

Biography and Society



NEXT ISA CONGRESS: XIX ISA WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY
TORONTO, CANADA, JULY 15-21, 2018

BIOGRAPHY AND SOCIETY

RESEARCH COMMITTEE 38 OF THE ISA

NEWSLETTER/AUGUST 2017

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENCY

Dear Colleagues,

Since the last newsletter at the beginning of this year, we were mainly busy with preparations for the **XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology**, to take place in **Toronto, Canada from July 15-21, 2018**. Our RC was able to compose a Call for Papers with ten regular sessions, six Joint Sessions with other RCs, and one Invited Session, again with a variety of topics which we, and hopefully also you, find very interesting and inspiring. Thanks to all who have contributed with session proposals! In this newsletter you will find some information on the general theme of the Congress as well as the Call for Papers of our RC. We warmly invite you to submit your paper proposals electronically following this link:

<https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/wc2018/webprogrampreliminary/Symposium475.html>

The **very last deadline** for doing so is **September 30, 2017**.

Please note that no extension is possible! We strongly recommend to submit your abstract(s) before the last day since experience shows that the electronic system is likely to crash if too many abstracts are uploaded at once, which causes quite a lot of technical problems and costs some nerves on many sides.

The preparation of the next World Congress was not the only activity within our RC. Next month, September 14-16, 2017, an **International workshop on "Biography and Body"** takes place at the Department of Sociology of the University of Crete in Rethymnon, Greece. It is organized by Giorgios Tsiolis, University of Crete, Irini Siouti, University of Vienna, and Riki van Boeschoten, University of Thessaly in cooperation between our RC and the Greek Association of Oral History. You will find the program in this newsletter.

Last not least, please take note of the Call for Papers for a conference on **"Biography and Violence - Violent dynamics and agency in collective processes and individual life histories"** to be held at the University of Göttingen, Center of Methods in Social Sciences on 9-10 February 2018. This conference is organized by the team of Gabriele Rosenthal: Eva Bahl, M.A.; Isabella Enzler, M.A.; Hendrik Hinrichsen, M.A.; Kristina Meier, M.A.; Miriam Schäfer, M.A.; Katharina Teutenberg, M.A. and Arne Worm, M.A.

Finally, as usual, you find some hints at new publications. In order to share more of what is published on Biography by our members, please don't hesitate to send us information about your publications for the next newsletter(s)!

Meanwhile, best wishes for a still pleasant, enjoyable and relaxing summer- or winter-break, depending on where you live on this earth, and we hope to see many of you at some of the coming occasions!

Roswitha Breckner, Lena Inowlocki, Hermílio Santos, Maria Pohn-Lauggas

Membership fees

Please remember to pay your membership fee. To apply for membership or renew ISA and/or RC affiliation, please use the membership form online:

<https://isa.enoah.com/Sign-In>

The membership fees by the RC38 for 4 years are (see ISA regulations):

Regular members	U\$ 40
Students and members from countries B and C	U\$ 20

If you have any questions concerning the membership please contact Maria Pohn-Lauggas for advice:

maria.pohn-lauggas@univie.ac.at

The deadline for the next Newsletter is at the end of November 2017.

Please send us:

- A short paper (3-7 pages) on a topic you are currently working on
- A presentation of your current project
- Some reflections on your experiences of teaching biographical approaches and methods
- Reports or some notes about conferences you have attended
- General reports about activities in the field of biographical research in your institution, university, country, continent
- Interesting calls for papers for conferences, workshops, summer schools
- New publications from you, also in your respective native language
- Any other thought or information you would like to share.

Send your contribution directly to:

hermilio@pucrs.br

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CONFERENCES AND COURSES

XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology

Power, Violence and Justice: Reflections, Responses and Responsibilities

Toronto, Canada, July 15-21, 2018

Since the inception of the discipline, sociologists have been concerned with power, violence and justice. Current social, economic and political challenges enhance their relevance. As capitalist globalization expands and deepens, corporate power increases along with global, national and local inequalities. New geo-political power configurations and confrontations are emerging, with violence being used as a tool to oppress and also to resist oppression. Colonial histories and contemporary land appropriations reflect the structures and cultural processes that perpetuate violence against indigenous and minority communities. States' failures to meet their responsibility to provide basic resources are often deflected by blaming the most vulnerable. Both global economic and geo-political processes create crises and massive displacements of people and, at the same time, fuel racism, nationalism and xenophobia. We have also seen an increasing buildup of a culture of fear as a powerful tool used by states, corporations and other institutions to generate popular support for curtailing freedom in the name of security. Efforts to curtail the flow of desperate refugees, attest to the reinforcement of national and racialized borders. Despite visible progress on equality issues, violence against women and intersectional violence point to the entrenchment of the gender border around the world. Equally significant is the need to consider the role of state and institutional power relations to ongoing everyday violence. In response to disempowerment, violence, and injustice we have also witnessed nonviolent movements, humanitarian interventions, and peace processes that have empowered communities, reduced violence, and promoted justice. These diverse communities have built solidarities outside the neo-liberal frames of state-global capital nexus.

This XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology will focus on how scholars, public intellectuals, policy makers, journalists and activists from diverse fields can and do contribute to our understanding of power, violence and justice.

Margaret Abraham

ISA President



RC38 Biography & Society – Call for ABSTRACTS

Program Coordinators:

Roswitha BRECKNER, University of Vienna, Austria, roswitha.breckner@univie.ac.at

Lena INOWLOCKI, Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Germany, inowlocki@soz.uni-frankfurt.de

The call for abstracts is open from **April 25th, 2017 to September 30th, 2017**. Only abstracts submitted online can be considered:

<https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/wc2018/webprogrampreliminary/Symposium475.html>

No deadline extension is possible.

RC38 offers 10 regular sessions and 6 Joint sessions to which we invite abstract submissions.

Please note: You can submit up to two abstracts, not more.

The rules for **limited appearance in the program** are as follows:

A person may be listed in the Program no more than twice as author or co-author (oral or poster presentation, distributed paper, roundtable presenter). In addition, a person may be listed in the Program no more than 2 more times as chair or co-chair, panelist, critic, discussant.

For further information please visit the conference website:

<http://www.isa-sociology.org/en/conferences/world-congress/toronto-2018/call-for-abstracts/>

[Biography and Violence](#)

Session Organizers: Gabriele ROSENTHAL (University of Goettingen), Hermílio SANTOS (PUCRS)

For this session we invite papers on the interrelations between violence, life courses and life stories from the perspective of biographical research. When researching people's everyday life experiences and the entanglement of biographies with family and collective histories in their respective socio-historical contexts, being confronted with experiences of violence in one way or the other comes almost naturally as a part of biographical research. At the same time, sociological research on dynamics

and experiences of violence still poses a lot of challenges analytically and methodologically.

In this session we will specifically address the issue of living in contexts, situations and social spaces that have been (more or less permanently) shaped by recurring forms of collective (organized or 'spontaneous') violence, such as (civil) wars, pogroms, (state) terrorism, and violent conflicts between different groupings. We will discuss questions such as: How are experiences of violence (from the perspectives of violent actors, victims or bystanders) interrelated with life courses, power relations/figurations between different groupings and constructions of belonging? We hope to open a broad comparative discussion and therefore invite papers concerning biographies, violent actors, armed groups, violent settings and violent actions in the so-called Global North and the so-called Global South.

['Doing Memory' of Violence in Images and Biographical Narrations](#)

Session Organizers: Faime ALPAGU, Maria POHN-LAUGGAS (University of Vienna)

The session wants to highlight the question of doing memory of violence twofold: Firstly, the session asks for historical-social and institutional conditions, which structure doing memory processes in the sense that they open spaces for memories, limit opportunities to remember or even prevent memories. The borders of these spaces are amongst others defined by established rules of speaking about violence. Secondly, in biography research crucial studies on memory processes are carried out in the last decades. However, because verbal narrations have been the main data source other forms of memory, especially images, stayed rather in the background. Therefore, the session is interested in papers which deal with the question of doing memory of violence in verbal narrations as well as in images. Further we invite papers which question the significance of images and verbal narrations for biographical mnemonic processes. The following questions will be discussed: To what extent and how does violence become an issue in biographical narrations and/or in and through images? Which forms of violence can be narrated and/or visualized and which not? Are there any dominant (collective) narrations, which structure biographical narrations about experienced violence? In which way does the materiality of doing memory structure the memory process? In which way does the materiality influence the manner how violence is addressed as an issue in biographical memory processes?

[Responses to Violence: From Citizens' Passivity to Active Help](#)

Session Organizers: Julia VAJDA, Julia SZEKELY (ELTE University Budapest)

It has been more than seventy years since the end of WWII and the persecution of Jews, Romas, homosexuals and the disabled. During this time, the number of researchers gradually increased who were trying to understand the horror of this period of history. This horror was based on the extreme violence of a political power

that not only introduced a distorted jurisdiction in order to legitimize its actions but also targeted innocent citizens.

So far, the primary concern of researchers has been to articulate the responsibility of the political elite and, later, also to pay attention to the victims of the regime. Yet, besides the figure of the perpetrator and victim, there is a third character present that is still very much neglected in the various analyses. Therefore, in this session, we aim to conceptualize the role of bystanders who, except for a few who tried to help, largely legitimized their passivity through the belief of not having any means to act or even accepted the ideology of the regime.

Accordingly, we invite papers that deal with the understanding of the biographical background of these various responses: resistance, indifference, or embracing the racist ideology. We are particularly interested in how the memories of these responses have been (re)articulated according to the changing norms and values of societies. We believe, that the introduction of bystanders' life stories into the research agenda can also facilitate the understanding of citizens' political (in)activity in our current age when neo-nationalism is reemerging, particularly in Europe.

What Can We Learn from the Classics? Reflections on the 100th Anniversary of the First Publication of the Polish Peasant in Europe and America

Session Organizer: Kaja KAZMIERSKA (University of Lodz)

In 2018 we will celebrate the centennial of the first publication of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918-1920) by William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki – a classic study of the Chicago School of Sociology, which is regarded as the beginning of the biographical approach in sociology. This can give us an opportunity to reflect on the history and development of the biographical approach, the status of biographical research in contemporary social sciences, and possible ways of reanalysis of the collected materials. This last issue is especially interesting when we apply more recent methods, such as narrative, conversational, linguistic analysis to the original materials. From this perspective, biographical materials can be analyzed as social constructs not only of their authors' experiences but – possibly even first of all – by the respective interpretative frames in which the experiences were placed. Chicago School sociologists did not dispose of the analytical techniques of new approaches in interpretative sociology. Today, classical monographs based on autobiographies can be interpreted with the help of contemporary analytical procedures. The aim of such an analysis would not be to discredit methods used by the founders of the biographical method or to question their results, but rather on the contrary to recognize them as continuously fascinating and deserving re-analysis. Thus we should also discuss what can we learn from the classics nowadays – is it possible, for example, to analyze contemporary social problems using traditional theoretical concepts?

[Biographical Research: Epistemological and Methodological Foundation, Balance and Perspectives](#)

Session Organizers: Michaela KOETTIG (Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences), Hermílio SANTOS (PUCRS)

Since the establishment of the RC Biography and Society, the biographical research showed a multifold development, founded in many epistemological schools and based in different methodological approaches. However, neither the epistemological foundation nor the methodological procedures are always explicit in the papers presented in the RC 38 sessions. Often the papers are focused on research projects and results and due to the time frames the theoretical foundation of the procedures are only mentioned but not described in detail. In contrast the aim of this session is to discuss the variety of epistemological and methodological foundations that have been used more or less explicit in biographical research approaches. We want to open up and to establish the theoretical discussion about the basis of research in order to engage efforts in the task of reviewing and discussing the epistemological foundations of biography as a way to approach social reality. This might be useful for the future development of biographical research, and for the attraction of new generations of sociologists worldwide for this subarea of the sociology.

[Reflecting on the Silences in Biographical Research \(Invited Session, not open for abstract submission\)](#)

Session Organizers: Kathy DAVIS (VU Amsterdam), Roswitha BRECKNER (University of Vienna)

In biographical research, we are used to approaching life histories comprehensively in order to understand how they develop in specific social and historical circumstances. However, in every research endeavor, certain thoughts, intuitions, feelings or sensations may be left aside as we attempt to come to terms with the complexities of our material and figure out what the 'main issue' is. At best, we put aside the bits and pieces that we left out for later. At worst, we forget about them altogether. In addition, we are all susceptible to blind spots, biases, and myopias, so that we may not even be aware of what we are omitting or avoiding in our research. However, reflection about precisely these gaps or silences in our research may prove essential for developing new and interesting questions as well as comprehensive, responsive, and responsible biographical research. In this session, we have asked biographical researchers to think critically about the gaps and silences and blind spots in their own work. These are some of the questions they will be asked to address:

- What areas of experience do you leave out of your research or even avoid when they crop up in interviews with your informants?
- Which topics do you find difficult to approach and why?

- Where do you see gaps and blind spots in the theories and methodologies which are used for biographical research?
- What kinds of suggestions can you offer for developing a productive approach to the issue of silences in biographical research?

Research Ethics in Biographical Research

Session Organizers: Lena INOWLOCKI (Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences), Irini SIOUTI (University of Vienna), Hella von UNGER (University of Munich)

Doing research and data analysis on the basis of biographical narrative interviews has been very productive in different sociological areas, such as migration studies, psychosocial and medical contexts, and other research areas that relate to transitory or liminal life situations and experience. However, doing biographical research in transitional, transnational and transcultural research settings involves various ethical challenges, for example in the research field of migration and refugee studies and also in psychosocial research. Here, researchers have to reflect and adequately deal with a number of ethical questions and challenges in the field research process, especially in doing field research and biographical-narrative interviews among – potentially – vulnerable groups, such as refugees or (ex-) psychiatric patients. The different challenges concern the research relationship or research alliance, with regard to questions of trust, power hierarchies, and mutual as well as differing interests concerning research questions, aims, and procedures; furthermore, questions regarding “informed consent” as an ongoing process and a dialogue; the notion of authenticity and truth of the narrated life stories; issues of confidentiality and anonymization of the data, and last but not least questions concerning the archiving of biographical data and the (political) consequences for secondary analysis.

For this panel we invite social scientists who are working with biographical methods to present and discuss the ethical challenges they have encountered in their research practice.

Body – Image – Affect

Session Organizers: Roswitha BRECKNER (University of Vienna), Kathy DAVIS (VU Amsterdam)

Bodies, images, and affect are closely interrelated. Bodies are performed as images. Body surfaces are painted (make-up, tattoos, body art), clothes and jewelry are arranged to express a mood, attract attention, or indicate group membership or identity attention. Through gestures, glances, and movements, bodies are presented in ways that shape specific interactions and situations (Goffman). They express a person's bodily relation to the world (Merleau-Ponty), and can be seen as symbolization of gender, racial, ethnic, sexed, and other relations involving power.

Being situated in images and pictures affects us emotionally and in an embodied way, often occurring outside our conscious awareness. This provides a welcome opportunity for biographical research to show how our “ways of seeing” (Berger) are biographically informed and, at the same time, ongoingly construct individuals’ biographies, giving meaning and ‘color’ to the different social contexts in which they find themselves.

We invite papers which deal with the relation between the visual as well as imaginative relation between body, image and affect from a biographical perspective, following questions such as:

- In what way photographs and other images of bodies in different life stages are used and negotiated?
- In what way a ‘life’ becomes visible when looking at the face or body of a person?
- How do bodily images generate affective reactions which shape how we experience ourselves and our circumstances?
- What specific opportunities and challenges does a visual approach to biography offer?

[Language Realms and Desires: Biographies, Multilinguality and Power in Society](#)

Session Organizers: Anna SCHNITZER (University of Zurich), Lena INOWLOCKI (Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences)

Due to global migration and its regulation through policies in societies, questions of language empowerment and language legitimacy have become increasingly important. While more and more people are socialized as multilingual speakers, nation states and especially their educational systems remain mostly monolingually organized. Therefore multiple processes of exclusion as well as of attempts at integration and belonging result from speaking languages “of others” and “of one’s own”.

Literary writers have found ways to describe what it means for them to write in another language, making it their own. This can occur under conditions of exile (Vladimir Nabokov, Eva Hoffman) or in the course of purposeful migration (Jhumpa Lahiri, Tomer Gardi, Yiyun Li). The new language certainly presents challenges and restrictions but also a realm of transformation and creativity.

By conceptualizing language as a social practice, we would like to explore situations and interactions of biographical relevance. The focus could be on questions such as: In which ways does multilinguality or learning to speak the new language as a migrant present speakers with processes of exclusion? Does the new language possibly also represent what speakers desire, or who they desire to become? How do speakers reflect “their own” and “others’” languages biographically? How can we reconstruct the power relations they experienced in their language biographies?

Biography, Migration and Belonging

Session Organizers: Arne WORM, Gabriele ROSENTHAL (University of Goettingen)

Processes of migration are often accompanied by changing images of oneself, of we-group belongings, and of other groupings on different levels (such as gender, religion, ethnicity, or class). Established images of one's own belonging to a certain grouping, as well as corresponding stocks of knowledge, everyday-life perspectives, and patterns of action are challenged and re-interpreted in the varying social figurations and biographical constellations encountered during a process of migration. Research on these dynamics of belonging is an important and well-established part of the sociology of migration.

When we are analyzing these transformation processes regarding the individual's belonging in the context of migration, it is also important to consider the social processes and constellations that lead to interpreting oneself more as an individual or more as a member of certain groups, or in other words: to investigate the role of changes in the "we-I balance" (Elias).

In this session, we invite papers that deal with questions of migration, belonging and changes in "we" and "I" from the perspective of biographical research, which means reconstructing these dynamics in the light of migrants' complex life trajectories and in their interrelations with family and collective histories and the changing power balances, inequalities and figurations that shape migration processes.

Biographies in Organizations – Organizations in Biographies

Session Organizers: Marita HAAS (Vienna Technical University), Miriam SCHÄFER (University of Goettingen)

People are involved in organizations in diverse ways and in different phases of life. These are public institutions of socialization, such as schools, professional organizations in the economic, academic or public sectors, but also organizations of religious groups or associations for leisure activities. Individual trajectories, in this context, underlay the social and institutional setting of organizations. Vice versa, individual biographies influence organizations in various ways: People with diverse biographical backgrounds are included and promoted in organizations and co-construct the structures and processes in place.

The aim of this session is to gain a deeper insight into the interrelation of biographical experiences and organizational constellations from a perspective of biographical research.

We invite papers that deal with the interrelation between biographic experiences and organizations illustrating how structural and institutional aspects of organizations interrelate with the biographical history.

JOINT SESSIONS

[Using Intersectionality in Biographical Research](#)

Joint session RC38 (Biography & Society, host) and RC05 (Racism, Nationalism and Ethnic Relations)

Session Organizers: Kathy DAVIS (VU Amsterdam), Helma LUTZ (Goethe University Frankfurt)

Intersectionality as theory has provided a sophisticated and dynamic way to conceptualize how socially constructed differences and structures of power based on gender, ethnicity, class, national belonging, sexuality and more work at the level of individual experiences, social practices, institutional arrangements, symbolic representations and cultural imaginaries. It has been embraced as one of the most important contributions to critical studies in the field of gender studies, critical race studies, and postcolonial scholarship. Despite its popularity, there has been less attention paid to how the insights of intersectionality as theory can be applied to empirical research on identities and experiences of exclusion, subordination, and marginalization. Biographical research is ideally suited for an intersectional approach because it allows the researcher to explore how axes of difference and power are discursively negotiated by differently located individuals as they talk about their experiences, their life histories, and their identities. This session invites scholars who have used intersectionality in their research to reflect on the the advantages, but also the problems and pitfalls of an intersectional lens for analyzing and understanding how power and difference work in people's everyday lives. The goal of the session is not to evaluate intersectionality as a theory, but rather to explore the ways it can (or cannot) be used as a method in biographical research.

[Biographies, Figurations and Discourses in the Global South](#)

Joint Session RC38 (host) and RC09 (Social Transformations and Sociology of Development)

Session Organizers: Artur BOGNER (University of Bayreuth), Jesus PINEDA OLIVIERI (University of Goettingen)

For long biographical research in sociology has mostly focused on people from countries of the "Global North", or even chiefly the "G7" countries, and on their lifeworlds. We invite contributions that concentrate firstly on life stories and life courses from outside of these geographical areas, and secondly on the intricate entwinement of biographical (self-)interpretations and life courses of individuals with larger social figurations and collective discourses in the course of time. In other words we hope for contributions that understand and explain the *intertwining* of individual, biographical and collective processes in a diachronic ("historical") perspective - and

ideally this intertwining itself too as a long-term or lengthy process. Among others we propose to pay attention to the interaction of *individual* and *collective* self-images, and to the inequalities of power and “voice” which are typical of established-outsiders figurations.

[Ethnography and Biographical Research](#)

Joint Session RC33 (Logic and Methodology, host) and RC38

Session Organizers: Gabriele ROSENTHAL, Johannes BECKER (University of Goettingen)

What can ethnographers learn from biographical researchers and *vice versa*? What commonalities and differences are there between the two paradigms? In both research traditions most scholars are committed to interpretative sociology and we therefore think that a continuing exchange is fruitful, especially regarding methods and methodology.

However, both paradigms have ‘defining’ methods – biographical-narrative interviews in the case of biographical research, and participant observation in ethnography. They emphasize different facets of the social world.

In the case of observation, for example, the central focus is often on (inter-)action in its non-verbal and bodily dimensions. Although conversations in certain social settings (often in public or semi-private spaces) are also important elements, the emphasis is not on the self-descriptions of the actors.

An important characteristic of narrative interviews is that the *genesis* of specific features and patterns of activity and interpretation is taken seriously – in contrast to most ethnographic studies there is a systematic interest in a diachronic perspective.

We invite contributions which are based on a combination of different forms of data collection and which discuss concrete experiences with such combinations in specific empirical projects. We are also interested in contributions which highlight limits or mutual obstructions to the combination of methods.

[Biography and City](#)

Joint Session RC21 (Sociology of Urban and Regional Development, host) and RC38

Session Organizer: Nicole WITTE, Johannes BECKER (University of Goettingen)

How do cities affect the lives of their inhabitants? This question has been relevant for sociological research since the publication of Georg Simmel's essay “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903), and the programmatic writings of the Chicago School (see esp. Park 1915). They were also concerned with the social and geographical organization of living together in cities, as well as with group formation and mechanisms of segregation.

These questions have not lost their urgency for the social sciences, on the contrary. Mega cities continue to grow, and generally, urbanization is still on the rise. Urban

growth, and processes such as segregation and precarization, are directly connected to the life courses and biographical constructions of their inhabitants.

In light of these considerations, our interest is the connection between biography and city, i.e. how urban contexts influence life courses and how cities have been formed and changed in the past and the present by interactions between their inhabitants. We welcome contributions which are based on empirical research dealing with questions such as the following:

- How does the city influence life histories and life stories? How are urban contexts constituted by interactions between their inhabitants?
- How can we explore a city's history by employing biographical research?
- Which (combinations of) methods are suitable for research on biographies and cities?
- What role is played in biographies by 'urban materialities' and geographical features?
- How can we compare living in urban areas and living in rural areas on the basis of biographies?

[Visualizing Power: Epistemological and Theoretical Aspects of Studying Biographies Affected By Violence and Injustice](#)

Joint Session RC57 (Visual Sociology, host), RC37 (Sociology of Arts), RC38 (Biography & Society)

Session Organizers: Regev NATHANSON (University of Haifa), Roswitha BRECKNER (University of Vienna), Paulo MENEZES (University of Sao Paulo)

This joint session seeks to present different sociological perspectives on how visuals and the arts are related to biographies affected by power, violence and injustice. How images of different kinds and media, e.g. paintings, drawings, collages and photographs from art history, contemporary artists, scholars and non-scholars create ways to depict experiences, situations and social contexts shaped by power and violence? In what way images are used to deal with power and violence e.g. in political activism, public media or within families? How do they become relevant in processes of transmission between generations and within communities affected by power, violence and injustice? How can images become powerful and violent by themselves?

We seek papers that will explore various methodological, epistemological, and theoretical approaches concerning visibility and invisibility of power, violence and injustice. We particularly welcome papers that will examine these aspects in a comparative manner: between different observers, cross culturally, or across historical periods.

[Digital Experiences and Narratives of Networked Activism](#)

Joint Session RC47 (Social Classes and Social Movements, host) and RC38

Session Organizer: Tin-Yuet TING (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University)

The popularity of social media and mobile technologies bears witness to thriving networked activism among connected individuals in different regions. The advent of information and communication technologies provides accessible multimedia platforms that allow self-joining and self-organized individual activists to create and share alternative discourses in advocating for diverse social agendas. Moreover, digital experiences and narrations as political performance in turn transform individuals' identities and values. They influence the individuals' civic-political activities and awareness both during and after social movements. While networked individuals and their connective efforts have been considered at the forefront of recent movement protests, less has been known about how they construct movement experiences and narratives with social media and mobile technologies, and the impacts of digitally-enabled experiences and narrations on their life histories in the long run. In order to address these issues, this session solicits submissions that analyze how individual activists construct movement experiences with mobile social media; the role of images and videos, likes and tweets, and other forms of representations in digital narrating; how digital experiences and narrating shape the individuals' civic-political agency and biographical outcomes. Contributions are welcome from different methodological approaches and socio-cultural contexts.

International Workshop
Biography and Body

University of Crete, Rethymnon

September 14-16, 2017

Department of Sociology, University of Crete

Greek Association of Oral History

RC 38 Biography and Society, International Sociological Association (ISA)

The international workshop 'Biography and Body' focuses on interdisciplinary perspectives in the research field of embodied biographies. While we can observe a "body turn" in the Social Sciences over the last few years, we find that biographical research has not paid much attention to conceptualizing the connections between the body and biographical practices. Oral History researchers have acknowledged for some time now the importance of non-verbal communication and embodied performativity in the interview situation. Yet a specific focus on embodied experiences in life stories is a quite recent trend also in Oral History. In our workshop, we would like to enable a dialogue among the different theoretical and disciplinary perspectives from Sociology, Oral History, Anthropology and Gender Studies. Furthermore, we would like to discuss the methodological challenges that arise from the interview as an embodied encounter between two subjectivities and from investigating embodied experiences by using biographical methods.

A focus on the body seems particularly promising in life history research concerning the fields of migration, work, sexuality, disease, political violence, disabilities, as well as in psychosocial research.

We would like to invite PhD students and other scholars who are working in the research field of embodied biographies to participate in our workshop.

Organizers:

Prof. Dr. Giorgios Tsiolis, University of Crete

Dr. Irini Siouti, University of Vienna

Prof. Dr. Riki van Boeschoten, University of Thessaly

Program**Thursday, September 14, 2017**

18:00: Welcome

18:30: Keynote I: Kathy Davis (VU University Amsterdam): "The story of my life is written on my skin": Bringing the body into biographical research

Chair: Irimi Siouti (University of Vienna)

21.00: Dinner

Friday, September 15, 2017

10:30-13:00: Working group I: Theoretical perspectives on embodied biographies

Chair: Lena Inowlocki (Frankfurt University)

13:00-14:30: Lunch break

14:30-17:00: Working group II: Biography and body: methodological challenges

Chair: Giorgos Tsiolis (University of Crete)

18:00: Experimental workshop: (Mis)reading body language in the oral history interview

Chair: Riki van Boeschoten (University of Thessaly)

21.00: Dinner

Saturday, September 16, 2017

10:30-16:00: Research working group: Images of bodies in depictions of refugees

Chair: Roswitha Breckner (University of Vienna)

Registration:

Please register until 25 August 2017 with the organizers (tsiolisg@uoc.gr, irini.siouti@univie.ac.at).

Registration is without fees.

Location:

Department of Sociology

University of Crete

University Campus Rethymnon

CALL FOR PAPERS

GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT
GÖTTINGEN

Biography and Violence

Violent dynamics and agency in collective processes and individual life histories

International Conference to be held at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences (Qualitative Methods/Professorship Rosenthal),

University of Göttingen, on 9-10 February 2018

In European societies, current media reports on (civil) wars, armed conflicts, terror attacks, illegalized migration, or attacks on migrants show that physical violence and violent phenomena attract great attention, albeit often in a very charged and selective manner.

The high number of studies devoted to violent phenomena and their causes, dynamics and consequences means that today there can be no question of a general neglect of violence in the social sciences any more, at least with regard to empirical research. Much recent research in this field has focused on violence in the narrow sense of the word, meaning the social dynamics organized around physical injury to, and the vulnerability of, social actors. This conference tries to go beyond a normative perspective limited to the study of isolated "causes", and strives to understand the interactive dynamics of violence that creates and destroys social order. In addition, increased attention is paid to the history and experiences of the actors involved, and their social networks.

Sociologists interested in biographical research, or in other forms of research into everyday life, have explicitly studied contexts structured by violence, such as wars and violent conflicts, migration courses, or domestic violence, and have focused, for example, on the biographical, familial and transgenerational consequences of violent experiences. A biographical research approach must include contextualizing the phenomena under study socio-historically and diachronically. Moreover, an interpretative research approach that focuses on the biographical experiences, perspectives and relevances of the actors in their social fields of action, and, if possible, their historical genesis, frequently leads to the discovery of violent phenomena, which have significantly contributed to structuring the biographical courses of these actors, even without an explicit focus on violence. In other words, researchers commonly find traces of experiences of violence and violent behavior in various biographical fields. A biographical research approach makes it possible to examine

the processes that lead to experiences of violence, whether as targets or performers, on both a personal and a collective level.

This interdisciplinary and international conference offers an opportunity for discussion and exchange between scholars engaged in research on violence and those engaged in biographical research, from their different academic perspectives.

We are interested in the following questions: How can biographical research contribute to the systematic inclusion of violence in the development of sociological theories, as called for in recent years by scholars involved in research on violence and violent conflicts? And what perspectives can research on violence contribute to biographical research in the social sciences and sociology?

We therefore invite papers based on empirical research in the following interrelated areas:

- Reconstruction of processes of the development, continuation and change of (physically) violent behavior, and interpretations of violence, from the perspectives of actors involved in different socio-historical contexts.
- Reconstruction of interrelations between members of different groupings and individuals in violent situations.
- Empirical perspectives on violent dynamics in different regions of the world and different social contexts.
- Figurations of groupings in violent or armed conflicts.
- Experience of violent conditions as part of everyday life, and as part of an actor's collective, familial and personal history.
- Violence in organizational contexts (such as police or army): development, continuation and change of patterns of interpretation and action in connection with armed violence in organizational contexts; practices of organizational violence and their legitimation, and interrelations between biographical and organizational-professional patterns of action.
- Interdependencies between violence and collective belongings.
- Opportunities and limits in respect of the thematization of violence in different social contexts (also: in the research context) and in biographical courses.
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Please send your paper title and abstract (not exceeding 2300 characters, including authors and affiliations) to conference.mzs2018@uni-goettingen.de.

Deadline: September 1st, 2017.

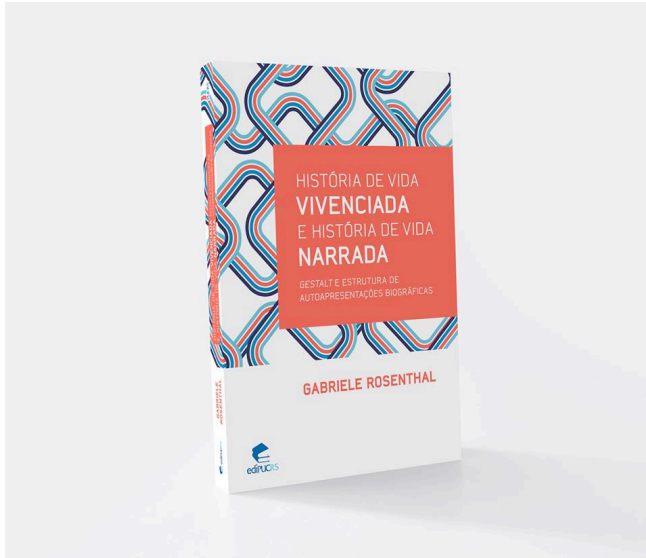
We especially invite junior researchers and young academics. Travel expenses can be partially covered for contributors of papers or presentations.

For current information visit our website at: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/562269.html>

Organizing team

- Eva Bahl, M.A.; Isabella Enzler, M.A.; Hendrik Hinrichsen, M.A.; Kristina Meier, M.A.; Miriam Schäfer, M.A.; Katharina Teutenberg, M.A.; Arne Worm, M.A.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS



The book *Erlebte und erzählte Lebensgeschichte – Gestalt und Struktur biographischer Selbstbeschreibungen*, by Gabriele Rosenthal, is now also available in Portuguese (Porto Alegre: Edipucrs, 2017), translated by Tomas da Costa, presented and with the technical translation review by Hermílio Santos. This translation is part of the efforts to enlarge and disseminate the interest for biographical research in Portuguese-speaking countries in Europa, Latin America, Africa and Oceania.



Gabriele Rosenthal, Artur Bogner (eds.)

BIOGRAPHIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Life Stories Embedded in Figurations and Discourses

campus

For a long time, sociological biographical research has focused on people who live in the "global north". This volume is a contribution to the more recent efforts to eliminate this far too narrow perspective. It aims at the life stories and life histories of people from Africa and the Middle East. The focus is on biographical and socio-historical interrelationships with other people and other social groups. Besides the contributions by the editors of the volume, chapters by Eva Bahl, Johannes Becker, Hendrik Hinrichsen, Josephine Schmiereck, Nicole Witte and Arne Worm.

SCREENING AND EXHIBITIONS



HISTORIES OF TRANSFORMATION BASED ON DIALOGUE

OCTOBER 2017 16th	MONDAY: 6 pm NYU Production Lab 16 Washington Place New York, NY 10003
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Directed by: Hermílio Santos and Kamila Almeida
Script: Kamila Almeida and Thaís Zimmer Martins
Soundtrack: Filipe Miu Editing and Finishing: Thaís Zimmer Martins

PRODUCTION:   

SUPPORTED BY:  design e conteúdo

SPONSORED BY:    Production Lab 

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