

Abstracts

Petra Németh and Ágnes Vidovics-Dancs: Reconcilability of child-bearing and work from the perspective of a more flexible system of parental leave and benefits

This paper looks at how childbearing and work could be balanced, taken the possibility of mothers' labour market presence into consideration. Current Hungarian circumstances – legal environment, institutional conditions, lack of demand for atypical work, and not least social beliefs – lead mothers with young children to be totally absent from labour market for years. We do believe that a more flexible system of parental leave and benefits would improve demographic and labour market trends in Hungary. According to this we analyse mainly the possibility of a theoretical reform that – in a narrow social group – on the one hand might increase the level of mothers' labour market activity and on the other hand might make childbearing more attractive. Our specific question is what the effects on different agents, and on demographic and labour market tendencies might be if we legally allowed mothers to work in the first two years of the child, in the current system *ceteris paribus*, while the parental benefits granted upon social security remained reimbursed.

Léna Podoletz: Japan's Criminology at the beginning of the New Millennium – Another „Japanese Miracle”?

Since the end of World War II, Japan has attracted the attention of the rest of the world, not only with its unique culture but with its economical and social changes. Many researchers were seeking the answer to the question how the economic boom called the 'Japanese miracle' was possible and later to the question how is it possible that during such dramatic changes crime rates did not raise significantly since the 1950s (and stayed at a low level compared to the Western countries). Since the beginning of the 1990s, Japan has been experiencing economical, social and cultural effects that should have lead to a raise in crime (according to what happened under similar circumstances in the Western world). However, in Japan, after a sudden raise in the beginning of the 2000s, crime rates dropped again leaving the researchers wondering. Meanwhile there are changes both in the legislation and the criminal justice that are very similar to what we have seen lately in the Western countries.

Georg Vobruba: The Social Construction of the European Society

The process of European integration has taken the form of two sociologically relevant impulses. First, it triggers reflections about the meaning of „society”--in sociological usage. What do practical observations in terms of society imply for the sociological theory of society? Secondly, European integration entails a unique opportunity to formulate new questions concerning causes and consequences of the construction

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of society with explanatory intent, in the context of the sociological theory of society. Specifically, it is the high speed of social change and the apparent tensions between institutional change and the lag in social integration that turns the process of integration at the European level into a laboratory of society-building. How, then, is European integration a stroke of luck for sociology? To answer this question, I proceed as follows. After briefly describing my understanding of “modern thinking”, I will endeavour to explicate modern conditions of recognition, to delineate the specifically modern meaning of “explanation.” The resulting guidelines for a sociological theory of society that focuses on *second-order observations* will set the stage to demarcate prerequisites for the sociological use of the concept, *society*—in the process providing a sample of empirical evidence regarding how people tend to locate society between the levels of nation-state and Europe. Finally, I will conclude with a short sketch of what it means to apply “second-order observations” to the question of an emerging European society.

István Budai and Judit Kozma: About the development of competence-based education of community worker

In the paper we share our experiences acquired in the development of a competence based community work curriculum for a further education program. This program was part of a project called “Alternatives of an Interprofessional Community Work Education Program” undertaken by a team of the Széchenyi Istvan University of Győr. So this paper can be seen as a report about the professional issues explored in the course of the curriculum development work. These issues are related to the following topics and their interconnectedness: 1. The context of the competence based educational program: the major trends of the contemporary social work and community work and their effects on the social work education; 2. The competence base of the professional practice and the competences that should be learnt in the course of the learning/teaching processes; 3. The identification of competences of community workers who have an interprofessional approach and 4. Principles of the management of the learning processes of our students.

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