

Thursday, August 29th, 2019, 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Lecture Hall 6, Room 2113, Campus Center, Moritzstraße 18

Keynote Speech

Theory and Higher Education Research: Are They Just Loosely Coupled?

Anna Kosmützky

The development of research fields and debates about theory and theoretical controversies as well as theoretical developments and new conceptualizations are closely related (just as, of course, methods). In my talk, I will focus on the relationship between higher education research and theory, and will ask how loosely (or tightly) coupled they are. I will examine the question on three levels: individual studies in higher education research, thematic sub-fields of higher education research, and theories on the role of higher education in society. Although a loose coupling of theory and higher education research has particular advantages (looseness entails openness and flexibility), a tighter coupling can be beneficial: Without a reference to theory, empirical results might remain incoherent and disconnected, and methodological questions tend to stay on the surface. Without theoretical discussions and controversies, the field might neglect its potential for development and innovation, and without a foundation in societal theory, we might lack an understanding of the social dynamics in and of higher education and waste the opportunity to generate legitimacy for higher education (research). I will explore the potential for a tighter coupling of theory and higher education research across the three levels.

Speaker



Anna Kosmützky (Leibniz Center of Science and Society (LCSS), Leibniz University Hannover, Germany) Anna Kosmützky is a sociologist and holds a Ph.D. from habilitation (post-doc qualification) from University of Kassel. Before becoming a professor for the “Methodology of Higher Education and Science Research” at the Leibniz Center of Science and Society (LCSS) at the Leibniz Universität Hannover she worked at the International Center for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassel) and was head of a Bielefeld University and a research area that comprises research and research projects related to the knowledge production of universities. Her research includes higher education research, science research, and organizational studies and focusses on the methodology of comparative research, in particular, international comparative research (including international collaborative research). Furthermore, she studies globalization processes in higher education (and beyond) as well as the institutional and organizational change of higher education and research organizations.