

16.2.2026

**Author**

BLOCH, Roland (MITTERLE, Alexander)

**Title**

On stratification in changing higher education: the “analysis of status” revisited / Roland Bloch ; Alexander Mitterle

**Publication year**

2017

**Source/Footnote**

In: Higher education. - 73 (2017) 6, S. 929 - 946

**Inventory number**

45512

**Keywords**

Hochschule : Wettbewerb ; Hochschule und Staat : allgemein

**Abstract**

This article seeks to shed light on current dynamics of stratification in changing higher education and proposes an analytical perspective to account for these dynamics based on Martin Trow’s work on “the analysis of status.” In research on higher education, the term “stratification” is generally understood as a metaphor that describes a stable vertical order. In sectors that are experiencing considerable change, such an order is still in the making. In following Trow, we propose to look at stratification as an open ordering process that constructs verticality. We distinguish between sector and field stratification, i.e., between stratification through coercive regulation by the state and through status judgements by a wide range of stakeholders. Within the last decade, field stratification has grown in importance as governments in continental Europe have provided universities with more leeway. Specific devices (rankings, etc.) channel such judgements and construct images of how a field appears. By applying this concept to two empirical cases from German higher education, we will show how devices redefine verticality in higher education through specific field images. First, master

**16.2.2026**

rankings in business administration/economics expand the topological boundaries to include degree programs outside national sectors, raise the importance of alumni and increase the recruitment of female students. Second, the Excellence Initiative triggers the construction of a new unregulated sector of doctoral education; excellent graduate schools model themselves along the scales of the field image as selective, interdisciplinary, international, and part of a holistic university image. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Bloch, Roland, E-Mail: [roland.bloch@soziologie.uni-halle.de](mailto:roland.bloch@soziologie.uni-halle.de)