

Call for Papers

(In)visibilities in Academia and Higher Education

Exploring Links between (In)visibility and Social Inequality

International online workshop organized at the Leibniz Center for Science and Society
Leibniz University Hannover, 24 - 25 June 2021

Organization: Marco Valero Sanchez and Stephanie Beyer

An undertaking of sociology is to make the *invisible visible* and hence to analyse and understand social inequalities. Our workshop aims to broach this issue within the sphere of the university itself. For instance, we find that reputation as core criterion in academia – may it be in form of publications, citations, rankings, or research funds – plays a significant role in making institutions, their scholars, and their specific knowledge *visible*. However, reputation is a socially constructed phenomenon that is also connected to mechanisms of power that are usually invisible. Furthermore, the university is a specific and reflexive social space where potentially invisible social inequalities are made explicit, especially by the social sciences. Nonetheless, the university still contributes to not providing equal opportunities for all societal groups and therefore (re)produces social inequalities to a certain degree.

In our workshop, we would like to focus on the social construction and negotiation of (in)visibility of categories such as social class, gender, race, disability, health, and chronic illness. How and under which circumstances do these categories become (in)visible and for whom? Additionally, we would like to discuss the role of visibility and invisibility in academia and higher education, how this is translated into social inequalities (or vice versa), and how we can analyse these processes and/or tackle them conceptually. Furthermore, we would like to pay attention to the physical and psychological well-being of students, faculty, and staff and discuss whether and how differences in health status promote social inequalities.

The following questions are offered only as suggestive guidelines. Other topics suited to the workshop theme are explicitly welcome:

- To what extent are categories such as **social class, gender, race** and/or their intersections (in)visible categories within higher education? Which social processes contribute to marginalizing certain people and making them (in)visible in academic life? How does this affect their participation in higher education and their scientific careers?
- How are **(in)visible disabilities or chronic illnesses** constructed? What does it mean to (not) disclose an invisible disability or chronic illness and what are the consequences of this for disabled students, faculty, or staff? How is the (in)visibility of disabilities or chronic illnesses linked to the (re)production of social inequalities in academia or higher education? How does the category of (invisible) disability or chronic illness intersect with social class, gender, race, and other categories of analysis?

- What role does the category of **health** play in academia and higher education? For instance, how do students and academics perceive work and performance demands and how do these affect their physical and psychological well-being? How do students and academics perceive, address, and deal with pressure, stress or (job) insecurities? In which way is health connected to social inequalities?
- **Methodological and theoretical perspectives:** How can we describe and analyse opaque and mostly misrecognized categories such as **power** or privilege? Which methods, methodologies and/or theoretical perspectives help us transform latent categories into manifest categories and thereby to analyse social inequalities within academia or higher education?

If you would like to virtually present a paper on your theoretical, methodological, or empirical research, please send an abstract of no more than 300 words in a pdf-file to marco.valero.sanchez@lcss.uni-hannover.de and stephanie.beyer@lcss.uni-hannover.de. Papers are allocated a 40 minutes slot which we recommend includes 25 minutes presentation and 15 minutes for questions and discussion. **The deadline for abstract submissions is 18th April 2021.** All applicants will receive a notification of acceptance by **7th May 2021.**

For all others who are interested to take part in the workshop, you will need to register prior to 1st June 2021. There are no admission or conference fees. Please register with stephanie.beyer@lcss.uni-hannover.de. If you wish for technical or personal support to attend the online workshop: Please also contact us prior to 1st June 2021.