



SYMPOSIUM > 13–14 JUNI 2019

## **Academia in the Age of Comparison: Methodological and Empirical Perspectives in an Interdisciplinary Dialogue**

Academia is in an age of comparison. Momentous processes like globalization, marketization, and digitalization are not only of general societal relevance but also pushed by and simultaneously pushing comparisons in academia. In this climate, comparison ‘strikes back’: Scholars are conducting comparisons as a research method and at the same time turn into units of comparison themselves. The symposium emphasizes the double role of comparisons as an intellectual operation in research practice, and a social practice that contributes to creating an academic social order. Instead of conceiving of comparisons as a mere intellectual operation with few social consequences, or as a social process that is not based on very specific methodological implications, the symposium is ought to facilitate a more detailed understanding of comparisons of and in academia through interdisciplinary dialogue.

Contributions are distributed across four slots with talks and comments that address key aspects of comparison in academia: histories and trajectories of comparison, the relation between comparator and compared, devices and instruments of comparison, and consequences of comparison. In addition to these contributions, early career researchers present their ongoing research in an interactive poster and pitche(r)s session. Two keynotes by eminent scholars of comparison and a closing panel with observations made during the symposium by distinguished scholars complement these contributions.

International Symposium of the Volkswagen Foundation

**Academia in the Age of Comparison.  
Methodological and Empirical Perspectives**

12.-14. June 2019,  
Conference Center Herrenhausen Palace, Hanover, Germany

**Wednesday, 12.06.2019**

18:00 Get together, drinks and snacks at LCSS  
19:00 Dinner

**Thursday, 13.06.2019**

09:30-10:00 Coffee and registration

10:00-10:30 Anna Kosmützky, Julian Hamann, Frerk Blome (LCSS Hanover): *Introduction: Comparing and being Compared. Academia and the Double Role of Comparison*

10:30-11:30 *Opening panel* with Bernhard Ebbinghaus (Oxford University), Angelika Epple (University of Bielefeld), Merle Hummrich (University of Frankfurt), Tobias Werron (University of Bielefeld): *From Assessment to Quantification - On the Analytical Leverage of "Comparison" as a Term and Concept*  
*Moderation: Anna Kosmützky (LCSS Hanover)*

11:30-12:30 David J. Frank (University of California, Irvine): *Keynote: The University in Comparative Perspective: Sameness and Difference*  
*Moderation: Julian Hamann (LCSS Hanover)*

12:30-13:30 Lunch

13:30-15:30 *Slot 1: Histories and trajectories of comparison*  
Tobias Werron, Jelena Brankovic (University of Bielefeld): *Where do rankings come from? The emergence and institutionalization of rankings in different societal fields*  
Angelika Epple, Walter Erhart (University of Bielefeld): *Is There an Age of Comparison? Comparative Practices from Antiquity to Present Times*  
Annette Simonis (University of Giessen): *From Comparison of Arts to Comparative Media Studies*  
David Kaldewey (University of Bonn, FIW Bonn): *Comment*  
*Moderation: Jennifer Dusdal (University of Luxembourg)*

15:30-16:00 Coffee

16:00-18:00 *Slot 2: The comparator and the compared*  
Ruth Müller (Technical University of Munich): *Bigger, better, faster, more? Narratives of excellence in contemporary academia*  
Michael Guggenheim (Goldsmiths, University of London): *How to Make Good Comparators*

Justin Powell, Marcelo Marques (University of Luxembourg): From Ratings to Rankings: Research Evaluation and Strategic Organizational Actors

Anne K. Krüger (Humboldt University of Berlin, DZHW Berlin): Comment

*Moderation:* Eva Maria Vögtle (DZHW Hanover)

18:00-19:30 Poster and Pitche(r)s Session: PhDs and Post-Docs Presentations

Anoud Abusalim (Lancaster University): Disciplinary Writing Practices in Social Sciences and STEM

Aliakbar Akbaritabar (DZHW Berlin): A spatial scientometric and network analysis of Higher Education Research and Science Studies (HERSS)

Tamara Dagen (University of Zagreb): The impact of globalization on the internationalization of European public universities

Marita McGrory (University of Flensburg): International Students' Success Rates in Germany - Are they rough diamonds?

Hanne Kvilhaugsvik (University of Bergen): Re-connecting to the labor market? Labor market panels for higher education in Denmark and Norway

Marianne Noel (University of Paris-Est): Three tales of marketization. The role of publication programs in the entry into an era of post-comparison in chemistry

Pedro Pineda (University of Kassel): Studying worldwide diffusion of teaching evaluations through case-centered and variable-centered comparisons

*Moderation:* Frerk Blome (LCSS Hanover)

19:30 Dinner

### Friday, 14.06.2019

08:30-09:00 Coffee

09:00-10:00 Bernhard Ebbinghaus (Oxford University). *Keynote:* Are welfare regime typologies an ideal or realistic comparison of and for public policy?

*Moderation:* Anna Kosmützky (LCSS Hanover)

10:00-10:30 Coffee

10:30-12:30 *Slot 3: Devices and instruments of comparison*

Michael Sauder (University of Iowa): Rankings as Devices of Comparison

Wolfgang Kaltenbrunner (CWTS Leiden): Filling in the gaps: The interpretation of CVs in peer review

Martina Franzen (KWI Essen): Measuring scholarly impact. Altmetrics as devices of comparison in the digital age

Torger Möller (DZHW Berlin): Comment

*Moderation:* Tim Seidenschnur (INCHER Kassel)

12:30-13:30 Lunch

- 13:30-15:30 *Slot 4: Consequences of comparison*
- Richard Watermeyer (University of Bath): REFability and the insidious effects of institutional and individual competitiveness
- Lars Alberth (University of Hanover): Universities between comparability and incomparability
- Frank Meier (Helmut Schmidt University of Hamburg): Competition between Higher Education Institutions
- Terhi Nokkala (University of Jyväskylä): Comment
- Moderation:* Stefan Groth (University of Zurich)
- 15:30-15:40 Grab a coffee
- 15:40-17:00 *Final discussion and closing remarks*, with observations from Andrea Mennicken (LSE London) and Marta Natalia Wróblewska (National Centre for Research and Development Warsaw)

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