Abstract

The dissertation provides a qualitative study of the recent phenomenon of museums promoting health. It focuses on the dilemmas and challenges of fostering participation, addressing complex everyday health practices and reaching disadvantaged groups in a science centre setting. The author describes the development process of a health promoting exhibition based, discussing how the project’s projectness with its predefined goals and embedded values clashed with the practical enactments of health and everyday lives. In the dissertation, the author conceptualizes health as a collective matter and describes the everyday struggles of the participating families to balance practices of health and family life. The author makes the case that the health promoting exhibitions in the study produce collateral realities and ontological norms that have adverse effects: Through the efforts to promote inclusion and participation, an ideal figure of the participating subject is produced alongside ideal ways of enacting health and visitorship. The author concludes that the health promoting exhibitions, despite their efforts to provide dialogic, open-ended and positively framed health learning, tend to reproduce a knowledge gap approach that does not address the practical and collective efforts to make family life and health workable in the everyday.