

Conference, organised by the “Arbeitskreis Funktionale Analyse” (Study Group Functional Analysis)

Invitation and Call for Papers for the Conference:

„The Methodologies of the System – How can one arrive at the case and how does one get behind it?“

4th – 6th September 2008, University of Hohenheim, Stuttgart

It has been researched about most social phenomena as well as they have been described from the perspective of systems theory – and yet those two areas of sociology, systems theory and empirical research remained mainly ignorant towards each other. General reproaches of theoretical or empirical blindness too often collide. This leaves important potentials unused. The theory-based development of empirical methods as well as the empirical richness of social theory – especially this of systems theory – and thus the contribution of sociology to current problems of society have to rely on the bridge of methodology. Therefore the conference aims at pushing forward the dialogue between systems theoretical conception and empirical observation by broadening and deepening it. The debate about mutual methodological consequences of theory and empirical work can bridge the gap between those two sociological areas. This gap is mainly due to the frequent non-reflection of systems theoretical projects on the methods that were applied to come to their results. They do not reflect on their underlying methodology and thus, how they come to what they observe as their “case”. Therefore the main issue is to reflect upon the methods applied and their methodological justification of projects working with a systems theoretical perspective. The starting point for the linkage between empirical research and systems theory is the question about the methodology of systems theory as the link between theory and method. From this angle, systems theory can offer useful tools for empirical research as well as open up itself reasonably and explicitly for empirical observation of the society.

This leads to the three main topics of the conference:

- Which methodologies and methods are tacitly applied in systems theoretical works?
- How compatible are systems theory and its methodology with already existing methods of empirical social research?
- Which bridges exist between systems theory and the methods and methodologies generated from other theories?

Those questions are embedded into the debate about the general connection between theory, methodology and method as well as the further development of systems theory. This discussion also has an encroaching character, since the guiding topic touches epistemological issues and thus also implies the importance of social sciences in and for society.

The key-note speakers for the main topics of the conference will be: Rudolf Stichweh (Universität Luzern), Gorm Haste (Aarhus University), Niels Akerstrom-Anderson (Kopenhagen Business School), Werner Vogd (Universität Witten-Herdecke), Wolfgang Schneider (Universität Osnabrück), Thomas Scheffer (Freie Universität Berlin), Urs Stäheli (Universität Basel) und Hubert Knoblauch (Technische Universität Berlin). These key-notes are the starting point for discussions that shall be deepened in several workshops. **For those workshops we invite lecture-proposals**, which tackle the problems and possible solutions of empirical social research from a systems theoretical perspective and touch the main topics of the conference. The aim is an international and interdisciplinary social-scientific dialogue. The insights gained at the conference are supposed to be documented in a conference-publication.

Place of the conference:

University of Hohenheim, 70593 Stuttgart

Registrations and questions:

- ☞ Dr. René John (Universität Hohenheim): rene.john@uni-hohenheim.de
- ☞ Dr. Jana Rückert-John (Universität Hohenheim): rueckert@uni-hohenheim.de
- ☞ Dipl.-Ökon. Anna A. Henkel (Universität Witten/Herdecke): anna.a.henkel@web.de

Conference-languages:

German and English

Dates:

Deadline for conference registration: 15th of August 2008

Deadline for abstracts (max. 2 pages): 30th of June 2008

Conference fee:

A conference-fee of 95 Euro is due after the confirmation of registration.

Further information:

- ☞ About the program (German): www.isinova.org/download/AKFA/MethoSys08.pdf
- ☞ About the organiser: www.funktionale-analyse.isinova.org