

Contents and Abstracts in English

Sociologia, the Journal of the Westermarck Society, Vol. 54, 2017, No. 2

Editor-in-chief Olli Pyyhtinen | subeditor Outi Koskinen

www.sociologia.fi | sosiologialehti@gmail.com

Sociologia, Outi Koskinen LINNA 5031, YKY, 33014 University of Tampere, Finland

Current Contents

Merja Kinnunen, Kirsti Lempiäinen & Virve Peteri:

From Office to Activity-based Office: An Ethnographic Analysis on Work Spaces 110

Tuomo Laihiala & Maria Ohisalo:

Charity Food Aid as an Indicator of Gender and Social Inequalities in Finland 128

Aila-Leena Matthies:

The promise and deception of participation in welfare services 150

Satu Husso:

Moderate Utopia. Constructions of an Ethical Self in the Texts of a Social Movement Critical of the Growth Paradigm 167

A Transition to Activity-Based Offices: An Ethnographic Analysis of Work Spaces

Merja Kinnunen, D.Soc.Sc, Professor,
University of Lapland

Kirsti Lempiäinen, D.Soc.Sc, Adjunct
Professor, Lecturer, University of
Lapland

Virve Peteri, D.Soc.Sc, Postdoctoral
Researcher, University of Tampere

Abstract

The article studies how workspaces construct work and workers. The analysis is based on feminist research literature on space and Henri

Lefebvre's theory of social space, both of which present a criticism of capitalist society as well as emphasize embodied agency and the materiality of space. We analyze how space creates things, makes new practices and enables possibilities to think and act. The data was gathered in ethnographies conducted in office environments in the 1980s, 1990s and 2010s. The article shows how the openness of the new office space might in practice mean that today employees are required to control and perform their bodies in a new way. The study also brings to light how the aim to add and apply informal encounters favored by women in industrial offices might in fact paradoxically reduce direct encounters and communication.

KEYWORDS: Ethnography, Henri Lefebvre, feminist research on space, office space.

Charity Food Aid as an Indicator of Gender and Social Inequalities in Finland

Tuomo Laihiala, M.Pol.Sc, Researcher, University of Eastern-Finland
 Maria Ohisalo, M.Pol.Sc, Researcher, University of Eastern-Finland

Abstract

The article explores food aid recipients (N = 3 474), one of the so-called hard-to-survey-groups, in terms of gender differences and quality of life (QOL) in Finland and compares it to the Finnish population at large. It also attends to socio-economic predictors of disadvantage. Food aid makes inequalities in a welfare state palpable: lonely, often middle-aged unemployed men face several QOL deficits (male-typical social exclusion). Women, in turn, face structural inequalities during their life course – those living alone, being single-parents, or older pensioners experience economic disadvantage and income inequality (female-typical poverty). Recipients of food aid report explicitly lower levels of QOL than the general population. The most disadvantaged are the unemployed and those who rely on food aid frequently. Women report lower levels of health and insufficient income more often than men. The deepest deficits in QOL are reported by men: they experience hunger and loneliness as well as have problems in coping in life. Women's old age and men's lowest monthly incomes as well as rental accommodation predict the highest levels of disadvantage.

KEYWORDS: Charity food aid, experience of disadvantage, food banks, gender, inequality, quality of life.

The promise and deception of participation in welfare services

Aila-Leena Matthies, D.Soc.Sc,
 Professor, University of Jyväskylä, Kokkola
 University Consortium Chydenius

Abstract

The article critically discusses the implementation of the paradigm of participation in the context of welfare services, viewing them as emancipatory processes of justice and welfare. According to Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's concept of the dialectic of enlightenment, enlightenment can turn to become a deception or even a mass deception. An essential question in the paradigm of participation is whether participation increases or reduces the power of underprivileged people. The promises of participation are connected with democratization and improvement the welfare services as well as users' options to be heard as individuals by the service system. But promises can turn towards mass deception when new participation technologies become instruments of the governance of people and legitimation for the withdrawal of public accountability. Something similar happens when participatory practices remain short-term exceptions during a particular participation project. Therefore, the social sciences and professionals of welfare services have to reflect critically upon their own actions regarding participation research and techniques. Essential is whether changes towards permanent improvement in citizens' wellbeing and democratic delivery of power can be achieved. In spite of the constant risk of disillusionment, there is no other way but to hold on to the utopian promise of participation and the welfare society.

KEYWORDS: dialectic of enlightenment, involvement, participation, promise and deception of participation, welfare services.

Moderate Utopia. Constructions of an Ethical Self in the Texts of a Social Movement Critical of the Growth Paradigm

Satu Husso, M.Soc.Sc,
Doctoral Student, University of Turku

Abstract

This article focuses on the analysis of a Finnish social movement that is critical of the growth paradigm and consumer culture. It asks how the texts of two groups, Moderation in Danger and degrowth.fi, construct actors who develop themselves as ethical subjects and absorb a sustainable way of life. The article also asks how the narrative nurtures a political utopia of another world. The main contribution of this article consists of a micro level analysis of subjectification and of the formation of a narrative of a post-growth future. The analysis suggests that the moderation movement constructs a narrative of an ecologically civilized subject that reflects one's relationship to the neoliberal logic and aims to detach oneself from it. The narrative does not offer a close-up ending to the story, but rather empowers subjects to become resistant and envisage a better future. It also functions as a horizon for a sustainable society and as a form of cultural critique.

KEYWORDS: Aesthetics of existence, Foucault, narrative, social movements, utopia.