

CONFERENCE ON THE LEGACY OF RAYMOND BOUDON

ETH Zurich, 29-30 May 2014



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Organisers:

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Location:

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Raymond Boudon's pioneering work has strongly influenced contemporary sociology, especially rational choice/analytical sociology and research on education and social stratification. While others merely retell the work of classical sociologists, Boudon exploited the ideas of Weber, Durkheim, de Tocqueville and other classical sociologists in a unique way. Building on the sociological tradition, he was able to demonstrate the fruitful synthesis of classical ideas and modern analytical tools such as mathematical models, simulation methods and game theory. In doing so, Boudon succeeded in opening up black boxes, unravelling the mechanisms that generate the social phenomena to be explained.

The conference on Raymond Boudon's legacy will discuss contemporary sociological research and theory building in Boudon's tradition. Among other topics, the following aspects of his work will be discussed:

- Critical appraisal of theories, models, model extensions and simulation studies
- Empirical tests of theoretical models and hypothesis
- Theory and concepts of rationality and ideology
- Theory of education, inequality and mobility
- Methodological issues
- Impact on sociology.

Thursday, 29 May

09:00 - 09:30 *Reception | Coffee Break*

Social Theory I: Rationality

09:30 - 10:00 *Andreas Diekmann*

Welcoming Address: Boudon's Sociology—Classical Thoughts and Modern Analyses

10:00 - 10:45 *Siegwart Lindenberg*

Goal-Framing versus Cognitive Rationality

10:45 - 11:30 *Andrea Maurer*

Raymond Boudon's General Theory of Rationality Reconstructed in the Spirit of Max Weber

11:30 - 12:15 *Karl-Dieter Opp*

The Explanation of Everything. A Critical Analysis of Raymond Boudon's Social Theory

Lunch Break

Social Theory II: Micro-Macro

13:45 - 14:30 *Werner Raub*

Raymond Boudon, Micro-Macro Modeling, and Applications of Game Theory in Sociology: Progress, Open Problems, and a Case Study

14:30 - 15:15 *Jacques Lautman*

Along with Boudon's Cognitive Rationality: Explorations in Sociology of Organizations and Comparative Macro Sociology

Social Inequalities I: Relative Deprivation

15:15 - 16:00 *Gianluca Manzo*

Opportunity, Comparisons, and Satisfaction: An Agent-Based Model of Relative Deprivation

Coffee Break

16:30 - 17:15 *Joël Berger & Andreas Diekmann*

The Logic of Relative Frustration. Boudon's Competition Model and Experimental Evidence

17:15 - 18:00 *Georg Müller*

Fuzzy Logic, Cognitive Rationality, and the Indeterminate Truth of Beliefs

19:30 *Conference Dinner on the Üetliberg*

Friday, 30 May

Social Theory III: Mechanisms and Simulation Models

09:30 - 10:15 *Volker Müller-Benedict*

Boudon's Contribution to Simulation Models - Two Examples

10:15 - 11:00 *Alexandros Kyrtis*

Mechanisms and Complexity: Boudon's Non-deterministic Theory of History and Its Relationship to Social Network Analysis

11:00 - 11:30 **Book presentation**

Felix Wolter

Social Inequalities II: Education

11:30 - 12:15 *Rolf Becker*

Sociological Research on Inequality of Educational Opportunity - The Legacy of Raymond Boudon

Lunch Break

13:45 - 14:30 *Heiner Meulemann & Ilona Relikowski*

Equality of Opportunity and Achievement in Social Change. Primary and Secondary Effects of Social Origin on Secondary School Transition in Hesse 1969 and 2007

14:30 - 15:15 *Hartmut Esser*

Educational Inequality and Educational Systems: The Role of Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Effects.

15:15 - 16:00 *Michael Grätz*

Competing with Your Siblings: Inequality, Education, and Opportunity within Families

Coffee Break

16:30 - 17:15 *Hans Dietrich*

From Educational Aspiration to Attainment – The Adaption Process in the Last Year of Compulsory Schooling

18:40

Boat Cruise and Farewell Dinner

Thursday **Goal-Framing versus Cognitive Rationality**
10:00 – 10:45 *Siegwart Lindenberg (University of Groningen)*

There are good reasons to believe that the standard model of rational choice is not satisfactory. The question is: what to do about it? Boudon has offered a serious adaptation of the standard model. He rejects the revision of the model that is based on the assumption that we need to allow for much irrationality (cognitive biases). Rather, he goes the other way, assuming that people are in fact a lot more rational than they are given credit for by the “cognitive bias” scholars. Thus, according to him, models of rationality that develop in the direction of irrationality are pushed in the wrong direction. Boudon calls his particular model of rationality “cognitive rationality” and it includes the rationality of beliefs and a non-consequentialist “axiological rationality”. I will present a critical evaluation of Boudon’s cognitive rationality concept and compare it to a “social rationality” concept that is based on goal-framing and self-regulation.

Raymond Boudon's General Theory of Rationality Reconstructed in the Spirit of Max Weber

Thursday
10:45 – 11:30

Andrea Maurer (University of Trier)

Ramond Boudon's aim was to solve puzzles. One of the most inspiring puzzles within sociology is to link ideas and interests. There is no consensus about why and when interests or ideas matter. Especially in the work of Max Weber we can find the assumption that ideas and interests work differently by guiding individual's actions. Secondly, Weber holds the assumption that ideas and interests are driving forces in the social world and therefore explanations of socio-economic phenomena need to take both into account. But Weber never made clear how to link interests and ideas precisely. Furthermore, he stated that individual actions are driven by material as well as ideal interests but common ideas (Weltbilder) are the "tracks" that direct interests and thereby individual actions in novel ways. So one can say that Max Weber introduced the notion of explaining social phenomena by understanding individual actions by reconstructing the underlying (material or ideal) interests in a concrete situation. Only if this fails, individual actions are to be explained with regard to beliefs. For example, in the Protestant Ethic, he argues that the individualized citizens of modern cities orient rationally on the ideas of Protestantism because of lacking sense.

Raymond Boudon is best-known for his plea for explanations found in micro assumptions (Boudon 1979) that name "good reasons" as causes for individual actions. Whereas in an early stage of his work, Boudon used simple assumptions on the microlevel, he started to focus more and more on ideas as a rational foundation of individual actions (Boudon 1979). I'm arguing that by doing so, he not only criticizes economic theory as well as Rational-Choice-Models within sociology for being sometimes "unrealistic" but also theorizes the missing link between interests and ideas in the work of Max Weber. Raymond Boudon's general theory of rationality helps to deduce empirically testable theses about when and why "ideas" matter and solves some of the RC-paradoxes. Therefore, I will discuss Boudon's "general theory" (Boudon 2013) as an important step in theorizing Weber's action types. Secondly, I will discuss to what extent Boudon refers to Max Weber's rationalization thesis and what it means when he states with regard to Alexis de Tocqueville that sociologists are not able to provide good institutional settings as long as they know nothing or less about the principles of individual actions.

Boudon, Raymond. 1979. *Widersprüche sozialen Handelns*. Franz. Orig. 1971 ed. Darmstadt und Neuwied: Luchterhand.

Boudon, Raymond. 2013. *Beiträge zur allgemeinen Theorie der Rationalität*. Franz. Orig. 2007 ed. Die Einheit der Gesellschaftswissenschaften 146. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Thursday
11:30 – 12:45

The Explanation of Everything. A Critical Analysis of Raymond Boudon's Social Theory

Karl-Dieter Opp (University of Leipzig / University of Washington (Seattle))

Raymond Boudon proposes a theory that explains behavior, attitudes, descriptive and normative beliefs, preferences and behavior, in other words: everything – or at least almost everything – social scientists are interested in. The basic idea is that *reasons* are a major causal factor, but there are also *irrational factors* (Boudon's term) such as affective causes. This is the first paper that provides a detailed critical analysis of this theory. We first identify the major problems of the theory. One is its relatively low explanatory power: it is largely left open how to select the causally relevant reasons and irrational factors for an explanandum. A second problem is the validity of the theory: is it plausible that a single theory can explain the wide range of phenomena Boudon focuses on? Thus, the question is whether this generality assumption is valid. Furthermore, Boudon rejects utility maximization which is inconsistent with a large number of social psychological theories and thus seems implausible.

In a next step two social psychological theories are applied to each of the explananda of Boudon's theory. The first goal is to improve the explanatory power of Boudon's theory. A second goal is to examine Boudon's claims that (1) a single theory can explain all the explananda Boudon is concerned with and that (2) utility maximization does not hold true. The two theories are *balance theory* and *value expectancy theory*. They give detailed guidelines on how to select the "right" reasons and other factors, and they confirm Boudon's idea that a unified theory in the social sciences is plausible that explains the explananda of Boudon's theory. The two theories are inconsistent with Boudon's critique of utility maximization. Because these theories are versions of rational choice theory it might be argued that their application is problematic because Boudon is a strong opponent of this theory. It is argued in the final part of the paper that Boudon's critique of rational choice theory attacks a narrow outdated version of this theory and that Boudon's theory is actually compatible with a wide version of rational choice theory.

Raymond Boudon, Micro-Macro Modeling and Applications of Game Theory in Sociology: Progress, Open Problems, and a Case Study

Thursday
13:45 – 14:30

Werner Raub (Utrecht University)

Raymond Boudon's work such as *Effets pervers et ordre social* (1977), *La logique du social* (1979), and also *Education, Opportunity, and Social Inequality* (1974) has provided seminal heuristic ideas for as well as paradigmatic examples of micro-macro modeling and applications of game theory in sociology. I will briefly summarize some of Boudon's contributions to these issues and some progress that has been made in his wake as well as open problems. Progress and open problems will be illustrated employing a novel game-theoretic model on strategic network formation and network effects.

Thursday
14:30 – 15:15

**Along with Boudon's Cognitive Rationality: Explorations in
Sociology of Organizations and Comparative Macro Sociology**
Jacques Lautman (University of Aix-Marseille)

Raymond Boudon's work provides us with intellectual progress on at least three fronts that we may be tempted to pursue:

- a) There is a single body of scientific knowledge: scientific laws and mode of reasoning are equally relevant for all types of sciences, including *Geistwissenschaften*, *Mind sciences*.
- b) Social actors make decisions which are always rational, according to their own viewpoint, in that sense that they believe them to be based on « good reasons ».
- c) This pattern of « good reasons » may be of use to analyze opinions and the evolution of values.

My paper will focus on the first two statements.

Even though we believe in the uniqueness of scientific knowledge, we should still admit that as social scientists, we are dependent upon a number of factors: datasets size, empirical data level, scope of our ambition. At one end, we have data at hand and quantitative modeling is made possible; at the other end, we aim at developing a sociological interpretation of a specific social or historical situation.

Considering the usual succession of levels, namely social actor, organization, macro-society, I will consider how sociologists address the micro/macro link depending on the type of data they use.

1. Dealing with individual data and variables based on individual opinions or behavior, or aggregated elements thereof, makes it possible for analytical sociology to make real progress, mostly through multi-agent models.
2. The analysis of organized systems, once pursued separately by sociologists and economists, is nowadays conducted in a more systematic and coherent manner, due to a more flexible vision of the rational actor and his constraints, and to the emergence of a paradigm of generative mechanisms that allows a shift from a macro level, rich with empirically observed data to a micro virtually reconstructed level.
3. The macro-social level may be addressed through both monographies and comparative analysis. In both cases, no piece of general scientific knowledge can be expected and we are bound to face a somewhat different type of knowledge, focused on specific, non repeating facts and events.

Pour finir deux mots: Audace informée et contrôle.

Opportunity, Comparisons, and Satisfaction: An Agent-based Model of Relative Deprivation.

Thursday
15:15 – 16:00

Gianluca Manzo (CNRS (GEMASS) / University Paris-Sorbonne)

In order to study the conditions under which relative deprivation is more likely to appear, Boudon (1979, 1982) designed a game-theoretic setting in which actors compete for a limited number of goods representing the system's opportunity structure. In two related papers (Manzo 2009, 2011), I re-analyzed and extended Boudon's original model. First, I translated it into an agent-based computational model and performed an extensive sensitivity analysis of several variants of the model. Then, I extended it in two ways: 1) I introduced a set of mechanisms that are assumed to drive the intensity of actors' feelings of satisfaction; 2) building on the sketched analysis of relative deprivation by Burt (1982: 191-8), I introduced dyadic ties among artificial agents in order to represent actors performing neighborhood-based comparisons rather than population-based comparisons. The extensive sensitivity analysis of this model's variant shows that, when it is postulated that actors' envy inversely depends on the proportion of actors "in the same boat" (according to Merton's original intuition), the sought-after pattern "more opportunities, more satisfied actors, less intense individual-level feeling of dissatisfaction" is rarely observed; 2) the more the network connecting agents is sparse and contains low-degree nodes, the more frequent the pattern "more opportunities, lower dissatisfaction levels". Thus, the flexibility of agent-based computational modeling allows to move from Boudon's simplified game theoretic model to a preliminary formal unified framework in which it is possible to study at the same time A) how many actors are satisfied/dissatisfied as well as how intensely they are satisfied/dissatisfied, B) how population-based versus neighborhood-based comparisons interact, and C) how both macro-rates and micro-feelings of satisfaction depend on the kind of social structure in which actors are embedded.

Manzo, G. (2009). "Boudon's model of relative deprivation revisited," in M. Cherkaoui and P. Hamilton (eds.), *Raymond Boudon: a Life in Sociology*. Oxford: Bardwell Press, vol. III, part 3, ch. 46, 91–121.

Manzo, G. (2011). "Relative Deprivation *in Silico*: Agent-based Models and Causality in Analytical Sociology", in P. Demeulenaere (ed.), *Analytical Sociology and Social Mechanisms*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, ch. 13, 266-308.

For an adaptation of this paper in German, see:

Manzo, G. (2010). "Populationsbasierte versus nachbarschaftsbasierte soziale Vergleiche. Ein agentenbasiertes Modell für das Ausmaß und die Gefühle relativer Deprivation", in T. Kron and T. Grund (eds.), *Die Analytische Soziologie in der Diskussion*, Wiesbaden, VS Verlag, ch. 12, 265-299.

Thursday
16:30 – 17:15

The Logic of Relative Frustration. Boudon's Competition Model and Experimental Evidence

Joël Berger (ETH Zurich) & Andreas Diekmann (ETH Zurich)

An improvement in the opportunity structure of a social system (e.g., a society or a firm) can coincide with a growing share of frustrated individuals. For instance, uprisings were repeatedly preceded by political liberalizations or a rise in overall prosperity (the so-called Tocqueville paradox). In organisations, satisfaction with promotion opportunity can be negatively associated with objective promotion chances. Raymond Boudon suggests a game-theoretic competition model specifying the micro-mechanisms that produce these puzzling phenomena on the aggregate level and clarifying the conditions under which they emerge. We conducted a series of laboratory experiments to test model predictions, making our study the first empirical test of Boudon's model. Results are mixed: When opportunities increased, the share of the relatively frustrated losers in the group remained constant or increased only slightly. However, when applying another aggregation rule that accounts for all social comparison processes and does not merely focus on the losers as suggested by Boudon, an increase in relative frustration under improved conditions was observed. Our results imply that under specific conditions there is a trade-off between opportunities and social mobility on the one hand and social inequality and relative frustration on the other.

Fuzzy Logic, Cognitive Rationality, and the Indeterminate Truth of Beliefs

Georg Müller (University of Fribourg)

Thursday
17:15 – 18:00

This paper stands insofar in the intellectual tradition of R. Boudon, as it assumes that decisions are the result of cognitive processes, which are *subjectively* rational.¹⁾ In particular, in this paper we are interested in situations, where this cognitive rationality yields no conclusive results and leads to non-decisions about the truth of a belief. For this purpose we introduce the concept of *fuzzy truth* of a belief, which varies on a continuous scale between 0 = false and 1 = true with an intermediate value 0.5 = indeterminate.²⁾ Following another idea of Boudon³⁾, this overall truth of a belief is composed of the fuzzy truths of its different components: by fuzzy AND and OR operations they are synthesized into the mentioned overall truth of this belief.

If the fuzzy overall truth of a belief is close to 0.5, rational decisions about behavioral consequences are difficult, also with regard to the acceptance of the belief. Hence this paper postulates that this situation results in non-decisions. Similarly, if the truths of the various components of a belief are too heterogeneous, decisions based on these truths are under cross-pressure such that non-decisions are again very likely. Consequently the overall-truth of the belief becomes indeterminate. Obviously, the previous hypotheses can be concisely formulated by the means of fuzzy Boolean logic.²⁾

The empirical part of the paper analyzes item nonresponse to interview questions about *job-satisfaction*, which is interpreted as a non-decision about the truth of the belief of being happy with the own job. The European Values Study EVS 2008 offers internationally comparative data, also about the analyzed components of this belief like salary, hierarchical position and autonomy at work. The empirical analyses *confirm* our theoretical expectations: The closer the overall fuzzy truth of happiness with the own job is to the value 0.5 (= indeterminacy), the higher the probability of non-response to the corresponding interview question. Similarly, the higher the inconsistency between the highest and the lowest fuzzy truth of the components of job-satisfaction, the higher the probability of item nonresponse to the latter interview question.

¹⁾ Boudon, R. (1989) *Subjective Rationality and the Explanation of Social Behavior* (= Discussion Paper 89/6), pp. 10 ff. Köln, Max-Planck Institute.

²⁾ Bergmann, M. (2008) *An Introduction to Many-Valued and Fuzzy Logic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³⁾ Boudon, R. (1995). *Le juste et le vrai*, p. 333. Paris: Fayard.

Friday **Boudon's Contribution to Simulation Models - Two Examples**
09:30 – 10:15 *Volker Müller-Benedict (University of Flensburg)*

The core of Boudon's famous work on "L'inequality des chances" consists in a complex simulation model which performs social mobility via the way through the educational system. This was the first formal simulation which had a strong impact on general social theory. Also in other parts of his work Boudon used simulation models. While at the time of publication these models had to be calculated by paper and pencil and the different time paths had to be developed analytically today this work can be done easier by computer programming. Once Boudon's models are implemented in a program, the richness and complexity can be further developed and demonstrated.

The presentation gives two examples of this approach. The first one uses the original model of the work "L'inequality des chances" and shows that the question of how to diminish this inequality turns out undeterminable if different political goals and different distributions of social strata are taken into account. The second one compares the amount of the primary and secondary effect of social origin on success in the educational system based on a simple but ingenious idea of Boudon.

Mechanisms and Complexity: Boudon's Non-Deterministic Theory of History and its Relationship to Social Network Analysis

Friday
10:15 – 11:00

Alexandros-Andreas Kyrtzis (University of Athens)

Boudon's non-deterministic understanding of historical dynamics, as presented in his theory of social change, hides a potential that can be brought to light if we shift the method of representation of processes and the method of quasi-modelling he usually adopts. Although Boudon included in his views on social change a plethora of hidden assumptions concerning processes of social interaction that can be represented with network analytic tools, he tended to solve most of the problems he was posing by recourse to aggregation effects emerging from mechanisms of what one might call 'reduction of complexity'. For complexity theorists, these aggregation effects are usually associated with what they would call 'attractors', i.e. with mechanisms of generation of order emerging out of chaos. In spite of the fact that especially in his book "Theories of Social Change" he often makes such associations, he was explicitly opposing the use of complexity theory. His critique, epigrammatically formulated with reference to Herbert Simon, R. Todd La Porte and Edgar Morin, is essentially addressed to those who adopt an abstract and not sufficiently operational concept of complexity. A side effect of this scepticism was that, despite his interest in modelling, he undervalued the significance of discussions on the problems of representation of complexity. For instance, in one of his publications on social mechanisms he discusses the problem of black-boxing as a problem of misrepresentation of complexities and the consequences in terms of misconception of causal relationships; but he does not make the next step to propose alternative representations of dynamically evolving modalities of social interaction. However, if we put emphasis on the interactional, agent-based underlay of his understanding of social change and of historical dynamics, many aspects of his views can be translated into propositions of complexity theory. This presupposes also a critique of his preferred method of variable oriented modelling.

Friday **Book Presentation**

11:00 – 11:30 **Felix Wolter (Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz)**

Raymond Boudon: Beiträge zur allgemeinen Theorie der Rationalität, aus dem Französischen übersetzt von Felix Wolter, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2013.

English Title: Raymond Boudon: Essays on the General Theory of Rationality, translated from French to German by Felix Wolter, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2013.

In his essay collection, Raymond Boudon investigates the perhaps most fundamental question of the social sciences: How can social phenomena, understood as a product of human actions, be explained satisfactorily? And how can particularly phenomena that one would spontaneously qualify as “irrational” – such as rain dances or religious beliefs – be attributed to rational causes?

Boudon’s point of departure is the diagnosis that today, social theory finds itself in a profound crisis, partly because conventional rational-choice-theory and its notion of instrumental rationality has not been able to keep what it initially had promised. The author develops a “general theory of rationality” that extends the notion of rationality by an axiological and a cognitive dimension. Hence, social phenomena are always explainable by the subjectively substantial and objectively traceable causes that individuals have to adhere to certain beliefs or to carry out certain actions. Beliefs and action that appear as “irrational” finally turn out as being rational.

Boudon presents example applications of his theory of rationality, many of which already appear in the writings of sociological classics like Tocqueville, Weber or Durkheim. He chooses the classics deliberately and shows that some of the most important findings of the social sciences owe their success to the fact that they have based their analyses implicitly on the paradigm proposed in the book.

Sociological Research on Inequality of Educational Opportunity The Legacy of Raymond Boudon

Rolf Becker (University of Bern)

Friday

11:30 – 12:15

Raymond Boudon was one of the most important pioneers who have made seminal contributions for explaining the inequality of educational opportunity (IEO) from the sociological perspective. The suggestion to differentiate between primary and secondary effect of social inequality popularized by Boudon became the mostly utilized concept for analyzing structure, distribution, and reproduction of IEO in the present educational research. Although this theory has been extended in the empirical research in the last centuries, it doesn't provide explanation of IEO without any "black boxes". In this contribution, first, the state of the art of educational research basing on Boudon's theory will be reviewed. Second, the theory of cognitive rationality suggested by Boudon will be included into the explanation of IEO in order to provide an explanation without "black boxes". Third and finally, an outlook on future educational research will be given considering the most recent research on IEO.

Friday
13:45 – 14:30

**Equality of Opportunity and Achievement in Social Change.
Primary and Secondary Effects of Social Origin on Secondary
School Transition in Hesse 1969 and 2007**

Heiner Meulemann (University of Cologne) & Ilona Relikowski (University of Bamberg)

The positive impact of higher social status on the transition into more demanding secondary school forms can be split up into two effects: the primary effect, which is conditioned by higher achievements of children from privileged social origin, and the secondary effect, which is independent of achievement differences and conditioned by the fact the higher school curricula are less costly and promise more benefits for parents of higher social status than for parents of lower social status. It is examined how the relative size of both effects has changed in Germany between 1969 and 2007 using two studies in the federal state Hesse, which measure students' achievement and parents' status in very similar ways. The transition to the Gymnasium, the most prestigious track of the German tripartite secondary school, is investigated using the method of Karlson et al. (2012). The primary effect has increased, specifically because of an increasing impact of achievement; and the secondary effect decreased such that school has gained impact relative to the home.

Educational Inequality and Educational Systems: The Role of Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Effects.

Friday
14:30 – 15:15

Hartmut Esser (University of Mannheim)

The contribution deals with possible effects of educational systems on the generation of educational inequalities. The core lies in a theoretical separation of sorting and contextual effects and the role of primary, secondary and tertiary effects on achievement of children with different social (and ethnic) background. Relations to the work of Raymond Boudon are obvious: His seminal differentiation between primary and secondary effects of social background on educational careers (extended by SES-biased evaluations and recommendations of teachers, labeled here as tertiary effects) and the idea of schools and classes as learning environments and social contexts. Actual background of the contribution is a controversy between two different pathways to interpret the well-known Pisa-Results as causal effects of educational systems in educational economy on the one hand and educational sociology on the other and the so called collider problem for the identification of causal effects. General framework is the embedding of educational systems and the interactions of its main actors (children, parents, teachers) in the notion explanatory social sciences and mechanistic explanations for which Raymond Boudon was one of the most important Founding Fathers.

Friday
15:15 – 16:00

Competing With your Siblings: Inequality, Education, and Opportunity within Families

Michael Grätz (European University Institute)

This paper analyses within-family inequality in educational outcomes in Germany. On a theoretical level, I make the argument that Boudon's IEO model is applicable to within-family differences. It, then, predicts that we can expect differences between siblings to be more pronounced among siblings from lower SES families than among siblings from higher SES families. This is because performance differences between siblings have a lower influence on educational decision making in higher class families. Using data from the German-Economic Panel Study (GOSEP) I provide estimates of the proportion of inequality which is produced within as compared to between families. Furthermore, I test which mechanisms bring about inequality between siblings using family fixed effects models. These mechanisms include birth order, gender, birth spacing, maternal age, and parental separation. Finally, I look at the interaction between these factors and social origin. I find that differences between siblings exist in lower and higher SES families to a similar degree. However, the effects of some of the mechanisms analyzed on track attendance are more pronounced for lower SES families. This leads to the conclusion that the mechanisms which bring about inequalities between siblings do not differ between social classes but they are more consequential with respect to final educational attainment for lower SES families.

From Educational Aspiration to Attainment – The Adaption Process in the Last Year of Compulsory Schooling

Hans Dietrich (Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung)

Friday

16:30 – 17:15

The paper is in line with choice theoretic models of educational decision based on Boudon's IEO model (1974). The paper models individuals' educational attainment after graduation from last year of compulsory schooling in Germany. In extension to the literature, individuals' educational aspirations at the beginning of the final year of compulsory education are taken into account and the adaption process from aspiration to attainment is explored. That extension allows disentangling individuals and parents contribution to the educational decision of interest. The paper also considers the framing of the adaption process by institutional settings and the feedback from the training market to individuals' applications for higher education or apprenticeship training. Marginal effects of M-logit models are estimated, applying a unique empirical data set, which delivers data from a multi-wave survey interviewing students in the last year of compulsory schooling at three points of the decision process. Additionally students' parents are interviewed. Results show an increasing parental effect on the educational decision whilst the last year of schooling, when individuals' educational aspirations became crystalized by observable attainment. During the last year of compulsory schooling parental cost considerations gain importance, especially then when aspirations experienced adjustment towards educational attainment.

List of Participants

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