

Abstracts

Jenna Voss / Günter Warsewa

Reflexive organisation of work and employment – a new fundament for the regulation of labour in the postindustrial society

Since the beginning of the 1980s two convergent processes can be identified: the widespread implementation of »new production concepts« has brought about the need for a new »holistic« utilization of labour. As a result the scope for the enforcement of personal interests and concerns in the enterprises increased – particularly for highly qualified employees. On the other hand social changes led to an increase of those individual interests and concerns which have their origin in private life, e.g. concerning the compatibility of work and family, the democratic quality of work-related participation or the ecological and social responsibility on the job. As a consequence private life and work seem to interpenetrate more and more. Like all changes these developments also cover many social risks, which today arise as mass unemployment or overwork stress, missing future prospects or childlessness. But they also open new chances for self-realisation and participation, which can be seized individually and collectively, in order to shape the individual life-course and the working sphere. In the long run active co-designing and co-decision-making could become the basis of a new work culture.

These considerations lead to the concept of »reflexive organisation of work«, which is based on the analyses and interpretations of the interdependencies of current changes in the spheres of work and private life. Whether this indicates a general development and how it might influence the formal and informal mechanisms of labour regulation is discussed.

Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim

Transnational Marriages and Transnational Marriage Strategies: Explaining Spouse Selection Among Migrants

Who marries whom? Patterns of spouse selection among migrants have become a subject of debate in politics and the public arena, especially so because they are seen as indicators of the integration or non-integration of migrants. This paper first looks into a broad range of empirical studies dealing with the issue of migrants' marriages. Their results point to a consistent pattern: Many migrants choose spouses from their countries of origin. In order to analyse and explain such choices this paper uses the concept of transnational migration and transnational social spaces. Within this framework it identifies three major reasons and motivations: first, obligations of family solidarity; second, prospects of upward social mobility; third, hopes of re-shaping the power balance within the couple relationship. Seen in this light such choices are not the product of a rigid clinging to tradition or a resistance to integration. Rather they present a hybrid, a mixing, where traditional patterns of behaviour are being adapted to the ambitions, demands and constraints of life in transnational social spaces.

Alexandra Manske

Holding the Fort. Market Strategies and the Battle for Territory in Berlin's Internet Industry

This article investigates market strategies and territory battles in Berlin's internet industry. Empirical basis are 19 in-depth interviews with highly qualified free lancing Webdesigners

Soziale Welt 57 (2006), S. 223 – 224

as well as field investigations. Due to the internet industry's breakdown an overview of the changing working conditions, e.g. concerning the competition structures will be given. With this background, I will shed light on three subjective market strategies which Webdesigner develop in order to cope with the specific contraction of the field. I group these strategies into a typology which consists of three categories to highlight the different approaches to the entrepreneurial conditions undertaken by workers within the industry (»Unternehmer«, »Dienstleister« and »Künstler«). Additionally, Webdesigners' social position is deprived of social rights and, therefore, holds a certain potential of precariousness. While this fragile social position generally shifts between a privileged and precarious status, I will argue that with the change of the internet industry's structural conditions, their social position turns out to be a highly levelled precarious social state. In sum, this process reflects emerging new forms of social vulnerabilities and indicates certain practical forms of those.

Julia Reuter/Matthias Wieser

Postcolonial, gender and science studies – a challenge of sociology

Postcolonial, gender and science studies have long been neglected in German sociology and kept separate in special discourses with regard to their different studied phenomena. Nevertheless are their heuristics very similar: They discuss the differentiation of nature and culture, decentralize the ›classical‹ concept of the subject and criticize the ›Western‹ project of modernity. This convergence of postcolonial, gender and science studies will be developed systematically in this article with reference to their central concepts. Furthermore it will be asked which blind spots of sociology it can illuminate and where the limits of their renewal of social theory are.

Michael Windzio/ Matthias Kleimann

The Criminal Society – a Construction of Reality by the Mass Media? Media Use, Crime Perception and Sentencing Attitudes

In general, crime is a topic that attracts attention of the mass media and their audience. Mass media, especially private television stations, report on crime in several different formats. Interestingly, the majority of the population believes that crime figures highly increased during the last 10 years – which cannot be confirmed according to official crime statistics, suggesting in contrast, that overall crime has decreased. At the same time, the proportion of people who are in favour of tougher sentencing has increased.

In the empirical analysis it will be shown that crime topics are more prevalent in news broadcasted by private TV stations. Following from this, persons who tend to use private TV stations, erroneously assume more often that crime had highly increased during the last 10 years. This bias in public perception of crime has consequences, since persons who believe in a high increase in crime do also tend to have more punitive sentencing attitudes – which could have consequences for future crime policies.