

Lehrstuhl für Empirische Wirtschaftssoziologie

Prof. Dr. Monika Jungbauer-Gans

# Intersectionality and contextuality in social inequality

#### "Putting the trias into context"

Dynamic-interactive models of social inequality conceptualize the interactions (e.g. "trias" gender x socioeconomic status x migration) as *configurations* which means patterns and interactions among elements that have paradoxical and conflicting meanings depending on specific

#### Data

#### Context ,school' (Gottburgsen & Gross)

- competencies in reading and mathematics on the basis of international PISAdata 2006
- multidimensionality:

context as a whole. "It is an empirical matter in any given context to see what concepts are important to the configuration of inequalities in discourse and in practice" (Marx-Ferree 2009: 8).

## Theory and hypotheses

## Intersectionality approach to social inequality

(e.g. Crenshaw 1989, McCall 2005, Winker & Degele 2009)

- 3 basic principles:
  - multidimensionality due to the multiple social positioning of individuals
  - intersectionality through intersections of different social group memberships at the same time
  - contextuality: interaction effects depend on and vary across social contexts

#### ,contextuality':

Social context varies/limitates the effects of the trias

- main effects for gender (M/F), socioeconomic status (Low/High), migration status (Migrant/Native)
- Intersectionality: interaction of low socioeconomic status x male gender x migration background
  - compositional effects on reading ranking:
    FNH, FMH, FNL > FML, MNH, MMH > MNL > MML
  - compositional effects on mathematics ranking: MNH > MNH, FNH > FMH, MNL > FNL, MML > FML

#### **Context**, university' (Buche & Gottburgsen)

- chances of employment (full-time, with opportunity to qualify) in the scientific field on the basis of an online survey of employees of a German university (740 respondents)
- multidimensionality:
  - full-time employment:main effects for female gender, low socioeconomic status, not for migration status
  - opportunity to qualify: main effect for female gender, not for low socioeconomic status or migration background
- intersectionality :

gender x socioeconomic status x migration.

- -context ,school': (+)
- —context ,university': (—), (selectivity of migrants)
- -context ,labour market': +

## Results

# Trias gender x socioeconomic status x migration

- confirmed in the social context ,school'
- not confirmed in the social context ,university', but interactions of gender x migration x parenthood
- obvious in the social context ,labour market', but also evidence for effcts of age and parenthood

 no interactions of socioeconomic status x gender x migration, but for female gender x parenthood

#### Context ,labour market' (Gottburgsen & Sixt)

- research overview on key labour market indicators, e.g. monthly income, labour market participation, professional positioning, career prospects, risk of unemployment
- multidimensionality:
  - main effects of gender, socioeconomic status and migration proved by a range of studies, with negative effects for females, for persons with low socioeconomic status and migration background
- intersectionality:
  - a lack of empirical studies which include systematically interaction effects,
  - but some evidence for interactions of gender x socioeconomic status x migration,
  - other important dimensions age and parenthood

# ,Contextuality'

- confirmation of the third principle of the intersectionality approach
- social contexts limitate the effects of the trias, make other social

group memberships virulent

#### Outlook

#### **Need for further research**

- educational system, esp.regarding university entrance and degrees
- Iabour market: systematic inclusion of the trias in empirical studies

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