

**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 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 & Degèles 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 gender x socioeconomic status x migration.

- context ,school": (+)
- context ,university": (-).
- 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 effects of age and parenthood

**Conclusion**

'Contextuality'

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

**Data**

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

- competencies in reading and mathematics on the basis of international PISA-data 2006
- multidimensionality:
  - main effects for gender (M/F), socioeconomic status (Low/High), migration status (Migrant/Native)
  - interactionality: interaction of low socioeconomic status x male gender x migration background
  - compositional effects on reading — ranking:
    - FHN, FMH, FNL > FML, MNH, MMH > MNL > MML
  - compositional effects on mathematics — ranking:
    - MNH > MNL, FNH > FML, MNL > FNL, MML > FML

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

- chances of university (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
  - interactionality:
    - 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
  - interactionality:
    - 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

**Outlook**

**Need for further research**

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

References

