

Working and Waiting—The White and the Black Sheep of the Family?

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The presentation has two parts. (1) In the first part, I try to give a phenomenological account of the action type of waiting by comparing it to the action type of working. Since the latter has received more attention by theorists of action and is therefore more thoroughly explored, the means of comparison can be used to reflect upon the less investigated phenomenon of waiting. Parallels and differences are discussed with regard to different dimensions like teleology, poiesis, relevance, episteme, temporality, or responsibility. (2) In the second part, I leave the level of constitution and turn towards the level of construction. Between different social or socio-historical contexts, not only the quantitative proportion between waiting and working varies, but also their socially accepted perception and evaluation—think e.g. at the frequent laments that in late-modern, accelerated times man has unlearned how to wait. The strict distinction between constitutive and constructional elements of waiting (and of working) allows to clearly identify those elements that are responsible for diverging assessments.