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Academic Identity as a Discursive Resource for Resistance : The Case of Quality Management in German Higher Education Institutions / Michael Lust, Christian Huber and Jaromir Junne

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Abstract

This paper explores the relation of professional identity and resistance in organizations. While prior literature points out that protecting identities from managerialistic changes is an end for which resistance is a means, this study focuses on how identity can also serve as a discursive means for resistance. We present the findings of a qualitative research project about the impact of the implementation of quality management in German higher education. The findings of our study show that academics, especially full professors, counter quality management with a repertoire of discursive resistance, often drawing on identity claims. We identify three main types of identity claims that are used as resources for discursive forms of micro-resistance: professional autonomy, expertise for teaching quality and specificities of academic disciplines. These findings add to the debate about the dynamics of identity during organizational and institutional changes in higher education by empirically illustrating how identity can be mobilized as a means to resist. Our study has the implication for quality management that its relations to academic identities are decisive for the

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everyday discourses and micro-practices of resistance it provokes. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)