

Wednesday, August 28th, 2019, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

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

Keynote Speech

Networks and Topics of Higher Education Intermediaries on the WWW

Achim Oberg

Intermediary organizations, such as university networks, student associations, rating agencies, and research funding organizations, participate in international debates on higher education and research. By advocating for their constituencies, they have the potential to affect how governments regulate, finance, aim to govern, and evaluate universities and research institutions. In addition, by drawing attention to topics, such organizations can stimulate or impede the diffusion of new practices among their members.

In a current research project on transnational intermediaries in higher education, we archive the websites of hundreds of such organizations over the course of several years. As in other big data research projects, our material contains large amounts of relational and textual data. To utilize these qualities, a conceptual lens that combines social network and institutional analysis is quite helpful. Social network analysis enables us to capture larger structures and the positions of individual organizations within these structures; institutional analysis provides concepts to interpret these structures and the diffusion of topics. In combination, methods and theoretical concepts facilitate the study of ongoing debates about higher education governance on a large scale in unprecedented detail.

Speaker

Achim Oberg (Institute of Organization Studies, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria/Institute for SME Research at the University of Mannheim, Germany)

ACHIM OBERG is assistant professor at the Institute of Organization Studies at the Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria, and a senior researcher at the Institute for SME Research at the University of Mannheim, Germany. After obtaining a degree in business administration and computer science at the University of Mannheim, he held positions at RWTH Aachen University and KIT Karlsruhe in Germany. His digital social science research focuses on organizational fields on the World Wide Web and on relational connections among concepts. To capture and analyze these phenomena, he combines network analysis methods with institutional theory.



Recent publications

Powell, Walter W., Oberg, Achim. 2017. Networks and Institutions. In: Greenwood, R; Oliver, C.; Lawrence, T.B.; Meyer, R.E. (Ed.) The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism (446-476). Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC, Melbourne: SAGE Publications.

Powell, Walter W., Oberg, Achim, Korff, Valeska P., Oelberger, Carrie, Kloos, Karina. 2017. Institutional analysis in a digital era: mechanisms and methods to understand emerging fields. In: Krücken, G.; Mazza, C.; Meyer, R.E.; Walgenbach, P. (Ed.) New Themes in Institutional Analysis (305-344). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Drori, Gili and Delmestri, Giuseppe and Oberg, Achim. 2016. The iconography of universities as institutional narratives. Higher Education 71, 163-180.

Sahlin, Kerstin, Wijkström, Filip, Dellmuth, Lisa, Einarsson, Torbjörn, Oberg, Achim. 2015. The 'Milky Way' of intermediary organisations: a transnational field of university governance. Policy & Politics 43 (3), 407-424.

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