

Abstract Working-Paper B1 (Diehm/Kuhn/Machold/Mai):

The production of difference by the language screening Delfin 4

This paper is concerned with the first findings of an ethnographic study into the production of *educational inequalities* in educational organizations, while focusing on ethnic heterogeneity as a relevant criterion. These findings will be illustrated by the standardized language screening Delfin 4¹, which is compulsory for all four-year-olds in North Rhine Westphalia. Following Max Weber's concept of ethnicity, which includes the issues of nationality, language, culture and religion, the category of language will be the main interest at this point.

At present 24 four-year-old children with so-called migration backgrounds, and 28 children without, are ethnographically accompanied on their educational pathways through the consecutive educational organizations of (the German) Kindergarten and primary school (project phase I) in this mixed-method longitudinal study. Between January and May 2012 the first field phase was conducted in two 'Kindergärten', which greatly vary in the socio-economic status of their catchment area.

Due to Andreas Reckwitz' praxeological theory (2003) the main analytical foci of the study; 'organization' and 'inequality', are considered through the theorem of 'social practices'. One premise of this praxeological perspective is that organizations situationally produce their members, phenomena like educational success and failure as well as deviation and equivalence to norms. In line with this argumentation educational inequality seems analyzable and understandable as a result of *differentiation practices* by the professionals in the everyday pedagogical situations of educational organizations.

As ethnography, this study is confronted with the methodological difficulty of the micro-macro connection, i.e. the transmission problem between interactional and structural level. It has to face the question of how to refer differentiation practices located on the micro level in relation to inequalities on the macro level. This theoretical deficit with respect to inequality in interactional analyses is addressed by a praxeological understanding of organizations. It implies an interest in continuous recursive routines in the organization (performative behavioral routines *at work*) as well as an explicit conceptual focus on the artifacts that are used, and produced, in the organization (cf. Reckwitz 2003). Artifacts like the documents of the language screening Delfin 4 unfold their effects going far beyond their situational production, by the information and legitimation of various institutional decisions referring to educational careers (cf. Kelle 2009). Furthermore artifacts are conceptualized by a double-character: They can be understood as documents and consequently as proof, as well as instruments, that structure as tools the differentiation practices of profes-

¹ The testing by the language-screening Delfin 4 in North Rhine Westphalia is regulated by § 36 section 2 of the education act. It is a two-tiered test, which is conducted for the children going to a kindergarten, in their institution. The Delfin 4- test is structured through different documents: a booklet for the protocol, calculation tables, decision tables and evaluation grid.

sionals (cf. Kelle 2007). Considering this praxeological perspective the language-screening Delfin 4 was investigated as a *social practice of differentiation* on three different levels. This working paper presents and discusses the first of these analytical findings:

(1) The form and logic of construction (cf. Kelle 2006) of the *blank documents* (documentation booklet, sheet of results, playboard, instruction cards, game/test instruction book) were analyzed *before* the situated procedure of the language screening in the pedagogical context, to gain insights into *how* these documents of the Delfin 4 testing configure the social reality of the testing procedure, the documentation and of the assessment of the children.

(2) Subsequently the *artifact-supported, situated and practical accomplishment* of the Delfin 4 testing by the professionals was investigated by audio recording-supported participant observations, to reconstruct the reality-structuring potential of the language screening.

(3) Regarding the question, if and what kind of dynamics are generated in the interaction during such a testing on the *level of peers*, the practices of the children were ethnographed and the children were asked about their experience of the test.

Later on the *formal educational careers* of the children are analyzed based on the Delfin 4 documents. This facilitates a relational perspective on the educational success of the accompanied children in relation to their *peers* within a kindergarten group. These findings will be contextualized using the structural data of their family (educational achievement, migration background, 'family language', income and family form).

References:

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