research institutes, which continuously have to renegotiate their identity internally by referring to unstable and highly complex environments.

Thomas Hinz and Tanja Falkenberg

Minority Students at a German University: High School Grade, Parents’ Education, and Subjectively Evaluated Success

Studying at German universities with migration background is a currently debated topic for higher education politics – merely considering the demographically growing group of minority students. Until now there is little systematic research on the studying conditions of minority students, their success chances at German universities, and on explaining factors for successfully managing the study programs. Based on a student survey at the University of Konstanz (N = 399), the article describes whether two success indicators (self-reported achievements and a problem index of using scientific methods) differ between the groups of students with and without migration background. Furthermore, it analyzes how possible differences are related to differences in study preconditions and requirements (grades of high school diploma (Abitur) and educational family background). The group differences for both indicators are small and almost fully explained by differences in grades of high school diploma.

Oliver Dimbath

Methodological Voyeurism. Perspectives for a Reorientation of Sociological Film Analysis.

Despite its long tradition sociological film analysis is still not seen as a ‘serious’ method of empirical social research. Gaining more and more popularity in university courses and theses, its bad reputation partly feeds on the perception of film as a methodologically problematic subject. This perception stems from the fear of analyzing film material in a naïve way by misunderstanding it as an authentic reflection of reality. Other reasons may lie in the blending of cinematic pleasure with research interests or in the difficult delineation to other – aestheticized or normative – approaches. This paper wants to develop a methodological point of view that can help to establish film analysis as a full-fledged social scientific research method. Theoretically, it combines micro-sociological and interactionist perspectives (Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel) with Norman K. Denzin’s film analysis. Empirically, it will focus on the interaction order of fictional film sequences portraying situations that can hardly be observed in ‘real life’.