

Call for Papers

Submit your abstract (300-500 words) until 31 July; e-mail: mechanisms@phil.hhu.de

Workshop on

Social Mechanisms:

Methodological Challenges, Empirical Applications & Modeling Techniques

7-8 November 2014, Düsseldorf, Germany

Social Mechanisms are the focus of several analytical approaches in the social sciences striving for explanation while acknowledging the relevance of understanding (Elster 1983, 1985, 1989; Freedman 1987). Following Coleman's (1990) explanatory *macro-micro-macro model* uniting different steps in the logic of explanation, i.e. situation, selection and aggregation, the need for more fine-grained explanatory approaches (Esser 1996; Goldthorpe 1996, 2001) has been addressed most prominently in the context of DBO theory building upon the distinction of *desires, beliefs* and *opportunities* (Hedström & Swedberg 1996). From a different direction, proponents of ('wide') rational action theory propose to further develop bridge assumptions, build upon social production functions, introduce frame selection and differentiate the explanatory steps that are undertaken to enrich the Coleman model (Lindenberg 1996; Opp/Friedrichs 1996; Kroneberg & Kalter 2012).

Although these two approaches depart from different theoretical avenues, both share the aim of improving the *analytical models* social scientists apply in order to better understand and ultimately explain human behavior and social dynamics. We propose to use this common ground as a frame of reference in order to further discuss and develop *mechanism-based explanations*. Beyond this, we would also like to encourage colleagues from different fields of theory testing to share their knowledge and develop a common language and understanding when modeling the social *explananda* of interest in our disciplines. Thus, we would like to bring together researchers doing advanced *quantitative empirical survey research* (e.g. multilevel and/or moderation/mediation models) and those applying *agent-based modeling* (simulation studies). Both directions of applying social mechanisms can be integrated to elaborate more appropriate models. The applications of *social mechanism-* and *theory-based explanations* presented at the workshop may cover a range of different substantial fields where mechanisms are discussed and elaborated. One objective of our workshop will be to discuss whether 'substantial' mechanisms such as mechanisms of social and/or educational inequality, stereotype and prejudice building, preference building, etc. can be traced back to a more *fundamental grammar of generative mechanisms* such as risk aversion, cognitive dissonance reduction, rational imitation etc. We also encourage colleagues to submit methodological or methodologically-inspired empirical papers.

For the workshop in Düsseldorf we invite presenters of papers addressing four different domains:

- (1) Methodological aspects of social mechanisms: explanatory status and potential
- (2) Quantitative empirical applications of social mechanisms
- (3) Agent-based modeling of social mechanisms
- (4) Intertwining techniques: combining social mechanisms in quantitative models with agent-based modeling

Submission guidelines

- (1) Submit your abstract of 300-500 words until 10 August by e-mail to: mechanisms@phil.hhu.de.
- (2) Include sufficient information on your methodological focus and/or your modeling approach.
- (3) For domains 2-4 above, include preliminary or main results of your analyses.
- (4) Relate your abstract to the analytical explanatory ideas and ideally to specific social mechanisms.

We will let you know if you are invited to present your paper until 22 August. You are obliged to hand in a short research note or conference paper (of at least 6-8pp.) until 20 October. If you intend to submit your paper to the special issue below you are asked to submit a full paper in order to allow us meet the publishing deadline.

Special issue on “Social Mechanisms”

The organizers of this workshop on “Social Mechanisms” (7-8 Nov 2014) and of an earlier workshop on “Soziale Mechanismen” (25-26 April 2014) will publish a **special issue** of **Analyse & Kritik**, Zeitschrift für Sozialtheorie (Journal for Social Theory) on **Social Mechanisms** in 2015 (all articles in English; for recent theme issues see <http://www.analyse-und-kritik.net/en/themeissues.php>). We invite all workshop contributors to submit their full papers to this peer reviewed special issue (call for papers will be published soon).

Conference fee

AnaGramm is funded by the Strategic Research Fund (SFF) of Heinrich Heine University. As this funding does not cover conference organization we will submit an application for external funding. If this attempt is not successful, a low level conference fee of € 20 and additional meals and accommodation costs as private expenses should be taken into account.

AnaGramm on the web

<http://blogfarm.phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de/anagramm/>

Arrival, accommodation and venue

Düsseldorf is located at the centre of the Rhine-Ruhr agglomeration. Düsseldorf airport (DUS) is easily accessible from all parts of Europe and directly connected to the Main Station (Hbf) by public transport (S11 in less than 15 minutes). Cologne-Bonn airport (CGN) is also nearby (35-50 min.); cf. www.bahn.de.

The conference hotel is located within walking distance to Düsseldorf Main Station and to the venue.

The workshop venue Haus der Universität is located in the city centre of Düsseldorf, close to Königsallee and the inner city historical park Hofgarten.

We are looking forward to your abstract submissions,

Ulf Tranow, Dominik Becker, Tilo Beckers

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Ulf Tranow, Dr. Dominik Becker and Dr. Tilo Beckers

SFF-Project AnaGramm – Analytical Sociology as a Grammar of the Social Sciences

at the Department of Social Sciences, Section of Sociology, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf