

Abstracts

Jochen Hirschle

Institutional and Informal Marriage Markets. The Crowding out of Informal Meeting Opportunities among the Higher Educated

The study examines the structural aspects of the mating process with focus on opportunities rather than preferences of individual actors. It is argued that the higher educated are to a lesser degree able to rely on informal, institution-independent networks in the meeting process. Geographical mobility and altered sociability styles result in a crowding-out of informal, lifeworld-generated mechanisms of social association. This assumption is tested with the biographical data of the German Youth Institute family survey 2000 by means of multinomial event history analysis. Results show, that the higher educated are to a stronger degree dependent on the inclusion in formal organizations (especially educational institutions) that produce marriage-markets as byproducts of other functions. In lifecycle periods where they cannot rely on institutionally generated opportunities, the probabilities to establish new intimate relations are significantly reduced (in comparison to the lower educated in the same situation). It can also be shown that this diminished probability of mating is the outcome of reduced transitivity within the informal networks of higher educated mobile individuals.

Bettina Isengard

Wage Differences in the Area of Conflict of Social Origin and Individual Education: A Comparative Analysis for Germany and Switzerland

Human Capital Theory is the dominating approach to explain individual wage differences. Consequently, the available stock of human capital in general and of the educational level in particular is the central characteristic for individual labour market success respectively the amount of wages. Accordingly, differences of wages can be justified on the basis of productivity differences arising as a result from unequal educational qualifications. However, the Status Attainment Theory postulates a close relationship between social origin, individual education and personal labour market success. Accordingly, the social status of the parents affects the formal educational qualification of children, which in turn influences the vocational status and therefore the wages. At the same time, social origin can have a direct effect on earnings. Against this background this paper investigates the relevance of social origin for educational success with special focus on the labour market success in Germany and Switzerland. It is argued that both countries show similarities concerning the relation between social origin, education and income.

Adam D. Dixon

Finding the Collective in an Era of Pension Individualization

Many scholars approach pension restructuring in terms of neoliberalism and class conflict, suggesting that pension restructuring is reducible to a linear and one-dimensional process. This article argues that this limits the scope for understanding pension restructuring and thus confines our capacity to understand and uncover new possibilities and collective solutions, albeit capitalized solutions. This article attempts to enrich our understanding of pension restructuring by approaching it through the lens of reflexive modernization, or *second* modernity, where the

institutions of *first* modernity undergo modernization themselves and where strict boundary demarcations are eroding. The article then theorizes the prospects of a collective resurgence in pension provision utilizing neoinstitutionalist theories of institutional design in conjunction with a case study of a new multi-employer German pension scheme. Ultimately, it is argued that past institutional legacies can be manoeuvred to produce a collective response to the liberalized and market-oriented environment of pension provision, suggesting that individualization has limits.

Richard Münch

The Construction of Sociological Excellence through Research Rating

The research rating of sociology, carried out and published in 2008 by an evaluation group as a pilot study on behalf of the German Science Council, is expected to distinguish itself by higher quality and multi-dimensionality compared to ordinary rankings. This article will show that this procedure of evaluation itself faces considerable problems in doing justice to the varied reality of research and building valid and reliable indicators of research activities. The research rating itself selectively constructs sociological excellence, which would look quite different if measured in other ways. A thus far open field of equally licensed participants in discourse is subjected to stratification, which tends towards self-reproduction, because acquired competitive advantages can be turned into further advantages. Hence, sociology moves farther away than before from the ideal speech situation. The evolution of sociological knowledge is closed by increasing subjection to power structures.