2.

Uli Sauerland – ZAS, Berlin

*German plural negatives with Plural-Individual-Level Predicates*

uli@alum.mit.edu

Kratzer (1995:146) observes that in German plural negative indefinites can combine with a stage-level predicate as in (1), but not an individual-level predicate as in (2).

(1) a.  ... weil keine Ärzte zugegen sind.
    ... since no physicians present are.
    ‘... since no physicians are present.’

b.  ... weil uns keine Freunde helfen. (Kratzer 1995:(47))
    .... since us no friends help.
    ‘... since no friends are helping us.’

(2) a.*  ... weil keine Ärzte altruistisch sind. (Kratzer 1995:(51))
    ... since no physicians altruistic are.

b.*  ... weil das keine Kandidaten wissen. (Kratzer 1995:(52))
    ... since this no candidates know.

Kratzer provides the following explanation for (1): She assumes that stage-level predicates have an external event argument position and therefore the subject can be realized VP-externally. Individual-level predicates, expressing permanent properties, lack an event argument position, and therefore the subject must be realized VP-externally. Furthermore, she assumes with Bech (1955) that *keine* is the result of morphological merger of *nicht* and immediately following *eine*. If furthermore *nicht* is adjoined to VP, it then follows that this merger can only take place when the subject occurs in a VP-internal position. Therefore, *keine* cannot occur with individual-level predicates.

In this snippet, I consider group predicates that express permanent properties of pluralities such as “be related by blood” or “genetically identical.” I use the term “Plural-Individual-Level Predicates” for these. (3) shows that these behave in several respects like other individual level predicates: (3a) must be interpreted generically, and they lead to ungrammaticality (or strong pragmatic oddity) with “when”-clauses ((3b)) and “there-be” existentials ((3c)).

(3) a. Royals are related by blood.

b. *When John is related by blood to Mary, he is her brother.

c. *There are royals related by blood.
Surprisingly, plural-individual-level predicates can occur with plural negative indefinites:

(4)  
   a.  ... weil keine Ärzte miteinander blutsverwandt sind.  
      ... since no doctors with-one-another blood-related are.  
      ‘... since no doctors are related by blood’.
   
   b.  ... weil keine zwei Zebrafische genetisch identisch sind.  
      ... since no two zebra fishes genetically identical are.  
      ‘... since no two zebra fishes are genetically identical’

The examples in (4) pose a problem for Kratzer's analysis of (1) and (2): Her analysis would lead one to assume that plural-individual-level predicates do allow VP-internal subjects; but then all of the other typical individual-level predicate properties illustrated in (3) must be independent of the syntax Kratzer proposes for individual-level predicates.

References
