

Abstracts

Katharina Hoppe and Thomas Lemke

The Meanings of Matter: The Foundations and Limits of Karen Barad's Agential Realism

This article critically discusses the work of the physicist and STS scholar Karen Barad, one of the most influential and important representatives of contemporary materialist scholarship. Barad's perspective of "agential realism" combines insights from Niels Bohr, one of the leading figures in quantum mechanics, with elements of poststructuralist theory. The article starts with an overview of the central ideas and concepts of agential realism, highlighting how Barad develops her theoretical perspective by a critical engagement with the writings of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Niels Bohr and Emmanuel Lévinas. The second part of the article argues that agential realism mobilizes and prolongs the insights of theories of "situated knowledge" within feminist science studies, and it stresses the analytical strengths of this research perspective before focusing on two conceptual ambiguities and theoretical problems in Barad's work that so far have not attracted sufficient scholarly attention. The third part of the paper focuses on inconsistencies in how matter is conceptualized within agential realism, while the last part argues that Barad's notion of responsibility is at risk to depoliticize ontological questions. The article concludes by offering an account of the theoretical and empirical potential of agential realism.

Werner Georg

Transmission of cultural capital and status attainment – An analysis of development between 15 and 45 years of age

Proceeding from Bourdieu's habitus and capital theory, this paper asks whether the cultural resources of families and the surveyed students have an impact on the status attainment process between the ages of 15 and 45. The analysis is based of the life45 survey, which rests on a follow-up of a youth study conducted by Fend et al. between 1979 and 1983. As a result it can be shown by means of a structural equation model that there is a substantial transmission of cultural capital between the parents and their children and that the student's cultural resources have an effect on their educational attainment (reproduction effect). Besides this social heritage the amount of cultural capital by the age of 35 also depends on the educational attainment. The effect of cultural capital during the life course is limited to the end of the vocational education.

Sigrun Anselm

Claessens first big contribution towards a sociological theory

Dieter Claessens was one of the first professors of sociology in post WWII West Germany. Marked by his experiences of war and imprisonment, he began to concentrate on the

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question which mechanisms give internal structure and stabilization to society. Influenced by the sociologists of the 50s, the categories organizing his work were ‚status‘ and ‚role‘. In his first major study, Claessens showed the ever changing nature of ‚status‘, from pre-industrial times to the modern middle class era. He understood ‚status‘ as the mediator between social and individual claims, whereby the binding tie of status is seriously endangered by the growing mechanization of the work place and everyday lives.

The threatening loss of social binding, according to Claessens, is opposed by the growing importance of the so-called „Primärstatus“ [primary status]. As a natural part of every individual, the „Primärstatus“ emancipates itself from its social environment and becomes the determining drive in the struggle of the individual for social acceptance and ascent. The ambition to climb up the social ladder, so Claessens’s judgment, marks the motive protecting the individual from a state of dissolution. He even thinks of a so-called ‚Aufsteigerge-sellschaft‘ as being egalitarian, and yet he senses the price being paid for this kind of social stabilization. He finds his rescue in the middle class family. Family, status, and social ascent – this is in his eyes what it takes to have a stable society.

Hsiao-Mei Juan

Strangeness as a Reality of Living Together. Re-Thinking the Inclusion/Exclusion-Process of Foreign Brides in Taiwan

This article attempts to critically analyse the social constructions of marriage migrants in Taiwan from the perspective of exclusion and inclusion. The naming of foreign/mainland brides is a by-product of Taiwanese identity. However, their self-naming as new migrant women is exposed to the risk of re-essentialization. Following the reflection on the categorizing even if positively made, it will discuss the possibility of exclusive individuality. Finally, this article will suggest that in addition to the idea of humanity and full citizenship “all are created equal”, the idea of otherness “all are created different” should also be underlined.

Maximiliane Wilkesmann, Birgit Apitzsch, and Caroline Ruiner

From deprofessionalization to reprofessionalization in hospitals? Locum doctors between market, organization, and profession

Regulatory reforms in the health care sector confront hospital doctors with the phenomenon of deprofessionalization of their work. In this context, managerial instruments become increasingly important to medical decisions, which can lead to dysfunctional outcomes (e.g. in terms of patient care quality). This development comes along with the disengagement of physicians who leave the organization to become self-employed. As locum doctors, they work for an appropriate fee in different hospitals on a temporary basis. In view of the different kinds of commodification at the individual and organizational level, our main research question is: *How does the commodification at the organizational and individual level affect the professional behavior of doctors in hospitals?* We refer to a qualitative study with locum doctors, employed physicians, chief physicians, and hospital managers. As a result of individual level commodification, locum doctors manage to overcome organizational restrictions, which in turn can lead to a reprofessionalization of the medical work since they have the freedom to take medical decisions based on professional standards and not solely on economic criteria.