

Summaries

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Increased Educational Participation and Sex Segregation at Swiss Universities

Enrollment of women in Swiss universities has doubled during the last 25 years from 25% to 50% of all students. At the same time sex segregation as measured by various indexes of dissimilarity remained almost constant. This contribution investigates the reasons of this – at first sight – paradoxical development. First, we describe the sex segregation in Swiss universities. Second, the pros and cons of different indexes of measuring sex segregation are discussed. Finally, we discuss possible reasons for sex segregation in different subjects.

Karsten Hank

Marital decisions of western German men in spatial context

This paper studies the relationship between characteristics of men's place of residence and the probability of entering marriage in western Germany during the 1980s and 1990s. We link micro-information from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (GSOEP) with district-level data to estimate discrete-time multilevel logit models. Our multivariate results stress the importance of men's individual economic status in marital decisions. They furthermore indicate a negative relationship between women's aggregate labour force participation and male transition rates to marriage, which could be interpreted as evidence for the popular »economic independence hypothesis« of marital behaviour. Complementary, we put forward an interpretation of female employment rates as indicators of regional differences in gender roles and individuals' autonomy. Our findings, which include a significant latent contextual effect, suggest that a man's propensity to marry is influenced by the regional socio-cultural milieu he lives in.

Martin Höpner

What drives the corporate leaders?

From agency theory to the sociology of management

The article discusses why shareholder-oriented company policy became popular among German managers in the 1990s despite the fact that it increased the market's influence on corporations and thus appeared to limit the managers' room for maneuver. This question can best be answered by combining agency theory and management sociology. The argument is carried out in three steps. First, it is shown that the 1990s witnessed changes in backgrounds and typical career features of top executives that increased their willingness to adopt shareholder-oriented strategies. Second, increasing control by markets was counterbalanced by decreasing control by insiders; in sum, not the quantity, but the quality of control over managers changed. Third, it is demonstrated that this change in the quality of control led to increasing managerial compensation and was therefore compatible with managers' interests. The arguments are backed up by data that cover the 40 largest German stock corporations during the 1990s.

Werner Vogd

Decisions and careers?

Organization-sociological views on, what's going on at a psychosomatic department

This paper discusses methodological questions arising in qualitative organizational research. The author suggests that the Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus and Niklas Luhmann's general systems theory can be combined to form a useful tool for understanding what is going on in organizational worlds. The analysis of a clinic department for psychosomatic disorders is presented as a paradigmatic example.

The results indicate that typical communication structures on the hospital ward reproduce taboos and decision blockades which have become the habitual practice of the professional actors. The two theoretical positions are shown to be compatible metatheoretically and to complementary each other, permitting an in-depth analysis of communicative processes in organizations.

Stefan Kühn

Fashions in development cooperation. Capacity Building and Capacity Development as new role – models for development agencies

The sociological research about organizational fashions has been concentrated on firms. However, this article examines capacity building and capacity development as management models, which has been dominating the work of development agencies for the last ten years. In the self-description of development agencies these management models have been justified with the argument, that the strengthening of the capacities within the developing countries will lead to a higher success rate of development projects. This article argues that the main function of this model is to satisfy the demand of legitimacy development agencies are confronted with. With rising criticism on their work there is a growing necessity of development agencies to signal, that they are continuously searching for new successful concepts.