



De-Territorialization and Re-Territorialization of “the social” - A debate

Deterritorialization has been used as an anthropological concept to designate the weakened ties between culture and place: Certain cultural/social processes and relations seem to increasingly transcend their previously given territorial boundaries in flexible capitalist societies. At the same time, policy studies, especially *Studies on Governmentality*, have emphasized the re-territorialization of the social, in which the former national welfare arrangements (*welfare and nation state*) as the scale of bio-political integration patterns are more and more substituted by small scaled inclusion areas (*e.g. neighbourhoods, districts and communities*). Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, de-territorialization processes have therefore always to be understood as combined with processes of a re-territorialization, producing new spatial formations. In this view, spatial arrangements and connections are not given and static structures, but controversial and unstable – nevertheless they are influential.

The papers in this first SW&S-Special Issue address these issues of territorialization, de- and re-territorialization in relation to social work and social policy. This first SW&S-Special Issue on *De- and Reterritorialization of the Social* is organized as a debate. Kevin Stenson (Middlesex University/London) opens the debate with his fundamental examination on the need of a new methodological strategy: a *realist governmentality* approach. John Clarke (Open University/Milton Keynes), Robert P. Fairbanks II (University of Chicago), Fabian Kessl & Nadia Kutscher (University Bielefeld & University of Applied Science Aachen) and Wendy Larner (University Bristol) comment on different aspects of Stenson’s argument, continuing his considerations at some points and arguing for a different conclusion at others. In his concluding comment, Kevin Stenson reacts to some of these recommendations and doubts.

We hope to offer an inspiring and controversial dispute on these fundamentally important analytic and political questions to the SW&S-community in this first SW&S-Special Issue.

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John Clarke and Fabian Kessl

