

## Science and Social Inequality

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My research focuses on the reproduction of social inequality in German science. Based on the current findings that educational expansion and open access to higher education did not result in less social exclusiveness in the German academic system (Graf 2015, Lange-Vester/Teiwes-Kügler 2013, Möller 2015), my PhD project aims to provide a qualitative study of this issue. The central question addresses how scientific practices contribute to social exclusiveness in the field of science. Theoretically and methodologically drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of social practice, I claim that the social background in the form of endowment with capital and affinity to the academic field influences the accumulation of scientific capital and hence the development of academic careers (see Graf 2015, Lange-Vester/Teiwes-Kügler 2013, Lenger 2008, Möller 2015, Schneickert 2013). Moreover, I argue that social selectivity is (re)produced by the practices and the habitus of the scientists and manifested in the structures of the field as contextual environment. Hence, I look at the process of becoming a professor in Germany in terms of a field socialization and at the way scientific practice narrowed down to practices of perception, attribution and promotion of (potentially promising) junior scientists is (re)produced by scientists, aiming to reveal the role of social background in these practices. Following Bourdieu's methodological relationalism I combine qualitative data (narrative interviews with professors from various disciplines with academic and non-academic family background plus their CVs) with a field analysis (secondary data) of German academia. Since scientific excellence must be perceived and recognized by the scientific community in order to exist (see Beaufaÿs/Krais 2005, Engler 2001, Merton 2010, Münch 2007), senior scientists play a crucial role in the "making" of scientists as they constitute others as fellow players in the scientific game by attributing achievement (potential) to them. By looking at the academic habitus and the forms of capital acquired by scientists as well as at how social exclusivity is reproduced by these scientists via their construction of excellence and scientific practices, the study aims to scrutinize the illusion that scientific merit is free from social influences. Assuming that "making judgements about excellence is a deeply interactional and emotional undertaking, rather than a strictly cognitive one" (Lamont 2009: 112), I assume that social homophily as a principle of judgment does not only refer to subject-specific aspects but as well to personal aspects in terms of a shared habitus (see also Beaufaÿs 2003, 2012, Lammers 2010, Lenger 2009, Zimmermann 2000). In my presentation at the Summer School I want to discuss to what extent recent structural changes in science increase social selectivity and argue that the politically initiated competition and the rise of precarious short-term and part-time employments strengthen the correlation between social background and an academic career, based on the article Keil (2016): Zur Reproduktion von sozialer Ungleichheit im Feld der Wissenschaft. In: Killius, Lucia; Killius, Markus & Raschauer, Agnes (2016): Generation Y Science. Lebens- und Arbeitsbedingungen junger Akademiker\_Innen (accepted). This trend is indicated quantitatively by a high level of competition between early-career scientists and qualitatively by precarious employment conditions and insufficient career prospects. Furthermore, any aspects of the PhD project are gladly open to discussion such as the research design, the empirical implications of a theory of social practice, etc.