Editorial: Mapping reproduction

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This special issue of *Distinktion* seeks to present a mapping of the distinctive signposts and features that shape the field of reproduction today. This exercise in cartography is deliberately cross-disciplinary, because reproduction both as a conceptual tool and as a social phenomenon is characterized by cutting across scientific divisions and ontological domains. This hybrid nature of the term points to its historical conditions of emergence. The notion of reproduction played an important part in the constitution of two new fields of knowledge in the second half of the 18th century. Biology as the science of life defined the capacity to reproduce as a distinctive quality of living beings and opened up new forms of knowledge focusing on the common features that humans, animals and plants share. It relied on and enacted a strict separation of the organic and the inorganic and distinguished more clearly than before between living bodies and artificial entities (Foucault 1970). At about the same time, the Physiocrats invented modern economic theory by according "reproduction" a central role in their account. Their concept of reproduction is based on the idea of a strong correspondence between nature and the economy by seeing the source of value in agricultural production (Jordana 1995; Schabas 2005).

While the disciplinary borders remained quite fluid during the 18th century and there has been a strong traffic and exchange of notions, metaphors and imaginaries since, the bonds between the two domains of knowledge dissolved further during the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. Economic production emancipated itself from its earlier links to natural philosophy and became increasingly conceived of as a social domain of practice while the associated meaning of "reproduction" was narrowed down to only concern the domain of the living. Hence, it was reserved for biological processes alone leaving "production" to the economy, although other social sciences such as sociology and political science took up the concept of reproduction, for instance in discussions about the stability and persistence of societal norms, structures and inequalities (see e.g. Althusser 2014). Even still, there was an increasing separation to be observed between the biological and the social scientific domains of knowledge. This process followed a more general movement towards a binary construction of nature and society that, according to Bruno Latour (1993), characterizes modernity as a joint history of separation and purification of hybrid socio-natural entities and

processes. Taking up Latour's idea of the "grand partage", Hüntelmann, Knecht and Schlünder (2012) suggest investigating reproduction as a "relational field". Their concept of "life-reproduction-economy" (2) serves as "an analytical tool to study the paradoxal, contradictory, and complex effects of the simultaneity of cleansing and mixing practices, histories of separation and connection, and the new constellations of materials and practices within historical structures" (5).

Such a historically informed perspective is very much needed today as the apparently clear-cut divisions between production and reproduction – the sphere of the economy and the domain of life – tend to become increasingly blurred. The transformation is grounded in a two-sided dynamic. From the side of the economy, there has been the shift from the Keynesian welfare state toward so-called free-market policies and the rise of neo-liberal political projects in Western democracies. The deregulation of the state went along with the promotion of forms of government that foster and enforce individual responsibility, privatized risk-management, empowerment techniques, and the introduction of marketized and entrepreneurial models across a wide variety of social domains. The Fordist family model characterized by a male breadwinner and the family wage has been dismantled in the course of this process giving way to a stronger integration of women into the labor market and the need for the two-wage family in the light of shrinking wages. One effect that goes along with this development is that women in most industrialized countries are delaying childbirth leading to a drop in birth rates across most European societies (O'Malley, 1996; Miller and Rose, 2008).

Besides the shift to a Postfordist economy since the 1970s, there has obviously also been a considerable technological change. Biotechnological and medical research has targeted women's reproductive capacities and processes to a larger extent than before. As Waldby and Cooper stress, this development constituted "another form of neoliberalised life, this time situated at the level of biological processes" (2008, 58). They argue that "the processes of reproduction have been deregulated, privatised and made available for investment and speculative development" (ibd.) and distinguish between two dimensions of this dynamics. First, medically assisted reproductive services from IVF, pre-implantation diagnostics, donor gametes, surrogacy etc. have developed into a global market and incited medical tourism from wealthier countries of the North to Eastern Europe and the Global South. Second, the rise of regenerative medicine (e.g. stem cell research, somatic cell nuclear transfer, cord blood banking) makes use of female reproductive biology, but disconnects it from childbirth. The focus here is on the promissory potential of tissues and biological material that is assumed to provide new therapeutic opportunities (ibd., Franklin 2006).

The new alignment of biology and economy has given rise to ambitious political programs action plans by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the EU, and in national initiatives postulating that the boundaries and the substance of the economic have to be redefined. The economy, according to this projection, will soon transform itself into a “bioeconomy” using the potential value of biological products and processes in order to create new domains of growth and prosperity for citizens and nations (European Commission. 2005, OECD 2006). To capture the relational dynamics of reproduction, scholars working on diverse aspects of reproductive technologies and the biosciences have proposed different conceptual tools and analytical instruments: “biomedical mode of reproduction” (Thompson 2005), “biovalue” (Waldby 2000), “biocapital” (Rajan 2006), and “life as surplus” (Cooper 2008).

Distinktion formerly dedicated a special issue to discussions of 'bioeconomy' (2007), whereas the present issue zooms in on the notion of reproduction and connects it with broader scholarly literatures on gender, intersectionality, technologies, and demographic policies. It charts the contemporary terrain of “reproduction” by addressing its complex genealogy in two different ways. The first concerns the very concept of reproduction. While social and political theory still tends to reiterate and restate a social concept of reproduction, ignoring its “vital” dimensions, the contributions in this issue attend to the systematic and specific interactions between the biological and the social. They do not reaffirm their binary opposition but rather seek to reclaim and recover their common ground. Second, the articles in this issue differ from dominant accounts of reproductive technologies. The public and scholarly debate on IVF, pre-implantation diagnostics and other technologies in this field is typically framed in bioethical terms informed by a normative agenda that often obscures the historical genesis and social context of biotechnological and biomedical innovations in favor of presenting alternative options to the problems at hand. The contributions to this issue do not rely on religious, philosophical or ethical agendas as such, but rather engage with theoretical and empirical work in the social sciences as well as in historical investigations. They assemble a significant variety of disciplinary orientations such as the history of ideas, political theory, political sociology, medical anthropology, gender and queer studies and science and technology studies.

In the first article, Susanne Lettow investigates the “birth” of the notion of reproduction in a historical-epistemological perspective. In a genealogy centered on the politics of reproduction, Lettow particularly pays attention to three interrelated biopolitical changes around the dawn of the 19th century. The first one focuses on the management of populations, the second is concerned with the relation between population and race, and the third engenders a different kinship model based on a hierarchical model of sexual complementarity. As a true genealogy,

Lettow's analysis also points towards the present in the sense that we may alter our understanding of the new regime of reproduction if we understand better what the present departs from.

In her contribution, Sarah Dionisius opens a discussion about how the abundant literature on reproductive technologies and gender has dealt with the notion of family-building and parenting outside of the heteronormative model. The article distinguishes three strands of empirical literature on lesbian couples using donor insemination. One that identifies a persistence of existing images of gender and parenthood, another one diagnosing new arrangements of family, kinship and gender, and finally a third and more recent one that aims to avoid earlier polarizations using theoretical insights from Queer Theory and Feminist Science and Technology Studies. As illustrated through results from a qualitative study of lesbian families in Germany, the third strand of literature holds the promise of a more nuanced analysis of (assisted) reproduction.

Stine Willum Adrian's article also takes its point of departure in Feminist Science and Technology Studies by defining the concept of 'emotional choreography'. Her argument combines Karen Barad's agential realism with Charis Thompson's notion of ontological choreography for an empirical study of reproductive technologies, complementing this theoretical hybrid with insights from the sociology of emotions. Adrian's ethnographic fieldwork in a fertility clinic brings to light the complex and multiple ways that emotions emerge and have effects in reproductive medicine. By drawing on a posthumanist and performative perspective to account for the materialization of emotions, the concept of 'emotional choreography' is also an important contribution to the ongoing debate on the impact of the "material turn" in the social sciences and the humanities.

In the fourth article, Lars Thorup Larsen connects the issue of reproductive technologies with how political decisions are made on topics such as these. The article presents a genealogy of various problematizations that have surrounded the political question of giving access to fertility treatment since the advent of IVF treatment in Denmark. The article argues that Foucault's original statement that biopolitics is now oriented to the fostering of life ('faire vivre') cannot be taken to imply that policymakers would use IVF policy to foster life, i.e. regulate the declining birth rates. Instead, access to fertility treatment has been problematized in other ways stressing either the problem of medical autonomy, or the morals of patients seeking treatment who are portrayed as being demanding.

The last contribution also concerns the relations between reproduction and political decision-making. Susanne Schultz takes up and further elaborates the term of 'demographization' to analyze how demographic knowledge is used to frame a multitude of different social and

political problems and conflicts as demographic ones. The argument is based on a comprehensive analysis of the revival of German demographic policies in the last two decades. By combining Foucault's work on governmentality and biopolitics with an intersectional perspective, the article demonstrates how policies related to the reproduction of the national population on a grand scale are interconnected with a wide variety of contentious issues like migration, labor market structures, and family policies.

The issue ends with a paper that does not form part of the thematic discussion of 'mapping reproduction', namely Johan Lindell's call for a Bourdieusian approach to media studies.

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