

Kristina Engwall, Magdalena Bengtsson Levin und Stefanie von Schnurbein (red.): *Hälsa – makt, tolkning, styrning*. Stockholm: Institutet för Framtidsstudier 2008 (= Framtidens samhälle; 13), 231 S.

The anthology *Hälsa – makt, tolkning, styrning* (*Health – power, interpretation, governance*) contains a rather diverse collection of texts. All stem from a collaboration between researchers from a range of academic environments in Germany and Scandinavia (among which can be mentioned Örebro University, Sweden, and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) and from a number of different academic disciplines.

The contributions are all, according to the editors, supposed to study historical or contemporary processes of demarcation where the – admittedly vague – concept of health is involved. The editors specifically mention the most obvious boundary connected to health, i.e. the one that is often drawn between health and disease. One thing they fail to mention is that health and disease are not always measured on the same scale, thus, this boundary may appear more than fleeting: sometimes even non-existent. In fact, however, few of the authors consider the supposed borderline between health and disease as a central object of investigation, and

some of them actually do explore health as potentially something else than just the opposite of disease.

Thus, even though Kerstin Bornholdt does look at physical exercise as a phenomenon balancing between health and disease, her aim is just as much to differentiate between different conceptualizations of health. More specifically, she studies a number of texts written by medical doctors in the first half of the 20th century to show how physical exercise was highly disputed as a source of health, and to show how different views on the value of exercise were connected to different body and health ideals: was the optimal (male) body one adjusted to a modern, sedentary work-life, or one trained to fulfil a higher potential? Did exercise strengthen people or just exhaust them? If exercise produced subjective well-being, was this the same as health?

Marie Öhman has used video recordings to analyse physical exercise from a governmentality perspective. She studies children's physical education as a space for

subject formation, a space where notions of health can be used in the exercise of modern forms of power, and where borders are primarily drawn between the voluntarily active/participating and the physically unwilling. David Kuchenbuch departs from a medicalization perspective in his analysis of the Swedish functionalist manifesto *Acceptera!* and its use of biomedical metaphors in talking about architecture and urban planning.

Several of the contributions look at processes of demarcation more indirectly related to the concept of health. In her article, Constanze Gestrich shows how infection, although differently conceptualised in different time periods, has continuously been used to draw borders, not just between health and disease, but – especially in colonial and post-colonial contexts – between us and them, well-known and alien, primitive and modern, visible and invisible. Stefanie von Schnurbein examines the Swedish author Victoria Benedictson's novel *Pengar* (*Money*), published in 1885, to see how notions of health (or rather ill-health) were used to distance the ideal (young, free, slender and strong) man or woman from undesirable modes of femininity. The female body also is a focal object for Christina Jansson who centres on claims of objectivity related to giving birth, investigating how nature and technology were contrasted in 1970s debates on

childbirth. Lill-Ann Körber departs from the male body too to see how representations of nudity in early 20th century Scandinavian art did, or did not, evoke questions about the borders between homo- and heterosexuality, decency and indecency, as well as illness and health.

Henrik Karlsson investigates professional boundary practices between different actors on a market of healthcare providers while Susanne Kreutzer in her study of the declining status of patient observation as a clinical method looks at professionalization, rationalization and claims of scientific expertise. The final chapter, written by Magdalena Bengtsson Levin, Kristina Engwall and Katharina Woellert, examines childlessness in the 20th century from different perspectives – to not want, to not be able to have, or to be denied children – and especially questions the strict border that is often drawn between voluntary and involuntary childlessness.

This collection will also be published in a German version.

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