Annual Conference of the Commission Organizational Education
in the German Educational Research Association (GERA)
In cooperation with the Division School Research and School Development
in the Austrian Educational Research Association,
the University of Education Upper Austria and the Johannes Kepler University Linz

Organization and Responsibility

March 1 – 2, 2018
Linz, Austria

4th Pre-Conference for Emerging Researchers:
Forum Educational Organization Research
February, 28 – March 1, 2018
Linz, Austria

CALL FOR PAPERS

Responsibility is a fundamental term of ethical thinking that has recently been discussed intensively on a politically programmatic and on an overall societal level. As an important research category of organizational education it helps clarifying questions in organizational theory and general education. Responsibility theories address the reasons as well as the conditions of the possibility of organizational action and its consequences. This also applies to individual and collective responsibility and is related to important epistemological positions and normative basic assumptions: The attribution of responsibility is connected to social values and standards, as well as to the status of actors like individuals, groups, collectives, organizations or networks. Responsibility can therefore be understood as principle for designing and thinking social practice. It shows how personal and institutional dimensions of action interact in the constitution and further development of organizations.

For all these reasons responsibility is an important perspective in the multi-disciplinary discourse on organizations that aims at the problem of assignability of individual, collective and organizational action (*accountability*), e.g. regarding decision making or dealing with the problem of diffusion of responsibility. At the same time it refers to social responsibility as an important issue of organizations (*Corporate Social Responsibility*). It also points to questions of leadership and management in managing organizations (*Governance*, *Management*), organizational governance, and the relations between organization and power or organization and ethics gain in importance.

For instance, the area of tension between a monologic versus a dialogic concept of responsibility offers an interesting point of reference from an educational perspective. Also the reflection on responsibility as an educational objective that at the same time serves as a means of achieving social values and norms – and potentially leads to excessive demand of the self-responsible subject. Simultaneously, this affects discussions in profession theory that focus either on the responsibility of different professionals for the production and compliance of educational or ethical principles, or the quality of processes of teaching and learning. From a school focused perspective this not only leads to questions of responsibility in cooperative educational settings, but also points to the problem of self-responsibility of individual schools or concepts of self-organized learning. In addition, in the discourse of vocational training people are challenged by models of workplace-learning and new concepts of self-responsibility.

All these organizational theoretical and normative issues in different academic fields of education can be understood as a request to organizational education, to take a closer look at the relation between organization and responsibility. It therefore should be asked to what extent organizations are part of a complex intersubjective practice of responsibility, how ethical issues are brought up *in* and *by* organizations and how they are handled and discussed, which role organizations play in strategies of assigning responsibility, respectively to what extent (educational) organizations are part of reproducing societal concepts of (self-)responsibility. Also responsibility-learning of organizations themselves could be a topic of interest here. With regard to the role, function(s) and meaning of responsibility *in*, *of* and *between* organizations as major change agents of cultural and societal change, regarding processes of organizing, and of initiation and implementation of organizational learning, the conference will provide opportunities to critically discuss, empirically prove and conceptually shape these perspectives of thinking and taking action.

Preliminary conference structure:

Within the conference framework, the main theme of "Organization and Responsibility" will be discussed along the following perspectives:

- **Theorizing on the relations of organizations and responsibility.** This topic includes basic educational and interdisciplinary concepts of the relation between organization and responsibility that among other things are being connected to questions of organizational ethics, economic ethics, educational ethics, educational normativity, and educational responsibility in processes of organizational learning. Furthermore organizational conditions for the opportunity of organizational responsibility should be discussed. From a discourse-theoretical perspective it can be asked, which of the stakeholders discuss the relation of organization and responsibility in what way. The relation between leading and responsibility, as it is currently discussed in (Critical) Leadership Studies (e.g. *Ethical Reasoning, Ethical Leadership* or *Good Governance*) could also be a possible topic.

- **Empirical and comparative studies on relations of organizations and responsibility.** Focusing on current approaches of organizational responsibility and organizational responsibility-learning by and in schools, universities, business enterprises, or other (educational) organizations. This for example involves questions on education by responsibility, responsibility in the context the development and autonomy of schools and universities, as well as questions about certain responsibility-based methods of teaching, and types of learning (*Service Learning, Community Based Learning, Community Based Research* or the responsibility practices in business enterprises (CSR, CC).

- **Historical research on relations of organization and responsibility.** For better understanding how (educational) organizations are dealing with responsibility, how organizational structures and organizational cultures are related to their societal responsibility, becomes accessible through analyzing their historical genesis. This includes the responsibility for the development, the survival or the vanishing of organizations themselves. On the other side the way organizations develop themselves in regard to future societal responsibility, is also of interest.

- **Responsibility (in) of Educational Organizational Research.** From this perspective responsibility shall be discussed as a methodological problem and opportunity; this refers to the basic normative stance of organizational education, respectively the normative disposition of educational organizational research, as well as the opportunity of making the theory-praxis-problem a subject of discussion.

- **Critical Perspectives on Organizational Responsibility.** This topic offers the opportunity of an international scholarly exchange in English language about the relation of organization and responsibility. Subjects could be the international discourse on critical management studies (CMS) or approaches of critical organizational research. Thereby the operationalization of the term ´responsibility´ in the process of ´Doing Critical Management Research´, as well as the concept of organizational responsibility (*Corporate Social Responsibility*) and actors of civil society who demand political responsibility, are of great relevance.

Please submit your proposal (max. **1500 characters** in German or English language that refers to the conceptual framework of the conference and clearly points out its theoretical, methodological, empirical or conceptual backgrounds. You are welcome to specify which main theme you would like to contribute to. The program committee will review all suggestions and assign presentations to thematic fora.

Presentations will be **25 minutes** each (+ 20 minutes discussion).

The deadline for paper submission is **2017, September 15.** Please send abstracts to:

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Executive board of the commission:
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