

Institutionalizing the Logic of Quantification

Michael Sauder

22.01.2020, 12 – 14 Uhr
Lange Laube 30, Raum 001
(Achtung: Raumänderung!)

Der Vortrag findet als **Brown Bag** Lunch-Vortrag statt, d.h. Sie können gerne Ihr Lunchpaket mitbringen. Das LCSS stellt Tee, Kaffee und Wasser bereit.

Knistern Erlaubt!

ABSTRACT

Quantification, in the form of accountability measures, organizational rankings, and personal metrics, plays an increasingly prominent role in modern society. While past research tends to depict quantification as a tool or an external intervention, we propose that conceptualizing quantification as a logic provides a more complete understanding of its influence and the profound transformations it can generate. Drawing on a 24-month ethnographic study of Korean higher education, this study demonstrates four pathways through which the logic of quantification is embedded into organizations. Specifically, we show how this new logic reshaped organizational structure, practices, power, and culture—changes that in turn buttress and reproduce the logic.

Theoretically, this study provides a new perspective on why quantification is often intractable and “de-quantification” so rare. In addition, this work contributes to the organizational literature on institutional logics by demonstrating how prevailing logics build defenses to resist challengers and thus maintain their influence. Most generally, we consider how the self-reinforcing nature of this logic contributes to the intensification of rationalization in contemporary society.

BIOGRAPHY

Michael Sauder is Professor at the Department of Sociology at the University of Iowa, IA, USA. He specializes in the sociology of organizations, theory, culture, and inequality. His recent research has appeared in *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, and *Administrative Science Quarterly*. Sauder's 2016 book with Wendy Espeland, *Engines of Anxiety: Educational Rankings, Reputation, and Accountability* (Russell Sage Foundation), is the culmination of an extensive project examining the unintended consequences of accountability measures on the individuals, organizations, and fields that they assess. Michael is currently a fellow at the Max-Weber-Kolleg at the University of Erfurt, where he pursues a research project on a sociological approach to the study of luck and inequality. This work develops a theoretical justification for studying luck and outlines an empirical program for creating a better understanding of both beliefs about luck and the ways in which luck influences life chances.



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