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Swiss Journal of Sociology

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The essay is based on the hypothesis that modern society in one of its legitimate and instructive descriptions may be called knowledge society and that the rise of knowledge society is related to structural changes in scientific system. Already eighteenth century enlightenment asserted the connection between the growth of knowledge, an increasing search for applications and a growing social inclusion in knowledge. This connection is again typical of societies of knowlegde. The rise of the modern form of science and of universities favoured alternative self-descriptions of society for 150 years. The structural change to the modern form of a knowledge society is then characterized by a plurality of features: a growing inclusion in knowledge; the proliferation of new knowledge systems; the incorporation of knowledge into social systems; new forms of observation of knowledge which arise as a second-order-knowledge, as a critique of knowledge and as a knowledge about the uncertainty of knowledge; the lines of differentiation between different places of production of knowledge. Finally knowledge and the societal form of differentiation are separated from one another. The ubiquity of knowledge is due to the fact that, other than science, knowledge lacks a functional autonomy. Therefore the hypothesis of knowledge society finds its validation in knowledge being orthogonal in its relation to the principle of functional differentiation.

Individualisation describes the process of emergence of the human being all by himself in the conduct of his life or, in other words, of the individual. From the sociological viewpoint, individualisation is constituted by human action – as opposed to any understanding of social constructs as realities sui generis. It is necessary to overcome the intrications between institutional rules of behaviour and individual autonomy; for the regulations made in this framework are implicitly and reciprocally prerequisite and the question of the individualism of the individual, that is, the specificity of individualisation, disappears from sight. The search for an answer leads to Ernst Troeltsch's study on Protestantism, which is closely related historically and systematically to Max Weber's thesis about protestant ethics. According to Troeltsch, Protestantism brings forth individualism as a constituent of modern culture. Individualism can be understood as a

principle for shaping social reality, which manifests itself in the content of human co-existence, but amounts to much more.

Though expert interviews are being widely used, there are only few methodological papers concerning this particular interview technique. In this article, we examine the history of the concepts, the theories and the methods of expert interviews, their origins and their applications. Based on findings from the cognitive and social psychology of expertise, we discuss expert interviews as a fruitful technique for time-efficient data collection in hypothesis-testing research designs. We also provide an annotated guideline for expert interviews.

In a break from explanations locating the social constructions of bodies in social or cultural causes, R. Boudon's paradigm allows us to show that the actors represent their own bodies in various ways. They use the same word for different programs (biological, moral, instrumental, aesthetic...), which can conflict, combine or be unconnected with one another. These programs are generally not invented by the actors: they are the product of a diffuse rationalisation resulting from the interaction of internal and external factors. At the same time, however, these actors are neither passive nor without rationality: they retain in these programs only the theories that they feel to be legitimate in relation to their social and cognitive contexts. These contexts help us understand a plurality and a structuring of bodily beliefs and actions beyond the processes of diffuse rationalisation. Thus beliefs, in connection with social structures, shape noticeably the bodies of individuals.

In this article we would like to account for the construction and justification of the Swiss federal law project about homosexual couples by having a close view of the political process leading to the elaboration of this law. During this process, different political stances and gestures took place in the legislative arena, in response the parlamentaries were bound to produce a renewed justification of their action. The main issues of the debate were the status of the project of law according to its difference or resemblance to the marriage, and the scope and forces of the non discrimination and equality principles, principles that had been engaged and put to a reality test in the debate.