

Abstracts

Stefanie Graefe and Stephan Lessenich

Justifying age(ing)

A remarkable transformation has taken place within the normative order of the welfare state: Ageing is no longer considered as a „residual“ phase of life that follows after having completed a normal employment biography. Rather, it is being reframed both as a productive resource for the political management of demographic change and as a biographical potential that can and should be employed by ageing individuals in their own interest. In this process, social norms, which previously applied to middle age phase, are being effectively extended to later phases of life. However, despite the new socio-political appreciation of old age and the elderly, symbolic and material inequalities among elderly people continue to exist – and thus specific forms of social distinction. Especially those ageing subjects whose lifestyle is already in line with the new normative ideals may expect a „distinction rent“ in the context of productive ageing discourses. Based on a qualitative empirical study, this paper examines the question of whether and how subjective interpretations of age(ing) relate to this discourse. The results show that a certain closeness to a „productive“ lifestyle can be found especially in the educated middle classes. Consequently, the new appreciation of old age may result in an indirect stabilisation of the cultural hegemony of the (upper) middle classes.

Weert Canzler

Automobility and Society: Theorizing the social science research of mobility

In spite of its adverse effects, the automobile makes for an unprecedented technological artifact in the every-day life and choice of residence for the majority of people in Western societies. Simultaneously, cars are increasingly popular in regions of catch-up modernization. Yet, the limitations of fossil-fuels highlight that conventional, private automobility cannot serve as a universal model. Neither peak oil nor climate change allow for a continuation on this trajectory. With that in mind, this study frames automobility as a ‚principle of modernity‘ by utilising the structuration approach of Anthony Giddens in order to explain the routine usage within the ‚Lebenswelt‘ of the automobile. Moreover, this analysis seeks to explore continuities and discontinuities in the development of conventional automobility. Finally, this study will result in distinct hypotheses about future social dynamics of automobility including opportunities for and barriers to potential transformations in this field.

Claudia Diehl and Patrick Fick

German on Probation. How Young German-Turkish Citizens Deal With the German „Optionsmodell“

Within the German „Optionsmodell“ young dual citizens have to decide if they want to keep their German citizenship and abandon that of their ancestors or vice versa. We assume that this decision reflects legal-pragmatic as well as social and identificational considerations. Findings of a survey among young so-called „Optionspflichtige“ of Turkish origin, which was supple-

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mented by guided interviews, reveal that nearly all interviewees plan to keep their German passport. However, this decision is not equally easy for all interviewees but varies depending on the perceived benefits and disadvantages of the different passports. Thus, German citizenship is chosen with ease when „Optionspflichtige“ anticipate legal benefits of the German passport and perceive it as a prerequisite to feeling German. Feelings of discrimination, a strong attachment to the Turkish passport within the family and identification with Turkey render the decision difficult. Regardless of these aspects, especially the highly educated struggle with being forced to make this decision. This suggests that the adherence to the principle of avoiding dual citizenship might pose an obstacle to the naturalization of well-integrated individuals.

Thomas Wimmer

Unintended side effects of political steering tools. Why the German Quarterly Medical Copay despite its failure, has been effective

Political measures by no means always yield the desired effects. Instead they often lead to unintended results making it difficult to assess its effectiveness. An example for such a measure is the German Quarterly Medical Copay (Praxisgebühr) which recently has been decided to be discontinued commencing January, 1, 2013. An analysis of the copay effects shows that most evaluation studies do not allow clear conclusions concerning the success or failure of political measures.