Scaling-sensitive teaching for scaling-sensitive professionalism

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DR. THOMAS MARTHALER & CLAUDE HAAS
UNIVERSITY OF LUXEMBOURG
INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN SOCIAL WORK, SOCIAL PEDAGOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE
Background and objectives of this talk

> Background

- Ongoing project at IRISS, Uni.lu: Claude Haas and Thomas Marthaler
- Developing social theory as a “Theory of Scales”
- Teaching in BSSE (Bachelor in Social Work), class on “Political, social and legal systems”

> Objectives of this talk

- Basics of our approach
- Assumption: teaching at University and “doing Social Work” follows the same ontological “move”
- Example: the aforementioned class: realizing scaling sensitivity in teaching for practice
Political, social and legal systems as contexts: conventional imaginations (1)

From: Schmid 2011: 140
Political, social and legal systems as contexts: Conventional Imaginations (2)

From: Grün 2013, 61
Political, social and legal systems as contexts: Conventional Imaginations (3)
What do these images have in common?

• Each image cuts social reality into different entities, that are juxtaposed and variously micro- or magnified
• Each image being of a specific scale invents a reality of its own
• The relationalities of the authors to other persons and places are important aspects to the scale(s) deployed
More scales and more relationalities
Preliminary conclusion and elements of a “Theory of Scales”

- **SCALES**: Our talking about water as well as these “systems” is a deployment of our own scales in relation to a certain materiality: It’s the moment’s singular way to “cut” reality.

- **RELATIVITY and RELATIONALITY**: These cuttings are relative and ‘broken’ – they bear emotions, ideas, a certain materiality – and they are deployed uniquely in singular relationalities.

- **RELATIONAL PERSONHOOD – LIFE-WORLD-BUBBLES**: persons are relational from the beginning and carry a fractal universe of scalings with them in ever new relations.
Preliminary conclusion and elements of a “Theory of Scales”

- Everywhere is “relational scaling-work”: people inventing reality (themselves included) by deploying and adjusting their scales in interaction.

- What we can know about reality is by following Persons-in-relational-scaling-work-at places.

- We can try to make this visible in its complexity in order to work with it.
“Social Work” as “Scaling-Sensitive Practice”? 

- “Social Work” (as interactional practise) basically is relational scaling work
- “Social Work” therefore is work with and by scalings (may this be cut as learning, support, help, control....) – basically it is about conglutinating, conventing usf. of scales
- Relationalities-at-places trigger the cutting of persons (persons-as-clients, ...-as-professionals, .....-as-??)
Scaling-sensitivity towards…
- Clients and professionals as well as managers are relational persons cut in multidimensional manner
- Relations-at-places
- Multiple/broken dimensions and relativity of scales
- Enabling scaling work at the base

Scaling-sensitive S.W. as cultivated “bricolage-work”?
The course “Political, social and legal systems” scaling-sensibly “reloaded”

- Basic assumption: Social work “as such” as well as these systems, a certain law, human rights and university itself are like “water”
- We cannot learn about these “things” questioning the facticity, single-dimensionality and unambiguousness of organisations, laws a.s.f.!
- We only can follow, how people at places cut reality and take into account the underlying relationalities: differences, ambiguity…
- In a relational reality there is space for creativity and “professional”/”human” considerations
The course “Political, social and legal systems” scaling-sensibly “reloaded”

1) Raise awareness for our own scales
2) Follow people at places: Interviews with people
3) Evaluation of these interviews: how is reality “cut”:
   - What kind of entities
   - Which size?
   - What kind of emotions?
   - In which relationalities?
4) Scaling work on these scalings elaborated and put into scene by student groups
<table>
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<th>Through IP at place…</th>
<th>As…</th>
<th>In relation to…</th>
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| Work integr. org. (social initiative) | • Decision-maker on number of staff  
• No feedback at all… | budget report |
| Job agency (ADEM) | • Differenciated and more objective  
• Service for enterprises and unemployed…. | labour-market clients |
| Job training center | • Can always appear for control  
• As less time for people… | evaluation-tool quotas |
A relational image of social reality, e.g. the “field” of work integration…
Thank you for your attention!
Looking forward to entering into interactional scaling work with you.

thomas.marthaler@uni.lu  claude.haas@uni.lu