

Abstracts

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Biomedtech Island Project and Risk Governance Paradigm conflicts within a hidden and delayed high-tech risk society

Abstract: Among global fierce competitions of biotechnological R&D, as a newly industrialized country and a burgeoning IT power in East Asia, the Taiwanese government declared to boost the project – »Island of Bio-medical Technology« in 2005. It attempts to combine niches of local IT industry superiority to construct electronic bio-medical industry thus become the gene research center of global Chinese simultaneously. However, these beaming techno-industrial policy decisions are highly suspicious in terms of human right, ethics, and society development. They not only rouse continuous paradigm war of risk but also bring challenges to the state's capacity on risk governance and its policy of decision-making concerning technologies.

Rolf Porst und Cornelia Jers

The ALLBUS ›Guest Worker Items‹ About the history of a standard instrument in the German General Social Survey (ALLBUS)

Abstract: The so called »guest worker items« have proved to be a widely used measurement instrument not only in the ALLBUS programme but in numerous surveys concerned with attitudes towards foreigners living in Germany. The paper gives a review of the origin, development and results of this item. New Insights are provided with respect to the possibility to use a split ballot to replace an outdated question wording (»guest workers«) by a modern one (»foreigners living in Germany«) without damaging the time series character of this item. In addition, the development of the »guest worker items« demonstrates that the need for and the usefulness of such a replacement can be detected by using cognitive pretests.

Anna Amelina

The Evolution of Media and Media-Control in the post Soviet Russia

Summary: The political influence of media practices in post-Soviet Russia is very much related to the ongoing change of media control. Thus, it is highly important to examine the question concerning societal and media pre-conditions of such a development in media. Exemplifying the evolution of television structures in the (post-) Soviet Russia between 1970 and 2006, one can show in which ways the typical forms of propaganda communication of the Soviet Union (commencing 1985/86), were replaced by new forms of media communication. The empirical data illustrates that not only media structures but also the forms of media control are changing. The macro-sociological perspective of this paper focuses on the connection between the media evolution and the societal formation of the former Soviet Union.

Boike Rehbein

Globalization, Sociocultures and Social Structure. Consequences of an application of Bourdieu's social theory to Southeast Asia

Abstract: The paper summarizes a few consequences to be drawn after applying Pierre Bourdieu's social theory to Laos. A small country of the Asian periphery, which is transformed by processes of globalization, seems very remote from Bourdieu's work. Hence, an application of his theory to Laos does call for a revision of its concepts and claims. With regard to Laos, the frame of the nation state, the uniformity of society, the economism and the identification of culture and structure inherent in Bourdieu's theory cannot be upheld. The paper argues that these shortcomings are not only relevant for Southeast Asia but for a contemporary, globalizing world. Thus, a confrontation of Bourdieu's theory with Laos may lead to consequences that are useful for a globalized sociology. The paper claims that classical sociology is valid merely for a limited historical and geographical setting. In consequence, it argues for a ›configurational dialectic‹ with concepts such as the division of work (not labour), social structure and socioculture at its core.

Steffen Mau und Jan Mewes

Transnational social relations A map of the German population

Summary: The article explores the extent to which the German population is involved in transnational networks of personal relationships. It is argued that ongoing processes of globalization have weakened the social cohesion of nation-states and engendered more and more border-crossing transactions. In the paper, key empirical indicators are presented to demonstrate the increased transnational interdependence at different societal levels. The empirical part presents results from a representative survey on the transnationalization of people's life worlds conducted in spring 2006. According to our findings, almost half of the German population has regular contact with at least one person living abroad. A closer look reveals that equal proportions of private transnational relations are contacts between Germans and foreigners and contacts between Germans and other Germans living abroad. The analysis of the geographic structure of cross-border relationships shows a confined spatial dispersion of cross-border ties. A large part of personal ties reaches into Western and economically powerful states, while the non-OECD-countries play a negligible role. Thus, we can refer to a ›First World transnationalization‹ of the cross-border networks of the German population.