

# Biography and Society

**BIOGRAPHY AND SOCIETY**  
RESEARCH COMMITTEE 38 OF THE ISA

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NEWSLETTER / DECEMBER 2012

**LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT  
DECEMBER 2012**

Dear Colleagues,

This year's activities of our RC developed mainly around the ISA Forum Conference in Buenos Aires. It allowed an intense encounter of scholars all over the world, and our well attended program was very inspiring and highly enriching. I would like to thank all session organisers, chairs, presenters and discussants who made this possible by their committed participation! Thanks to some colleagues who were ready to report some personal impressions from sessions they attended, you find traces of the lively presentations and discussions in this newsletter.

I'm specifically glad that a Latin American Network of biographical researchers was founded during the conference. We also had a Business Meeting in Buenos Aires from which we let you know with some 'minutes'.

Having still good memories from the conference in Buenos Aires, the coming events appear at the horizon and are taking shape. Kaja Kazmierska is about to prepare a conference at the University of Lodz "Biographical Research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – Epistemological and Axiological Dilemmas" (June 17-18/2013) on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the first ISA Ad-hoc-Group initiated by Daniel Bertaux named 'Biography and Society' which led to the foundation of the RC 38. You find the call for papers for this conference in the newsletter. Irini Siouti and Giorgos Tsiolis are preparing a workshop on "New Challenges in Transnational Biography Research" which will take place at the Department of Sociology, University of Crete, Greece, September 27-28/2013. You will find further information in the next newsletter.

Michaela Koettig and I will start the preparations for the next World Congress in Yokohama "Facing an Unequal World. Challenges for Global Sociology" (13-18 July 2014) very soon. Some major deadlines available so far are also included in the newsletter.

The following editorial written by Andreas Kempf and Michaela Koettig who have taken the task to compose the newsletters, will provide you with more information about the renewed concept and the content of this very rich edition.

I wish everybody all the best for the coming holiday season, and a good turn of the year!

Roswitha Breckner  
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President of the RC Biography & Society

**EDITORIAL  
DECEMBER 2012**

Dear colleagues,

This year's second newsletter of our Research Committee is an experiment!

As considered jointly during our last business meeting in Buenos Aires we would like to make our newsletter more interactive. Taking up South America in general and the wonderful and inspiring ISA conference in Buenos Aires in particular as the main topic of this issue we would like to invite you not to hesitate to enter into dialogue with each other. Thanks to the willingness of our RC members Kathy Davis, Laura Odasso, Sara Park, Johanna Sigl and Rixta Wundrak to contribute to our newsletter we start with short summaries of a selection of sessions of our RC in Buenos Aires. To support us in our project we kindly asked our authors to bring into their reflections their own opinion and their experiences with the program they are presenting. Meant as an invitation to dialogue and discussion we, this way, hope to encourage you to let us know your own opinion and impressions of the wide range of topics of the conference. With your consent we would like to publish these comments, sent to our mail address ([biography-and-society@gmx.de](mailto:biography-and-society@gmx.de)) in our next issue.

In keeping with this issue's main topic you will then find a country report on biographical research in Brazil written by Hermilio Pereira dos Santos Filho followed by an announcement to join the new Latin American Biographical Studies Group founded among others by Andrés Argüello Parra. Subsequently, we would like draw your attention as usual to various calls for papers as well as announcements to conferences and workshops which might be of interest to you.

One of such an exciting event which has already taken place in November this year in Vienna was the International Symposium entitled "Language and Pictures – Multimodal Approaches to Heteroglossic Biographies". Thanks to Sina Motzek you will find a conference report on this event in this issue.

As usual our newsletter finishes with news and publications related to our Research Committee respectively the ISA.

Hoping you enjoy the newsletter and looking forward to your comments

With kind regards  
Michaela & Andreas

Andreas Oskar Kempf ([andreas.kempf@gesis.org](mailto:andreas.kempf@gesis.org))  
Michaela Köttig ([koettig@fb4.fh-frankfurt.de](mailto:koettig@fb4.fh-frankfurt.de))

**Some further important topics:**

We ask all of you to inform us about a change in your address, and in particular in your e-mail address.

**# Membership fees**

Please remember to pay your membership fee:

Regular members	US\$ 40
Students and members from countries B and C (see ISA regulations)	US\$ 20

**Bank account:** Michaela Koettig  
Sparda-Bank-Hessen, Germany  
bank code: 500 905 00  
account number: 101 548 312

For bank transfer of members from European countries  
IBAN: 13 500 905 000 101 548 312  
BIC: GEN ODE F1 S12

**# The deadline for the next newsletter is the End of April 2013**

You can send us

- a short paper (3-7 pages) on a topic you are currently working on
- a presentation of your current project
- some reflection 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 call for papers for conferences, workshops, summer schools
- new publications from you, also in your respective native language
- any other thought or information you like to share.

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### NEWS

### PUBLICATIONS

## MINUTES FROM THE RC 38 BUSINESS MEETING IN BUENOS AIRES

AUGUST 3, 2012, 2.30-4.00 PM

1. Organising the programme at the Forum Conference was tough, because the newly implemented electronic system did not work well. We discussed this issue during the Council Business Meeting, and hopefully for the next World Congress in Yokohama things will go smoother. However, our sessions were very well attended, enormously interesting papers were presented and lively discussion took place even in the restricted time available. Impressions from participating colleagues will appear in the newsletter.
2. Preparations for the next ISA World Congress in Japan have already started, and the first deadlines are set: The call for sessions starts January 15, 2013 and has to be completed by April 7. The online-abstract submission will open in June 2013.
3. Kaja Kazmierska proposes to organise a workshop “Biographical Research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – Epistemological and Axiological Dilemmas” at the University of Lodz / Poland in 2013. The workshop is intended also to celebrate the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RC38. The dates still have to be fixed, but the workshop/conference probably will take place in June 2013. Everybody was enthusiastic about the idea and RC 38 is happy to support this project.
4. Irini Siouti proposes a workshop “Methodological Challenges of Biographical Research” at the University of Crete, Greece, to take place also in 2013, probably in fall, but also these dates still have to be fixed. This workshop is dedicated to concretely work together on material and discuss different approaches. The audience highly appreciated this proposal, which will have a different format than the workshop/conference in Lodz.  
We also felt a desire and need for smaller workshops/conferences with more discussion than possible at the big ISA conferences and are happy, that next year two of them will take place.
5. Andrés Arguello (Colombia) proposes to build a network of biographical researchers in Latin America, which already started to take shape during the conference. There will be a contribution about how the network is set up in this newsletter.
6. Newsletter: Michaela Koettig and Andreas Kempf were ready to take the responsibility for the appearance of the newsletter twice a year – acclamation!  
There are discussions within the ISA council to transform the newsletters required by the statutes of the RCs to appear two times a year, in a more ‘modern’ form, e.g. using websites. However, there are no new ‘standards’ formulated by the ISA yet, and until then we continue to produce the newsletter in the way we used to do.  
Kathy Davis shares ideas how to use the newsletter for more debate also on controversial issues.
7. ISA started a process of revising the statutes from every RC. Irini Siouti took care of the revisions in our statutes, which have to be voted on during the business meeting in Yokohama. The revised version is already published on our website ([http://www.isa-sociology.org/rcs/rc38\\_st.htm](http://www.isa-sociology.org/rcs/rc38_st.htm))
8. Mohammed Bamyeh, Professor and Editor of *International Sociology Review of Books* (ISR), invites everybody to contribute with reviews of books, “but also regional or local debates, as well as non-book materials (audio-visual materials, blogs, zines, etc.) that could be of interest to an international community of sociologists. I should also mention that we are *especially* interested in reviews of materials available in languages other than English.”
9. An informal meeting took place in the evening the same day as well as after finishing the programme on Saturday.
10. We were very thankful for Betina Freidin, our local Liaison, and Andrés Scharager, the volunteering translator during our sessions, who helped us a lot to make the conference a great event.



**Research Committee on Biography & Society – RC38**  
Program (<http://www.isa-sociology.org/buenos-aires-2012/rc/rc.php?n=RC38>)

**REFLECTIONS ON THE SESSIONS**

### **Sessions: Bodies, Pictures, and Food**

**Kathy Davis**, Utrecht University, Netherlands ([K.E.Davis@uu.nl](mailto:K.E.Davis@uu.nl))

The second day of the RC38 program began with three sessions on dance, pictures, and food, respectively and they were a bit off the beaten track for many of us who have been used to topics like migration, displacement, violence, and conflict situations. That the RC38 even offered sessions like this was due to the encouragement of our honored President, Roswitha Brechner, who early on assured the session organizers that she was very interested in seeing our research committee move in new directions. Despite her encouragement and the subsequent and quite considerable interest for the sessions – as evidenced by a collection of excellent and thought-provoking papers – I still felt just a little apprehensive when the first session on dance began. I remember scanning the members of the audience, who had braved the weather (pouring down rain and dismally cold) and were sitting there hopefully, steam rising from their coats (the building was, alas, unheated). I wondered whether the topics we had in store for them might simply be too frivolous to be worth their scholarly attention. Would we be able to convince them that dancing tango or eating humus were worth approaching from a biographical perspective? Would we be able to persuade these biographical researchers with their sophisticated methodological repertoires for collecting and analyzing stories that pictures were also worth – well – taking a look at?

The first session was called ‘Bodies in Motion’ with presentations on ball room dancing and Argentine tango. We were treated to beautiful photographs of performers, executing breath-taking bends and turns. One of the speakers perched provocatively on the desk, wearing a glamorous spangled blouse, during her talk, while another speaker executed a few dance steps and held a stiletto shoe aloft, explaining why it was the ‘Cadillac’ of the tango shoe and how an insider could ‘read off’ the quality of the dancer from the logo on her shoe bag, much to the amazement of the audience (An audience told me afterwards that this was the most convincing demonstration of what sociologists call tacit knowledge that she had ever seen). The second session ‘Pictures, biographies and families’ showed how different kinds of visual material – family photographs, photographed artifacts of family life, and photographs used for art exhibitions – can be used to explore family biographies. These photographs showed how pictures can trigger memories of family life, but also attested to those memories which are present but cannot be talked about (as was the case with the poignant analysis of photographs of

families who had lost members during the military regime in Argentina. The third session 'Food as a Special Symbol in the Migration Process' took a topic (migration) which has received considerable attention from biographical researchers in the past, giving it a special - and I might add - delicious twist (It was close to lunch time and I, for one, can verify that our mouths were watering!). The speakers showed how essential food and food practices can be for constructing a sense of home and negotiating livable identities in the context of migration.

For those of you who attended these sessions, I hope that you will agree with me that they exceeded our hopes. The speakers were enthusiastic, agreed to stay in touch, and promises were made to organize new conferences on similar themes in the future. Audience members were excited and the discussions spilled over into the breaks and were being continued days after the forum was over. Some even wanted to check out tango for themselves and were sighted lurking in tango salons throughout Buenos Aires (making observations and taking notes, of course).

Having had a chance to evaluate the sessions with many of the participants and audience members, I have to conclude that the 'experiment' to initiate somewhat unorthodox sessions was a success. More importantly, however, the sessions raise several issues for biographical research which I think would be worth pursuing in the future.

First, the concept of biography - what constitutes a biography - needs to be expanded. The sessions illustrated that the body not only need to be brought back into sociology, as Chris Shilling has argued, but that needs a revival in biographical research as well. How can we make sense of a person life through the movements of his/her body, its adornments, and its belongings? What is the role of passion and desire in the stories we tell about our lives? Can a photograph tell a life story? And, what about an object?

Second, the sessions illustrated how productive forays into different methodologies can be for biographical research. Nearly all of the speakers used ethnographies and as well as the analysis of visual representations in addition to biographical narratives. This not only raises the question whether it is possible to do 'straight' biographical research (i.e. what do we miss without an ethnographical analysis of the context), but, by the same token, how might the analysis of photographs or material artifacts profit from a biographical approach?

A third issue - and this is related to the first two - is that the success of these sessions suggests that our research committee, more than ever before, needs to avoid sectarianism and actively embark upon collaboration with other fields. Visual sociology is not simply interesting in and of itself, but it raises essential questions about how to think about the silences - something we are all familiar with in analyzing life stories. Bodies are part of any one's biography, whether s/he is a tango dancer or a refugee from a conflict zone. And can we even talk about how ethnicity is 'done' in everyday life without mentioning food and eating?

Last but not least, let's not forget the mundane, but perhaps most important issue of all - namely, finding ways to stay inspired and excited about our enterprise. I did not begin my own trajectory in the ISA as a member of RC38. In fact, for many years, I attended another research committee as a loyal, if slightly bored, member. I remember as clearly as if it were yesterday how I snuck away from the sessions of 'my' research committee to attend a session of the RC38- 'just for fun', as I told myself. I sat there enthralled, engaged, full of ideas, raring to discuss - in short, all the things I had been missing without even realizing it. I left my research committee shortly after that and never looked back. RC38



has been my intellectual home ever since. It is this experience which was so formative for me that I would most want to pass on to the others. The sessions on dance, pictures, and food did exactly that.

### **Session: Biography and ethnography**

**Laura Odasso**, Università Ca' Foscari, Venezia, Italy ([la.odasso@gmail.com](mailto:la.odasso@gmail.com))

#### **How could ethnography and biographical analysis profit from each other?**

This was the main question of the session on « Biography and ethnography » of the Second ISA forum held in Buenos Aires. More general, the debate was centred on the use of different kinds of qualitative research designs and tools in addition to biographical analysis as a methodological frame of research. The different presentations showed how multiple methodologies could strengthen each other and refine outcomes of biographical research. The panel was made up of six interventions : Adoption à la Brazilians: the foster children case (Priscila Azevedo, Brazil) ; Sociology, family history and genealogy (Ricardo Costa de Oliveira, Brazil); Biography and graphical representations: ethnography and transdisciplinary engagement (Barbara Morovich, France); The stigmatization of Villa Corina neighbours (Sebastiàn Lopez, Argentina), The wealthy ghettos of the metropolis (Nevin Sahin, Turkey) and Giving a three dimensional form to biography (Laura Odasso, France-Italy).

The research projects which served as exemplification models, led to the following key topics of discussion: firstly, the researcher's position and the need to create an alliance with the people and the context studied by means of ethnographic elements during the fieldwork and secondly, the ways of using the profitable outcomes of a research.

All the speakers showed that the researcher needs to participate in his/her fieldwork at least, in order to achieve a deeper "position" in the field studied as well as to give complexity to his/her analysis, and to reach the potential interviewees' confidence. If indeed, referring to Michael Burawoy "by ethnography, [we] mean writing about the world from the standpoint of participant observation" [1998: 6], it is necessary to use the "researcher's self" as an instrument of survey.

Sebastian Lopez, for instance, showed how the urban space and positioning of the barrio Villa Corina, in Buenos Aires, is fundamental to understand the aim of his research. Knowing everyday lives of the population studied as well as their environment by conducting interviews and even participating at the daily lives of the people of the "barrio" (i.e. meetings, dinners and family parties, etc.) were essential steps to catch the concrete interactions which led to the stigmatization of the inhabitants of the barrio. In addition, to collect written material (articles in local newspapers and on web pages, etc.) that alludes to Villa Corina helped him to enrich the data issued from the biographical data collected. A similar approach was used by Nevin Sahin. In her case the detailed photos shown by her permitted to perceive at what level urban ethnography can contribute to offer some characteristics of the concrete field of research which makes it easier to present, explain and transmit it to someone who "has never been there".

Priscilla Azevedo's research methodology focused on the life stories of eight foster children (filhos de criação). Once again to understand the specificities of their cases, ethnographic field notes of the dynamics and the economic and cultural aspects of the towns where the children live, chosen as field-

work, and some interviews with local people who are holding up relations to them were the keys to moderate and qualify the reasons and the consequences of the phenomenon studied.

Laura Odasso presented a case study of a bi-national couple: the institutional and juridical difficulties which emerged by their specific biographical work [Inowlocki and Lutz, 2000: 301] allowed her to discover that these problems are commonly experienced by bi-national couples nowadays in France. In fact, some elements of one biography led the researcher to enlarge her fieldwork and to discover a social mobilization spread all over in France, Les Amoureux au Ban Public. This association is involved in the protection of the legal rights of bi-national couples. Moving from the biography of the couple to the resources of the association imposed to the researcher an analytical passage from investigating the individual action to the collective one. Practically, this meant an involvement of the researcher in the activities of the association Les Amoureux au Ban Public. It was at that point that it meant a passage from participant observation (observation participant) to an observing participation (participation observante) [Pasquier, 2004; Tedlock, 1991]. In this case, the participation was given a higher priority and became a deeper form of observation. The subjective experience and the fact to be "inside" the field were most important.

Barbara Morovich used graphical representations of the life course to highlight biographical events centered on the issue of mobility of people in Haute-pierre, a sensitive urban zone of Strasbourg, in France. The idea of representation of the life course was born out of a transdisciplinary approach between art, anthropology and urbanism. The word "transdisciplinarity" [in French: trans-disciplinarité, Nicolescu, 1996] means to overcome the specialisation and the separation between disciplines with the goal to reach a sort of completion of knowledge with the synergies of different fields. These visual representations seem to be useful at different levels: for the people interviewed it is a way of being recognized as "persons" and thus to escape the stigma and also the denial of their mobility; for policy makers, the graphic life course could be a vector of better understanding the core problems of the neighborhood and its inhabitants; for social researchers, they may represent an innovative method of a kind of "summary" of trajectories of life; for the world of artistic creation they could be seen as "objects", graphically dense bearers of crossed values.

To conclude, when building a methodological frame of research by using as a starting point an ethnographical or biographical approach, it seems to come out as a result that a "complete" research leads to a natural combination of more than one method (e.g. participation, observation, collection of photos or other kind of materials, or even the production of visual material). This is because social actors can act in their life, using different kinds of resources and getting in contact with different fields of social reality; to act accordingly biographical research needs to follow these steps in a sort of "multi-sited ethnography" as suggested by George E. Marcus [1995]. In this way, it is possible to reach a deeper potentiality of life stories and biographical narratives. Moreover, an integrative respectively multi-methodical approach helps the researcher to catch the complexity of the phenomenon studied, by looking at it from the subjective perspective of social actors. We agree with Bernard Lahire when he says that sociology has to take advantages of all methods and all manners of scientifically building the social reality. This may drive to develop some "extended cases" [Burawoy, 1998].

#### **Some references:**

Basarab Nicolescu, *La transdisciplinarité, manifeste*, Éditions du Rocher, 1996,  
Burawoy M., "The Extended Case Method", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 16, no 1, March 1998, pp. 4 - 33.

Inowlocki L., Lutz H., "Hard Labour: The 'Biographical Work' of a Turkish Migrant Woman", *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol 7, no 3, 2000, pp. 301 - 319.

Marcus E. G., "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 24 no. , 1995, pp. 95 - 117.

### **Session: Victims and perpetrators in socio-political (post) conflict settings**

**Sara Park**, Kyoto University, Japan ([bach\\_ps@hotmail.com](mailto:bach_ps@hotmail.com))

The session of "Victims and perpetrators in socio-political (post) conflict settings" took place the 4<sup>th</sup> of August with four presentations and a bunch of audience members.

The first presentation made by Niklas RADENBACH (University of Goettingen, Germany) was about conflicting versions and perspectives of the German-Romanian occupation which are present in the grouping of ethnic Germans in southern Ukraine. Radenbach took a closer look at the years of the German-Romanian occupation from 1941 to 1944, and focused on the question how his interviewees talk about the events of this period today. During the course of research, he finds two groupings in his field. One group consists of those who aim to absolve the locals from guilt concerning the crimes during the German-Romanian occupation. Another group consists of those who address the events of the years 1941-44 in a critical manner and talk relatively openly about the participation of local inhabitants in the genocide of Jews and Roma. The differences between these two groups are marked by their social positions and different statuses; while the former group is well-established and its voice is accepted in public discourses, the latter is rather excluded.

Besides these research results, he discussed how the field researcher might deal with the various challenges of doing research in a conflictive context. For me he seems to be interested in the difficulties of listening to and analyzing people from different socio-historical backgrounds with at the same time sympathy and a scientific attitude, which perhaps interests many other researchers who deal with biographical narratives.

The second presenter, Elifcan KARACAN (Siegen University, German) talked about her research based on her PhD project dealing with remembrance of the military coup d'état in Turkey in September 1980 which caused uncountable arrests, tortures, and executions by the military. Her research aims to understand how the same past of this military coup d'état is being reconstructed differently contrasting narratives of victims of the military coup d'état who continued to live in Turkey with those of exiles who moved to Germany. She conducts eighteen interviews in Germany and Turkey, participating in different commemoration events on the coup d'état.

Through participant observation of the commemorations, she locates biographical narratives within the collective memory of the rebellions. As a result of her research, she concludes that individuals tend to remember the past with regard to their surroundings and present needs and believes, pointing out multiplicity and differences in the remembering process among the interviewees who remain in Turkey and who sought asylum in Germany. She observes that among those who immigrated to Germany their memories of the military coup d'état are even stronger, because it is the basic reason for their emigration.

What inspires me of her presentation is that the presentation bridges theory and practice of collective memory. The interviewees in Turkey and Germany narrate their pasts and experiences over 30 years,

which enables us to learn about their present surroundings and their understandings of societies in which they had lived respectively still live in. These "small" or "micro" perspectives and understandings might be the target of biographical inquiry.

The third presenter, who was me, had a presentation on undocumented migrants in post WW2 Japan. Focusing on the collapse of the Japanese Empire in 1945 and population movements in the following years, I tried to figure out how ethnic boundaries between "Japanese" and "foreigners" were re-organized through demographic registration systems in Japan and South Korea.

Citing written documents from and about undocumented migrants who immigrated to Japan, I firstly figured out hidden historical ties between Japan and South Korea, which tried to capture nationals through fingerprinting registration. Then, having used biographical interviews from those undocumented migrants, I turned to the migrants' experiences. Under uncertainty and surveillance, undocumented migrants neither were just subjects of the different systems nor did they remain suppressed; they negotiated their citizenship and tried to live where they wanted, even sometimes with different legal identities. Their experiences of exclusion and obtaining quasi-citizenship cast light on how the borderlines of people, "us" and "they" were reconstructed after the liberation of colonialism and the re-organization of the nation-states.

The fact that I got some supportive questions on my critical perspective on the Japanese society, made me think on how my presentation was understood by other professional scholars.

The last presenter, Rixta WUNDRAK (University of Goettingen, Germany), had a joint presentation with Nicole WITTE (University of Goettingen, Germany). The presentation is a result of a collaborative research project that takes place in Germany, Palestine, and Israel, dealing with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from everyday experiences of those who are living in stigmatized neighborhoods and are entangled in criminal networks in the region.

The presentation contrasted how discourses are narrated officially and internationally on the one hand and how people narrate their biographical first-hand experiences of violence on the other hand. Their ethnographic case studies in Haifa and Jaffa tried to highlight how to link discourse material like film with biographies and participant observation. The analyses show that personal life stories are often re-shaped into "presentable representations", and personal narrations are often turned into a kind of political speech for an international audience, emphasizing discrimination and expressing claims for social justice.

Beside the need for considerable sensibility in order to show the interviewee their interests in "trivial" and personal experiences and not in the "big global conflict", the presenters underlined that researchers are not allowed to judge about cases of violence.

From the perspective of a total outsider of German biographical research, the session was very interesting and gave me insights into some differences of the styles and academic backgrounds on conducting and analyzing life histories. Even though these differences could cause difficulties in understanding each other, this time I really enjoyed the different presentations. I assume that one of the challenges at international conferences lies in offering people from different backgrounds who do not know anything about the presenter's background or research field something that also generates excitement.

**Session: Biography and experiences with violence**

**Johanna Sigl**, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany (j.sigl@gmx.de)

The Session “Biography and experiences with violence” took place on Saturday, the last day of the conference and was organized by Hermilio Santos, Pontificia Universidade Catolica de Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

The possibility to give a paper not only in English but also in Spanish was widely used during this session. Unfortunately, the partially rudimentary translation made the understanding more difficult for people who did not understand Spanish (like myself).

Questions of violence framed the session. All the papers were indeed inspiring, in aspects of content and methodology. Various perspectives like those of the perpetrators as well as of the victims and the media staging of violence had been presented.

It was shown that violence represents a kind of social relationship. The subjective meaning and the narrations about violence depend on the involvement of the biographers as well as on the reception by the public.

**Marcela Cornejo**, **Maria Jose Reyes** (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile) and **Maria Angelica Cruz** (Universidad de Valparaíso, Chile) presented in their paper „*Cuéntame tu historia de la dictadura: Voces e imágenes en dialogía intergeneracional en Chile*“ parts of the results of their study, in which they conducted narrative interviews asking about the personal history of the dictatorship by using pictures and about the intergenerational dialogue of remembering the military dictatorship in Chile. They mentioned the diversity during the construction of social memory - especially from an intergenerational perspective.

**Claudia Bacci** (Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina) focused in her talk “*Subjetividad y experiencia en las narrativas personales sobre la violencia política en la Argentina reciente*” on questions of subjectivity, biography and violence in the Argentinean past. She did narrative interviews with people who were mostly part of the “Monteneros”, an armed organization, asking the question how memory and history become a narration. One of her central conclusions was that having been organized in the same political actions does not mean talking about it in the same ways.

The talk of **Hermilio Santos** (Pontificia Universidade Catolica de Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil) dealt with “*Young female engagement in delinquency in south Brazil: Biographic and visual narratives*”. In his methodological framing he underlined that in Brazil, there is no tradition in working with biographical-narrative interviews. And also there is nearly no connection established between questions of gender and delinquency. The conventional explanatory pattern for female delinquency is that females become violent because of the male. But in the analyses of the interviews Santos pointed out that the females don't rate themselves as subordinate. Here we can find a gap between public perceptions and subjective reality.

This gap was also pointed out as a central topic in the paper of **Michaela Koettig** (University of Applied Sciences Frankfurt/Main, Germany), titled “*Constructions of gender stereotypes by the media in dealing with the right-wing terror cell in Germany*”. She highlighted that the media has also to be understood as an actor in the reception and construction of violence. The gender specific perception of violence causes that females are perceived as being less violent. Michaela Koettig showed this through a media analysis of the current example of the right-wing terror cell called „Nationalsozialist Under-

ground“ in Germany.

The lecture of **Pablo Francisco Di Leo** and **Ana Clara Camarotti** (Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina), titled “*Violencias, consumos de drogas y soportes: Sus vinculaciones en experiencias biográficas de jóvenes en barrios marginalizados del área metropolitana de Buenos Aires*” first underlined that discrimination is to be understood as a way of everyday violence. They stated that the analysis of neighborhoods is very important for supporting the youth in finding other practices than using drugs.

The focus in the lecture of **Leticia de Azevedo** (Universidade Federal da Bahia, Brasil), titled “*Surviving a movable prison*” was on the victims of kidnapping in Brazil. In an impressive manner she showed the consequences (physical and emotional) for the victims of kidnapping. The victimization builds an identity trait and is to be differentiated in secondary and indirect victimization.

The session combined these very different facets of the question of violence and biography in a very fruitful manner. Using biographical-narrative interviews and additional methods of interpretive social research allows to get very differentiated answers to a very important social complex, which became clear during the following discussions.

### **Joint session RC 38/RC05: Where Are you From? Experiences of Exclusion, Marginalization and Racism**

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“The question ‘Where are you from?’ occurs when ‘you’ is identified as different by the asking person.” Stéphanie Cassilde from the University of Luxembourg used this formulation to describe the subject of her presentation. However, it also sums up precisely the topic of a two-part session organized by the research committee on Racism, Nationalism and Ethnic Relations (RC05) and the RC38 at the ISA Forum of Sociology in Buenos Aires.

‘Othering’ was the main phenomenon which was being discussed during the session. How are people dealing with experiences of exclusion, marginalization and racism? was one key question the organizers of the session posed and scholars such as Stephanie Cassilde addressed.

To organize this session jointly was a suggestion by Helma Lutz (University of Frankfurt/Main), board member of RC05, and of RC 38’s president Roswitha Breckner (University of Vienna). Together they invited scholars’ contributions to a debate on the biographical processing of a wide range of experiences of exclusion at this year’s ISA forum.

Over 70 abstracts were submitted – a first sign that they hit the mark with this topic. Thus, they organized a second time-slot and split the session into two. The sessions “**Where are you from? Experiences of Exclusion, Marginalization and Racism**” provided a forum for many scholars from different disciplines and regional contexts.

The variety of presentations did not only signify the thematic range of this research field, but also the challenge to deal with it methodologically: On the one hand, the phrase „Where are you from“ is part of the conversational repertoire and a prototypical symbolic code of othering in every-day communication. Thus, one can ask how people deal with this question in conversational situations in everyday life.

Consequently, othering has to be analyzed by the use of conversation analysis and interaction analysis. Nevertheless, it has biographical implications as the question always calls for self-thematization and determination of one's belonging.

On the other hand, we share a common pattern of interpretation lying on the meta-level of such a question. Thus, researchers have to address the meaning of this question, especially when it arises without somebody actually speaking it out. We have to ask how biographical experiences of racism and marginalization shape individuals' actions and reactions in conversation with others.

In both approaches, however, biographical theory comes into play and forces us to consider the biographical and multi-level meaning of this significant question. Accordingly, very diverse empirical studies on othering were presented at the session and discussed in a very inspiring and pleasant atmosphere: **Carmen Diop** provided an excellent example of the above mentioned interdependency. In her presentation "Black graduated women in the workplace in France. Experiences of exclusion and marginalization", she analyzed both, her conversations with women at work as well as their life-stories. The sociologist from the Université Paris Descartes (France) conceived workplaces of women in Paris as a suitable field for analyzing othering biographically as well as in interaction. Her presentation was impressing to me as she demonstrated how intergenerational and life experiences shape the way historical processes, social hierarchies and belonging are negotiated in every-day interactions of these women.

The first-mentioned speaker, **Stephanie Cassilde**, has already worked extensively on the interrelation between the perception of skin-colour (as well as the self-declaration) and socio-economic status. She speaks about the process of "becoming 'whitener' or 'darkener'" depending on the social status and context. This gets even more interesting in the frame of a biographical perspective. In her presentation, she focused on the learning process during a life course. Based on autobiographic evidences, informal and spontaneous talks, as well as on her own experiences in France, she looked at the respondents' socialization and how they learn to deal with the question "Where are you from?" when asked because of their skin colour.

However, not only the view of those who in fact „come from somewhere“, like migrants, but also the view of different outsider as well as established groupings in society became the focus of many presentations. I found those presentations particularly interesting which changed the perspective from those who are excluded to those who are in a position to ask such a question.

Interesting was the approach of **Lena Inowlocki** (University of Applied Sciences in Frankfurt/ Main, Germany). In her presentation "Closure and opening in asymmetrical communication about one's belonging", she focused on the reproduction of hierarchy between those who are supposed to answer and those who are asking the question "Where are you from". Furthermore, she included interviews with psychotherapists and social workers who treat migrants and who are continuously confronted with images of otherness on a professional level.

**Laura Odasso** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy) included husbands', friends' and peers' voices into her analysis. In her presentation titled „Between silent resistance and power of action: 'I am... not I come from'" she emphasized the methodological need to consider different perspectives as well as the intersection of age, gender, social class, 'race' and ethnical relations. Laura Odasso thus also focused on the performative power and the chance to overcome ideologies and ascriptions of otherness, and

and on the possibility to change patterns of interpretation in this respect.

**Vicki Harman** (Royal Holloway University of London, United Kingdom) and **Shamser Sinha** (University Campus Suffolk, United Kingdom) reconstructed othering within racist discourses. In their presentation „Moving racisms, shifting targets: An analysis of race in postcolonial Britain“, they explored the contemporary manifestations and meanings of race and their operations within racist discourses in Great Britain. The two criminologists interviewed two different groupings: The first study involved young migrants seeking asylum in Britain, whereas the second one focused on the experiences of lone white mothers of mixed-parentage children. By applying this comparative approach, they aimed at explaining every-day and structural racism experienced by both groups. They demonstrated how manifestations of racism are linked, how they are dependent on each other and how powerful they are. They explained the salience of racism from an intersectional perspective, for example how negotiating belonging interrelates with other social inequalities, such as migration status and family composition.

The entanglement of dominant discourses and doing belonging in everyday interaction was also the topic **Gabriele Rosenthal** (University of Goettingen, Germany) talked about in her presentation “Palestinians in the West Bank: Diverse collective belongings, varying collective memories and the experiences of discrimination in diverse interactional contexts”. She started off by explaining the meaning of the question in the context of her research field. If somebody would like to find out whether his/her counterpart is Christian or Muslim, she/he asks “Where are you from?” In other words, the ‘political correct question’ to find out someone’s belonging is the same question as to the counterparts’ regional origin or place of residence. Gabriele Rosenthal grounded this phenomenon in the Palestinians’ strong need to present themselves as part of a we-group with a harmonized we-image not least in order to be recognized as a “united counterpart” of the Jewish Israelis. “We Palestinians are one nation without internal conflicts” is the ‘thematic field’, they feel obliged to present in every-day conversation with others and explains their strategic use of the question concerned. As I am involved in the same research project (funded by the German Research Foundation), but focusing on Israel, her presentation as well as the following discussion was inspiring to me.

„Lives in green, white and black: Whiteness, national identity and anti-racism in Ireland“ was the title of **Alice Feldman’s** presentation (University College Dublin, Ireland), which was originally planned together with Romana Khaoury, who unfortunately could not attend the conference. In her inspiring talk she focused on constructions of belonging in Ireland. Interestingly, she mentioned, but not centered on the racialised construction of ‘the migrant other’ that has yet profoundly destabilized notions of Irishness. Instead, the “so-called majority white ethnic society“, the „uninterrogated and deracialized“ part of society has moved into her focus of interest. Based on biographical interviews with white Irish people who are active in anti-racism and migrant solidarity organizations she explained their experiences and their development of becoming interculturalist or ‘race cognizant’. Alice reconstructed how these experiences have shaped their involvement and practices, and their implications in the wider contexts of politics.

**Karim Murji**, (The Open University, United Kingdom) talked about the biographies of two East African born but South Asian descended writers, MG Vassanji and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, one resident in the UK, the other in Canada. Given the multiple and shifting spaces that would frame their answer to the question „Where are you from“ Murji’s analysis of Diaspora texts was indeed inspiring. In his presentation “Unrooted biographies/unexpected reconnections“, he focused on the “unexpected and unanticipated reconnections“ made through the life course of those writers whose multiple 'homelands' and



experiences of 'strangeness' are familiar to them rather than exceptional.

**Christina Schramm**, (Universidad de Costa Rica), presented interesting findings of her PhD-project. In her presentation: "Afro-indigenous subjectivity as an art of survival: 'I am black, Indian and when I get angry I come out of the devil', she demonstrated the dilemma Afro-indigenous women find themselves in when they are being asked for their belonging by doubting family members, skeptical neighbors or institutions. Confronted with questions of belonging concerning family and communal membership, as well as Costa Rican citizenship, Christina Schramm identified this problem as the intersections of 'indigeneity', 'blackness', gender and sexuality.

**Claudia Vorheyer** from the University of Zurich (Switzerland) conducted numerous biographical-narrative interviews with both female and male serial migrants who live as transnational mobiles in two places at the same time. In her presentation "'Same same but different' – experience of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion", she discusses the double-meaning of the question: that it might matter or not and that it might be a source of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion or not, depending on the characteristics of the context.

**Aletta Diefenbach** from the Free University in Berlin (Germany) was concerned about Muslim religious belonging in Germany. She discussed the concept of 'hybrid identity' (Hall) which implies that people feel they belong to different hegemonic cultural spaces. "'I am a German Muslim'. Precarious identity constructions and the need for communal belonging" was the title of her convincing presentation. She emphasized the double marginalization of Muslim women living in Germany and illustrated how strongly social representations of a "German narrative" and a "Muslim narrative" are linked and interwoven with categories of ethnicity, religion, gender, and class.

**Juan Hsiao-Mei's** presentation (Academia Sinica in Taipei, Taiwan) was on "The inclusion/exclusion-process of the foreign brides in Taiwan". She looked at marriage migrants from Southeast Asia and China coming to Taiwan and presented impressively how the concept of „foreign continental brides“ – which is a racist concept as such – are in an excluding way included in society. To overcome this concept she introduced the phenomenon of self-naming of marriage migrants as "new migrants" as an effort of self-empowerment. The emphasis on "individuality" is followed by a problematic loss of belonging, she said.

In their pleasant manner, Roswitha Breckner and Helma Lutz acted as masterly moderators and session leaders. They provided the forum for a numerous audience which was offered multifaceted presentations followed by lively discussions. The active involvement of the audience meant the exchange of different experiences during both sessions. Not least because of the venue being in Latin America, the variety of perspectives enriched these discussions.

Obviously, constructions of belonging and doing othering are central problems of biographical research. Yet, in my opinion, the great bonus of these two sessions was to underline the link between doing othering (and doing belonging) in every-day practices as well as in 'biographical work'.

Thanks to the excellent organization and well-chosen presentations as well as the vivid discussions among all participants those two sessions were my favorites at this year's ISA Forum.

## REPORT ON BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

### BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH IN BRAZILIAN SOCIOLOGY: BRIEF CONSIDERATIONS

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The use of biographies or even biographical narratives is not unknown among Brazilian sociologists. However, it is not an easy task to explain, why this approach gained in the last three decades such a high reputation in other sociological communities, as the German, French, British, Polish and North-American, in contrast to the almost oblivion and poor contribution to methodological and empirical studies of sociological biographical approach in the Brazilian sociology. Partly, it could be explained by the very limited access that young students have to this literature in Portuguese. This situation makes it for sure not very feasible to train or even to attract the interest of younger scholars for having in biographies a way to understand social realities. But this is only one reason and possibly not the most important one. Another reason may be more suitable to explain the still modest knowledge and recognition of biographical research as a sociological autonomous approach in Brazilian sociology. The study of collective action (of social movements, for instance) and of social structures, based above all on Marxism, on structural-functionalism and systemic theories – or on theoretical approaches that could be seen as immediate heir of some of these schools; the sociology of Bourdieu, for instance – practically monopolized the interest of social scientists in Brazil until very recently, giving relatively little attention to the study based on individual lives. There are two other reasons that could help to understand the relatively modest reception of biographical research in Brazilian sociology: it is its low or inexistent normative appeal, that means, the biographical research undertaken seems not to offer any guideline for the construction of a promising social reality or any utopia, which could provoke a kind of sympathy among a significant part of social scientists. Last but not least, the knowledge of literature that could give an epistemological foundation for the biographical research is not very consistent or widespread among sociologists in Brazil, the country with the most vivid and important sociological output in South America.

However, this context could not prevent that some sociologists developed an interest in biographical research in the last four decades. Next I will try to outline briefly the presence of biographical interest in Brazilian sociology. This short revision is not exhaustive, nor will it consider the use of biographical material in other disciplines, as history, social work, psychology, education and anthropology, for instance, just to mention a few disciplines that in last decades make extensive use of biographical material in their academic research. The aim is to identify briefly the history of the introduction of biographical research in sociology in Brazil, to present the more recent reception of this approach, trying to outline the most important foci of the research and their most important theoretical and methodological influences. At the end I would like to explore a perspective of biographical research, considering the epistemological foundation of it.

The use of oral life stories correlates with different phases in the Brazilian social sciences (Pereira, 1991), started in the 1950s by researchers as Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz and Florestan Fernandes, under the coordination of the French sociologist Roger Bastide, focused on the life of black people in Brazil (Carmargo, Hippolito and Lima, 1983: 7). Before this period, in 1945, Florestan Fernandes ana-

lyzed the biography of an Indian from the Brazilian Midwest, with the interest to investigate the marginalization of the indigenous population (see, Fernandes, 2007; see also Martins, 1996 and Alvarez, 2007, on the contributions of Florestan Fernandes for the biographical research). Later on, in the 1950s, another research project, supported by the UNESCO, investigated the racial relations in the Brazilian society, considered at that time as an example of “racial democracy”. In this research a variety of methods were applied, including life histories, as a way to complement other methods. Camargo *et al.* (1983) mentioned a series of texts produced during this period based at least partly on the method of life history. However, these first experiences of Brazilian sociologists with life history in São Paulo, did not significantly affect subsequent sociological research. This incipient use of life histories as an instrument of sociological analysis soon lost importance for the benefit of quantitative approaches, which promised objectivity of the sociological activity more convincingly (Pereira, 1991: 110). The purpose here was to decontaminate the sociological research from the subjectivity of the actor, replaced by the supposed objectivity of the instruments used by the researcher.

Not before the mid-1970s the Fundação Getúlio Vargas, a prominent academic centre in Rio de Janeiro, started a research program on oral history, interviewing political leaders of the Brazilian society who were engaged in the revolution of 1930 and later events. The interest here was to collect the testimony of key-figures of the elites that were seen as privileged witnesses of important historical events. In this period, the most important kinds of “models” of life history research were: the autobiography (of political leaders, intellectuals, etc.) and the biographical interviews (with the participation of a researcher) with “personalities” that would “deserve” to be listened to because of their prominent participation in a relevant historical episode or during a larger period of the Brazilian history. This approach of biographical research is very influential among Brazilian sociologists still today, who try to investigate some characteristics of social relations in specific historical periods having as a starting point the biography of some personalities. In this case, the testimony of the interviewee appears just as an illustration of a social structure already known by the researcher. Probably the main role of the researcher here is to “give” voice to the interviewee. Another strategy followed by researchers is to use the life trajectory of some prominent figure and thereafter investigate the social conditions of the period using mostly historical documents. This is a particular kind of biographical research, in which the writing of life is made without the active and conscious participation of those that occupy the centre of the attention in a specific research undertaken.

Many other studies, listed by Camargo *et al.* (1983), focused on social problems in which interviewees were the “ordinary people” and not a privileged witness of historical episodes. Here, the researcher was interested for instance to elucidate questions not satisfactorily answered in thematic interviews. Groups of urban deviants, fishing communities, sugarcane workers, etc., were examples of populations/groups whose life histories were listened to compose a comprehensive understanding of the reality. However, even if the 1970s were marked by an interest in life histories, it is not possible to identify any relevant effort to clarify or to establish a consolidated methodological procedure that could be recognised by the sociological community. A possible reason for that is the role played by life history as a complement or to illustrate a research that was founded mostly in other methods. Even though, at that time, by the end of the 1970s, Brazilian sociologists played a significant role in ISA by the establishment of the RC 38 Biography and Society, their participation however seems to be very limited during the 1990s and beyond. After this period – with only a few exceptions – the use of biographical data was almost confined to sociological research that was dedicated to historical personalities, and was

not able to consolidate biographical analysis as an autonomous research field.

By the of the 1970s, the biographical approach proposed by Daniel Bertaux starts to gain influence in Brazil among sociologists and other social scientists that were using oral history, whose main attention was directed above all to social structures and objective processes (Pereira, 1991: 115), what means, that the interview was mainly focused on obtaining elements from the interviewee that could contribute to the effort to delineate the structural pattern in the configuration of the relations in a specific production process. The life trajectories were the way these patterns were supposed to emerge. In a more recent “survey” of life history methods the prominent influence of Bertaux among Brazilian researchers when using life history approaches (Barros *et al.*, 2007) is pointed out. Here, the subjective interpretation of the interviewee played not a prominent role, in opposition to other approaches that elected the structures and subjective process as the focus of the analysis, notably the approach developed by Fritz Schütze that emerged in the same period in Germany. Not only the difficulty with the language (since most of the literature was available only in German), but also the theoretical background – even if not always explicitly – that supported the contribution of some scholars from the University of Bielefeld (Germany) explained the reason why the approach proposed by Schütze until very recently received scant attention in the Brazilian sociology. Schütze and his colleagues and young assistants at that time were in some way perceived as continuing the tradition of the comprehensive sociology, combined with the sociological approach of the so-called Chicago School. Influenced mostly by the French sociologists and intellectuals, combined with the North-American functionalism (Villas-Bôas, 1997), Brazilian sociologists were not very much attracted by the theoretical tradition that animated the “Bielefeld group”.

Although still marginal in sociology, it can be identified an interest among the Brazilian younger generation of sociologists to explore the potentiality of different methods using biographical materials. Next I would like to outline briefly some tendencies in the most recent efforts to make biographical research against distrust and resistance a legitimate and widespread approach in Brazilian sociology.

Even though well established, biographical research in sociology is not accepted without important critical appraisals in Brazil. One of the most influential authors who expressed his critics to the incorporation of biography as a source for the sociological analysis was Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu is one of the most influential sociologists in preparation of thesis and dissertations among Brazilian academics. In his short essay “L’illusion biographique” (The biographical illusion), Bourdieu argues that the incorporation of life stories in sociological research is not more than a concession of sociology to the common sense (Bourdieu, 1986: 69). It is, indeed, a problematic article in many aspects. First of all, the author tries to identify assumptions of the biographical research in sociology that are not found in sociological literature itself, but in metaphors of literature, when referring to authors like Maupassant and Jules Romains. Bourdieu explicitly states, among other things, that dealing with biographical material would mean to admit that life is history, understood as a succession of historical events. As these assumptions are not available this way in the sociological literature on biographic research, or at least the author does not present the references where we could find such presuppositions, Bourdieu seems to have no other alternative but to refer to authors that have nothing to do with what he wants to refute. However, this is just one of the problems one may find in his text, and probably the less important one. Another aspect may receive more attention, and it concerns what is intended when sociologists undertake biographical research. According to some authors influenced by Bourdieu in Brazil, having biography as a material of sociological analysis would mean to search “an harmonic causality of indi-

vidual life histories”, that could be explained “by the necessity, from the part of individuals as by the social science, to ascribe a coherent meaning to human actions” (Montagner, 2007: 252).

Bourdieu’s illusion was to believe to be possible to refute a sociological approach without refuting simultaneously its epistemological and methodological foundations. In this sense, to become a successful and consistent task, the refutation of the biographical research in sociology would mean to refute not only its methodological assumptions, but above all its epistemological foundation, what, definitely, Bourdieu was not able to present in his paper. The alternative presented by Bourdieu was, without rejecting completely the material of life histories, to leave aside the focus on biography and to emphasize the “trajectories”, understood as the “objectification of relations between agents and the exchanges presented in the field” (Montagner, 2007: 254).

The main problem here is not whether life history is harmonious or not, but the possibility that there exists something like “biography”, that means, the interpretation of the actor of his or her own life. In fact, to admit the existence of biography would imply to attribute to the actor a status of interpreter, what Bourdieu and his followers were hardly disposed to do, since it would require, among other things, a deep modification of the interpretation of the relation between subject and *habitus*, for instance. In fact, the comprehension of the relation between *habitus* and individual in the way as assumed by Bourdieu is coherent with the position defended by the French sociologist to see the biographical approach as an illusion. The sociological investigation focused on the biographical narrative is, in fact, a paradox, if such approach would be anchored in the theory of *habitus* from Bourdieu, since it presupposes the irrelevance of the interpretation made by the actor (Truc, 2011: 162), at least as an indispensable resource for the comprehension of social phenomena through biographical narratives, for example.

More recently, Brazilian sociology is receiving another influential work regarding the use of life history, namely the work of Lahire (2004), a former assistant of Bourdieu, who also prefers to speak about life trajectories and not about biographies. By establishing in advance which issues the interviewees should talk about, and in which sequence they should be introduced, Lahire (2004) gives up on the possibility of obtaining elements for the analysis of the subjective interpretation on the interviewees’ course of life, since he thinks it is not possible to get it because he believes it would not be relevant for the sociological research.

The problem which we could call “colonization” of the interviewees’ relevance system by the relevance system of the social scientist can be observed, for instance, in the research proposal of social trajectories of Bernard Lahire, who proceeds in a way that leaves the interviewee even more a hostage of the researcher and, even worse, that leaves without consideration the chosen thematic and the discursive forms of the interviewee as key-elements for the comprehension of the positions taken along his/her biography or in specific phases of it. This problem can be partly minimized if the social scientist gives the biographer the possibility of choosing the topic, and also if the sociologist is aware of the textual types during the interviewees’ narrative.

More than in sociology, anthropological scholars in Brazilian social sciences have been more receptive to the biographical studies (for instance, Velho, 2006). Biographical and everyday life narratives are able to offer a very important access to the narrator’s interpretation, but also to the connections between individuals and their groups, communities and movements (Carvalho, 2003: 293).

There are no specific research problems in (Brazilian) sociology which are being dealt with by using bi-

biographical material. One of the subjects that have been investigated through the use of biographical methods is the engagement of adolescents in violence and delinquency (for instance, Vieira, 2011; Santos, 2012a; 2012b; Malvasi, 2011; 2012). Another issue that deserved investigations using biographical work of the interviewees can be found in the work of Marilda Aparecida de Menezes (for instance, 2006; 2011) on rural workers in North-east Brazil, and on members of the “black movement” (see Goss, 2010).

However, it can be observed that most of the scholars using biographical materials in empirical sociological research projects are not explicitly concerning their methodological approaches; insofar it is hard to locate them among the different biographical research schools or approaches. Despite this difficulty, it can be stated that there is a preference to reconstruct life trajectories as if it was the only way to manage biographical material in sociology. It seems that this is only a very limited effort to explore the potentialities of biographical research. Again, what may explain this limitation is probably not only the poor familiarity among Brazilian sociologists with other methodological possibilities – for instance, those presented by Schütze, and especially by Rosenthal –, but also the knowledge of theoretical approaches that could motivate/stimulate other possibilities – for instance, the analysis of the subjectivity of the interviewee regarding the investigated phenomena.

### **Concluding remarks**

In the last two decades, it can be observed in Brazil a growing interest for German sociological literature (Villas Bôas, 1997). This interest partly explains the current reception of qualitative research that explores both biography and narratives. This current interest recently could be verified during the XV Congress of the Brazilian Sociological Association (SBS), that took place in 2011 in Curitiba, especially in the sessions dedicated to qualitative research methods, organized by Wivian Weller and Hermílio Santos, and during the XXVIII Congress of the Latin-American Sociological Association, occurred in Recife in 2011, especially in a round-table dedicated to discuss the contribution of Karl Mannheim and Alfred Schütz for the biographical and narrative research approaches. The contributions of Schütz for the biographical research were also the topic of some papers published recently (see, for instance, Fanton, 2011; Santos, 2012b). It is also worth mentioning the conferences which occurred recently in Brazil discussing approaches of biographical and narrative analysis, for instance “Social Science and Narratives”, taking place in Porto Alegre in 2010, with the participation of Wivian Weller and Bettina Völter and the conference “Subjectivity, biography and society”, that also took place in Porto Alegre in 2012, with the participation of Gabriele Rosenthal. Both conferences were organized by the Social Science Department of the PUCRS (Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul), with the support of the local Goethe-Institut. Beside these events, the Social Science Department of PUC-Rio organized a one-day conference in August 2012 with the same purpose to discuss contributions of the biographical research, with the participation of Gabriele Rosenthal and Michaela Köttig. All these events help to disseminate an approach of biographical narrative that is still not very well known among Brazilian sociologists.

One of the main theoretical sources for the elaboration of the biographical narrative approach proposed by Schütze is, among others, the sociology of Alfred Schütz, especially his theory of relevance (see for instance, Rosenthal 1995; Schütz, 2004). This approach has as starting point the assumption that any narrative is an interpretation viewed from a specific biographical situation (Schütz, 1979: 73),

since a biography is a description of processes and lived experiences by the individual itself.

Since the approach presented by Daniel Bertaux of exploring life trajectories is already well known, at least among those already familiar with biographical research in sociology in Brazil, I would say that a future perspective that could be explored is the approach presented by Gabriele Rosenthal, still less known for Brazilian sociologists. Her approach retrieves much of what was already formulated by Schütze (2010), but goes some steps further, incorporating in the analysis contributions of Aaron Gurwitsch and the objective hermeneutic of Ulrich Oevermann. Even if the approach of biographical research of Rosenthal can not be considered an individualistic version of it, since it considers very much the connection between individual narrative and historical events, it seems to be very important to connect her contribution to the work of Alfred Schütz. This combination would make much clearer the originality of the approach proposed by Rosenthal.

So far the Brazilian sociological literature has dedicated relatively little attention to analytical perspectives that propose to explore the subjective interpretations of social actors. This type of analysis conceives individuals as actors that interpret things they are faced with (people, ideas, etc.) in order to locate themselves in the world and, by doing that, to establish their guide of action. This presupposition is shared by many schools of the comprehensive sociology (or interpretive sociology), as the symbolic interactionism, and ethnomethodology, besides sociological approaches influenced by phenomenology. Common to all these approaches is the idea that the social actor not only internalizes norms and meanings; on the opposite, this actor is also, according to Arthur S. Parsons, a conscious agent and responsible for the active adoption of normative codes in the interpretation of social reality (Parsons, 1978: 111). It is precisely the subjective interpretation of reality or social context that could offer good perspectives for the development of the biographical research in Brazilian sociology.

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## LATIN AMERICAN BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES GROUP

### Conversations and biographical possibilities from Latin America

The idea of establishing and creating new liaisons among researchers from different countries who are engaged in scientific research from a biographical perspective was born during different meetings among fellow researchers at different events carried out lately, especially, the last Forum of *International Sociological Association* "Social justice and democratization", Buenos Aires (Argentina) 2012; and the Third Conference of the Latin American Network for Methodologies in Social Sciences, REDMET, Manizales (Colombia) 2012. In particular, we consider, it is mandatory to seek this type of initiative with researchers from Latin America in search of a specific approach of our work about the reality and characteristic phenomena that determine topics of interest in research fields of the social sciences.

By highlighting the widespread use of biographical research, we want to accentuate the openness of this approach from an epistemological and methodological viewpoint derived from several disciplines around biographies and their usages, be this either in philosophy, psychoanalysis, pedagogy, or in literature and the social sciences. Such openness will allow dialogues to be richer and to gather the central points of current discussions.

Such being the case, we suggest the creation of a LATIN AMERICAN BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES GROUP, which expects to feed on the plurality of approaches, tendencies and useful possibilities in defining new problems and potentiality of the biographical perspective upon the horizon of contemporary Latin America.

### Objectives

To allow the exchange of scientific information on a continental level and from here to other well-known international networks, and to promote publication of research projects, study documents, specialized references, among others, of special interest for the purposes of the LATIN AMERICAN BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES GROUP.

To promote this approach to main academic challenges of the modern world from a Latin America perspective starting from a wide consideration of the biographical research which helps to understand the historical, social, political, working, educative and cultural processes of Latin America and its space-time particularities.

To establish an academic relationship within the research group that allows a permanent study dynamic, from the different uses of the biographical research and other perspectives alike, in order to discuss phenomena of relevant and pertinent study, analyze the problematic situations, debate the methodologies and to study comparatively the use of several approaches.

### How it Works

The LATIN AMERICAN BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES GROUP will operate and develop its activities as an autonomous group of *Latin American Network for Methodologies in Social Sciences*, REDMET (<http://redmet.fahce.unlp.edu.ar>). Besides, our group hopes to establish relations with individuals and networks involved in biographical research around the world, particularly, with Research Committee

38 “Biography and Society” of *International Sociological Association* (ISA).

**Coordinating Committee**

- **Leticia Muñiz Terra** National University of La Plata, Argentina ([lmunizterra@conicet.gov.ar](mailto:lmunizterra@conicet.gov.ar); [leticiamunizterra@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:leticiamunizterra@yahoo.com.ar))
- **Andrés Argüello Parra**, Saint Thomas University (USTA), Colombia ([mouneriano@yahoo.es](mailto:mouneriano@yahoo.es))
- **Guilherme Arduini**, University of Campinas (UNICAMP) – University of São Paulo (USP), Brasil ([guilherme.arduini@gmail.com](mailto:guilherme.arduini@gmail.com))

**Contact:** <http://estudiosbiograficoslatinoamericanos.wordpress.com/>

**CALL FOR PAPERS/ORGANIZERS****Interim Conference  
to the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Biography and Society Research Committee****BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH IN THE 21<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY - EPISTEMOLOGICAL ISSUES AND  
ETHICAL DILEMMAS**

17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June 2013, University of Lodz, Poland

In 1978 professor Daniel Bertaux initiated the *ad hoc* group Biography and Society in the International Sociological Association then (since 1984) Research Committee 38 Biography and Society which up to now has given the floor for important conceptual and methodological debates. In 2013 we celebrate the 35th anniversary of this event. Therefore University of Lodz, Institute of Sociology with the cooperation of RC 38 Biography and Society, propose the conference to reflect on traditional and current modes of biographical research.

University of Lodz has a rich tradition in developing biographical methods and wide experience in doing biographical research since the Institute of Sociology was established by Józef Chałasiński and then headed by Jan Szczepański (who was also the Rector of University of Lodz). Both of them were students of Florian Znaniecki and worked in the field of biographical research.

**Papers are invited on the following themes:**

1. Methodological insights into various ways of doing biographical research
2. The status of biographical research in contemporary social sciences
3. The history and development of biographical approach
4. Ethical dilemmas of biographical research
5. Researcher experiences from the research field
6. Cross-genres in biographical research
7. Biographical research – theory and practice
8. Biographical analysis and generating theories
9. Examples of ongoing biographical research projects
10. Biographical research – critical approach
11. New developments in biographical research

**Call for papers deadline: March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013**

**Abstracts:** We invite colleagues from different countries and different disciplines of the social sciences to submit abstracts until **1<sup>st</sup> March 2013**. Please send your abstracts to: [biography.society@gmail.com](mailto:biography.society@gmail.com)

**Conference Fee** covers: conference registration, lunches, refreshments and conference dinner: 50 euro, 30 euro for ISA members and for PhD students. Conference fee payment **until May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013**. Bank transfer information: Bank account: 07 1240 3028 1111 0010 2943 4436, IBAN: PL 07 1240..., SWIFT: PKOP PL PW, **Please add: ISA.**

**If you have any questions, please contact:** Prof. Kaja Kaźmierska ([kajakaz@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:kajakaz@uni.lodz.pl)), Katarzyna Waniek, PhD ([k.m.waniek@gmail.com](mailto:k.m.waniek@gmail.com))

**Congress of the Swiss Sociological Association**  
**INEQUALITY AND INTEGRATION IN TIMES OF CRISIS**

June 26 – 28, 2013 at the University of Bern (Switzerland)

Since Karl Marx first described the enormous social inequalities and their potential for social change at the beginning of industrialization in the 19th century, the origins, extent, and consequences of social inequality, as well the level of inequality which a society is willing to tolerate, have been major themes in sociology. Our discipline has taken on the theme of inequality in multiple areas ranging from research on unequal educational and labor market opportunities, unequal income distributions, gender and health inequality, and inequality in life expectancy, to mention only a few. There are innumerable national and international conferences devoted to these themes. Do we need yet another one? Is inequality still a problem in our society?

The answer to this question is undoubtedly yes. In particular, the economic crisis at the start of the 21st century underlines the fact that the theme of inequality has not lost its relevance. Above all, the European debt crisis inclines us to suspect that social inequality is growing. In comparison with economic boom times, almost all the European countries feel the pressure of stabilizing their economies and cutting back on public expenditures. This will also impact redistributive policies to reduce inequality and bring about new challenges for integration policies addressing the emerging disparities. At the same time as inequalities within European societies are exacerbated, disparities between states are also rising, which will likely have adverse effects on European unification, not to mention creating new challenges for Switzerland as well.

The European debt crisis came at a point in time when global environmental and demographic problems worsened simultaneously – the aging of industrialized countries and population explosion in developing countries. The inequality effects of climate change and the unequal distribution of population growth will lead to an increase in migration and elevate the immigration pressure on the European Union and Switzerland. For this reason, Switzerland, as well as the other European countries, grapple with questions of managing migration and integration. Inequalities – as problematic they may be – are also in some sense an opportunity. They increase the diversity of society and can bring about new ideas, innovation, and growth. Our desire and ability for social integration depends, above all, on the ultimate balance between these advantages and disadvantages. Within the framework of the various foci of the research committees, the conference will concentrate on the opportunities as well as the risks associated with these social changes.

**Call for Organizers:** If you would like to organize a plenary session, please submit the title of the plenary as well as the designated contributions (including titles, abstracts, and the names of the contributors) to the organizing committee by January 15, 2013 (by e-mail to [sgs-kongress2013@soz.unibe.ch](mailto:sgs-kongress2013@soz.unibe.ch)). A plenary session usually includes three contributions. If you would like to organize a workshop (parallel session), please submit the theme proposal and call for papers for the workshop to the organizing committee by November 30, 2012 (by e-mail to [sgs-kongress2013@soz.unibe.ch](mailto:sgs-kongress2013@soz.unibe.ch)). After the organizing committee accepts the proposal, the call for papers will be published. The organizers of the workshop are responsible for collecting the submissions and selecting the contributions to be included in the workshop. The final program of the workshop (including titles, abstracts, and the names of the contributors) has to be submitted to the organizing committee by March 15, 2013 (by e-mail to [sgs-kongress2013@soz.unibe.ch](mailto:sgs-kongress2013@soz.unibe.ch)). Further **Information** about the conference can be found on our homepage: [www.sgs-kongress2013.unibe.ch](http://www.sgs-kongress2013.unibe.ch).

## CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Annual Conference of the Section Biographical Research of the German Sociological Association (DGS)

#### BIOGRAPHY AND DISCOURSE

17 – 18 January 2013, University of Kassel/ Germany

Biographical research assumes that a biography generates patterns of individual structuring and processing of experiences in social contexts and thereby always refers to the social rules and social conditions of its production. Therefore, biographical research focuses on the way the biography is embedded in the respective history of a society, and by which it is constituted. In addition, biographical research investigates, how gender, ethnicity and social class are entangled with social structures and how they are (re)produced, rejected, transformed or varied within biographical structures.

The theoretical framework of discourse analysis by Michel Foucault has posed a challenge to biographical research with its statement that biographies are produced by and through discourses (and that discourses therefore are prior to biographies); this led to a methodological debate about the relation between discourse and biographies. By now, it is assumed that biographies and discourses are closely intertwined and that discourses affect both the narrated and the experienced life history as well as the ways of telling one's biography.

Closely connected to this development we identify increasing interest on the part of biographical researchers in the methods of discourse analysis, which on its part has been accused of neglecting the role of the subject in the constitution of discourses in both, the context of theory and in empirical work. Over the recent years, Cultural Studies as well as governmentality research has dealt with the relation between discourse, power and the subject. The same applies for biographical research. That is why we can now see methodological convergences and fruitful discussions between biographical and discourse researchers. However, challenges of connecting both approaches in empirical implementations continue to exist.

The Research Committee Biographical Research of the German Sociological Association takes this as a starting point for its annual conference 2013. We wish to take into account recent developments in both fields, biographical research and discourse analysis and make them speak to each other.

**Keynote Speakers:** Ann Phoenix, Kathy Davis, Floya Anthias

**Panel Discussion** with Peter Alheit, Andrea Bührmann, Reiner Keller and Gabriele Rosenthal

Information and program: <http://www.soziologie.de/index.php?id=294>, Registration by 7 January 2013 via mail to [biographieunddiskurs@gmail.com](mailto:biographieunddiskurs@gmail.com)

## **WORKSHOP: “NEW CHALLENGES IN TRANSNATIONAL BIOGRAPHY RESEARCH”**

Department of Sociology, University of Crete, Greece 27-28. September 2013

Organized by: **Irini Siouti**, Fachbereich Gesellschaftswissenschaften, J.W. Goethe Universität Frankfurt, Germany ([Siouti@soz.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:Siouti@soz.uni-frankfurt.de)) and **Giorgos Tsiolis**, University of Crete, Sociology, Greece ([tsiolisg@social.soc.uoc.gr](mailto:tsiolisg@social.soc.uoc.gr))

The transnationalization approach has not only presented additional challenges for the debate on migration theory but also for empirical migration research in relation to methodologies and methods. In an age of transnationalization, cultures and people who produce cultural practices and discourses are ‘moving targets’ (Welz 1998), so that researchers are constantly required to adapt and refocus their work. This is also increasingly true for the methodologies and methods used in biography research, and the possibilities and limitations for applying them in transnational research settings. The workshop will focus on the methodological as well as methodical challenges of doing biographical analysis in transnational research contexts.

*More detailed information about the workshop will follow soon...*

### **5-Day Intensive Training 2012**

#### **Biographic-Narrative-Interpretive Method (BNIM)**

#### **Narrative Interview and Interpretation**

January 31<sup>st</sup> - February 1<sup>th</sup>, Monday February 4<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> 2013, London, United Kingdom  
June 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>, June 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>

The value of open-narrative interviewing and insightful interpretation is widely recognised, but rather than having to invent the wheel for themselves, many people welcome a systematic textbook-backed immersion into principles and procedures that have been shown over two decades and many countries to generate constantly high-quality work.

Designed for PhD students and professional researchers, the course provides a thorough training in doing BNIM biographic narrative interviews, together with ‘hands-on experience’ of following BNIM interpretation procedures. Students develop a sense of how their own research projects might use such aspects and components.

**CONTACT:** To apply for a place, please contact [tom@tomwengraf.com](mailto:tom@tomwengraf.com). Places are secured by a £300 deposit, refundable given sufficient notice.

Further on, Tom Wengraf composed a list of electronic references and downloadable thesis based on the BNIM-approach. You can get this list writing either to Tom Wengraf directly ([ascy82@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:ascy82@dsl.pipex.com)) or to BNIM ([biographic-narrative-BNIM@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:biographic-narrative-BNIM@jiscmail.ac.uk)).



# XVIII ISA WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY

横浜  
YOKOHAMA

FACING AN UNEQUAL WORLD:  
CHALLENGES FOR GLOBAL SOCIOLOGY



13-19 July 2014

The XVIII ISA World Congress of Sociology will take place in Yokohama, Japan, on July 13-19, 2014.

Information from the president: Roswitha Breckner ([roswitha.breckner@univie.ac.at](mailto:roswitha.breckner@univie.ac.at))

Margaret Abraham, ISA Vice-President, informed us about the most important deadlines so far:

- We have to announce the Programme Coordinator(s) until January 15, 2013. Michaela Koettig and I have agreed to take on this task again. We will let you know about details as soon as possible.
- A final list of sessions has to be submitted to the ISA Secretariat no later than April 7, 2013. The call for papers will open the same day.
- Based on the number of our members in good standing, 14 sessions (including a business meeting) are allocated to our RC.
- Electronic abstracts submission will be open between 3 June – 30 September, 2013
- The abstracts selection takes place between 4 October – 24 November, 2013
- Notification letters have to be sent until 30 November, 2013

You find more details about the Congress on its webpage: <http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2014/>. If you have ideas and suggestions for topics of sessions or possible Joint Sessions with another RC, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us!

Looking forward to our collaboration in creating another interesting program!

## CONFERENCE REPORTS

### International Symposium „Language and Pictures – Multimodal Approaches to Heteroglossic Biographies”, 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> November, University of Vienna

Sina Motzek, University of Kassel, Germany ([sinamotzek@gmx.de](mailto:sinamotzek@gmx.de))<sup>1</sup>

International Symposium  
**Language and Pictures**  
 Multimodal Approaches to Heteroglossic Biographies  
 22. - 24. November 2012, University of Vienna

Department of Linguistics and Department of Sociology, in cooperation with the Institute of Art and Design, Vienna University of Technology  
 Venue: Österreichische Forschungstiftung für Internationale Entwicklung (ÖFSE)  
 Sensesgasse 3, 1090 Wien, Alois Wagner-Saal  
 We kindly ask for registration in advance. Please contact: [luzapuitu@univie.ac.at](mailto:luzapuitu@univie.ac.at)

universität wien id  
 Institut für Sprachwissenschaft - Institut für Soziologie - Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften

The international symposium “Language and Pictures” took place as a cooperation of the Departments of Linguistics and Sociology of the University of Vienna and the Institute of Art and Design of the University of Technology Vienna. With the symposium the initiators Roswitha Breckner and Brigitta Busch intended to transcend borders in manifold ways. Besides bringing together scholars from various countries, with contributions from i.a. Sociology, linguistics, art, as well as social work, it was designed interdisciplinary. Another aim was to create a space of exchange between different generations of scholars, which is why next to i.a. Kathy Davis, Bettina Völter and Lena Inowlocki, also PhD-students presented their innovative research projects as 'work-in-progress'.

The three days in Vienna were shaped by questions as, what do pictures tell about biographies and discourses, as well as questions related to the use of

visual and creative methods in biographical research, in connection with narration-based methods. Further core topics were the opportunities and restrictions of iconographical analysis, the use of pictures as traces to interpretations of narrative material and image production as a door-opener for narratives. The symposium, taking place with a limited number of participants, besides that was discussing the role of plurilinguality in biographies and related research accounts and reflecting the methodical consideration of multilinguality in biographical research.

Christine Anthonissen and Marcelyn Oostendorp (University of Stellenbosch) began the symposium with a presentation of their methodical consideration of drawing so called language portraits. They pointed to narrative and visual-creative methods complementing one another in the creation of meaning. Sandra Nossik (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris 3) was speaking about non-verbal and interactional elements in biographical interviews as an access to other layers of narratives and showed on behalf of data from russian-speaking, plurilingual migrants in France, how the narrators were switching between discourse positions flexibly. In her contribution Ruth Singer (University of Melbourne) has shown the use of language portraits for researching on indigeneous language practices in a multilingual context. Subsequently Kamran Khan (University of Birmingham, University of Melbourne) pre-

<sup>1</sup> This report was initiated by Elisabeth Truider to be published in the newsletter of the German Biographical Association



sented his ethnographic study about the way of a migrant to language acquisition and English citizenship.

To the regret of all participants the public lecture with Eva Hoffmann in the evening could not take place as planned, for the writer had broken her leg in the morning. Lena Inowlocki and Kathy Davis filled in her place and read out of her books *Lost in Translation* and *Appassionata*.

Lena Inowlocki (University of Applied Sciences Frankfurt) began the second day with a talk about processes of transmission of languages between generations in the context of social disruption and trauma. She compared the audible, but not literal transmission of a language spoken only between parents but not with children, with the partial transmission of knowledge about how things should look or taste like (e.g. clothes and food) but not 'how to do' them. Kathy Davis (Utrecht University in the Netherlands) looked at the passion for tango dancing and raised the issue of the insufficiency of language for the expression of certain feelings and body experiences. Bettina Völter (Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences Berlin) gave an account of the use of diverse modes of communication in a participative research with the aim of a recreation of public spaces in a community in Brazil. Gülsüm Depeli (Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Ankara) gave a lecture on photographs as producers and accumulation of collective memory and its relation to state discourses and collective identities.

Because of a short-term program change, I myself, Sina Motzek (University of Kassel), had the opportunity to present my approach to multilinguality in the analysis of narratives of depressive migrant women from Turkey, to illustrate the effects of language decisions on the interview interaction and the blurred demarcation between translation and interpretation. Brigitta Busch (University of Vienna) presented an approach to plurilinguality by referring to the "little books project", which is applied in classrooms. She pointed to the heteroglossic resources, that children use to refer to discourses and partly deal with trauma.

Peter Mörtenböck and Helge Mooshammer (Technical University of Vienna, Goldsmith College London) introduced into the panel "Language, Pictures and Art". They presented impressions of the visual culture of informal markets and pointed out the creative dimension in the negotiation of culture and urban spaces. Julia Bernstein (University of Cologne) has been using collages and drawings as a medium to reflect on her ethnographic research in the homes of migrants in Germany and presented some of her works.

On Saturday morning Karlheinz Spitzl and Martina Rienzner (University of Vienna) posed the question, what happens when plurilingual speakers encounter monolingual spaces. In the Plus-project they research on the context of court, which as a state institution is additionally marked by professional language. They pointed to the power relations, that stand behind the language portraits and to the antagonism between the complexity of the individual language portraits and the sharp demarcations, by which language distribution maps are geographically divided. Judith Purkarthofer (University of Vienna) in her contribution presented her multimodal approach to spaces that enable plurilingual practices. Roswitha Breckner (University of Vienna) closed the symposium by illustrating how segment analysis of a family photo album and narrative analysis can complement one another and broaden biographical research.

It became clear, how the social reemphasis and the individual blurring of language, culture and state boundaries emerge in biographies – in narrated as well as in visualized ones.

**1<sup>st</sup> Day: 22. November**

- 1:30 pm *Arrival, Welcome*
- 2:00 pm Roswitha Breckner / Brigitta Busch: Introduction
- PANEL 1 APPROACHES TO EXPERIENCES OF LANGUAGING**  
Chair: Brigitta Busch
- 2:30 pm **Christine Anthonissen / Marcelyn Oostendorp**, Institute of General Linguistics, Stellenbosch, South Africa  
Studying multilingual biographies of African migrants in South Africa: dialogue between an arts-based approach and a small-narrative approach
- 3:10 pm **Sandra Nossik**, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3, France  
Telling silent stories: verbal and non-verbal resources in oral narratives
- 3:50 pm *Coffee Break*
- 4:10 pm **Ruth Singer**, School of Languages and Linguistics, University of Melbourne, Australia  
Understanding multilingualism in an Australian Aboriginal community: insights from multimodal linguistic biographies
- 4:50 pm **Kamran Khan**, School of Education, Birmingham, UK, and Melbourne, Australia  
ESOL Policy under pressure: A learner's experience
- 5:30 pm *Snack at the Department of Linguistics, Sensengasse 3*
- 7:00 pm **Evening Talk: Keynote with Eva Hoffman**, Kingston University, London, UK  
"Lost in Translation" – "Appassionata"

**2<sup>nd</sup> Day: 23. November**

- PANEL 2 EXPERIENCES IN OTHER MODES OF COMMUNICATION**  
Chair: Roswitha Breckner
- 9:30 am **Lena Inowlocki**, University of Applied Sciences, Frankfurt am Main, Germany  
Lost in Transmission: Languages of (my) Childhood
- 10:10 am **Kathy Davis**, Institute of History and Culture, Utrecht University in the Netherlands  
Passion, experience, and biography: What can tango dancers tell us?
- 10:50 am *Coffee Break*
- 11:10 am **Bettina Völter**, Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences, Berlin, Germany  
To comprehend while not understanding. To understand while not comprehending. Short stories / miniatures about the reciprocal approach to different life worlds in a transcultural community work between Brazil and Germany
- 11:50 am **Gülüm Depeli**, Faculty of Communication, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey  
Iconized Images in Collective Memory: The News Photographs on State Violence in the Turkish Context
- 12:30 am *Lunch buffet at the venue*

**PANEL 3 LANGUAGE, PICTURES AND ART**

- Chair: Peter Mörtenböck
- 2:00 pm **Peter Mörtenböck / Helge Mooshammer**, Institute of Art and Design, Vienna University of Technology, Visual Culture Unit / Goldsmiths College, London, UK  
Provocations
- 3:00 pm **Nada Prija**, Serious Interests Agency, UK  
European Convention for the Protection of Human Complexity
- 4:00 pm *Coffee Break*
- 4:30 pm **Julia Bernstein**, Faculty of Humanities, University of Cologne, Germany  
Collages of Migration
- Free Evening*

**3<sup>rd</sup> Day: 24. November****PANEL 4 MULTIMODALITY AND BIOGRAPHY**

- Chair: Kathy Davis
- 9:30 am **Karl-Heinz Spitzl / Martina Rienzner**, The „Plus“ Research Group, Dept. of African Studies, University of Vienna  
Taking the visual turn: The poetics of the language portraits vs. the politics of the linguistic map
- 10:10 am **Judith Purkardhofer**, Institute of Applied Linguistics, University of Vienna  
What is there to see in Linguistic Landscapes? Language policies and biographic experience in a multilingual primary school
- 10:50 am *Coffee Break*
- 11:10 am **Roswitha Breckner**, Institute of Sociology, University of Vienna  
Biographies in Pictures. What does a family photo album show?
- 11:50 am **Brigitta Busch**, Institute of Applied Linguistics, University of Vienna  
The elephant and the mouse: children draw and tell (their) stories
- 12:30 am *Lunch buffet at the venue*
- 2:00 pm *Departure*

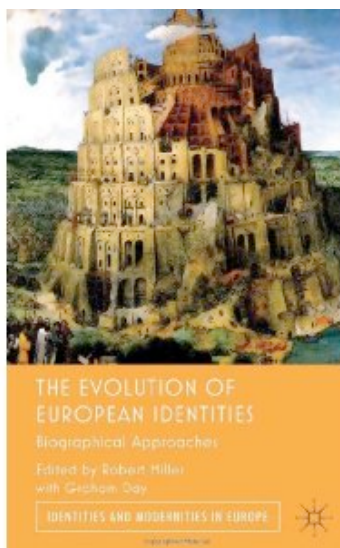
**NEWS****New ISA initiative: Social Justice and Democratization space**

The ISA started an open access e-space initiative called Social Justice and Democratization space (<http://sjdSPACE.sagepub.com/>) for being part of a global community in trying to break down hierarchies in knowledge production, exchange and dissemination by sharing each others research, pedagogies, policies and practices with people all over the world through open access. The Research Committees can play a critical part in the success of this endeavor. The ISA hopes to populate this site with many contributions, including in different languages. People can share their syllabi, images, policy reports, comments and articles and also suggest ways to improve the site.

**Information from Mohammed Bamyeh, Professor Editor, *International Sociology Review of Books (ISRB)***

Since assuming my position as the new editor of ISA's *International Sociology Review of Books (ISRB)* earlier this year, I have been exploring ways to enhance the journal's usefulness to ISA members and the international community of sociologists it serves. To that end, I am approaching you as a president or coordinator of an ISA research committee, working group, or thematic group. In particular, I am very interested in hearing from you and/or your group's members if they have any proposals for themes, debates, or materials of particular interest that they would like ISRB to highlight. ISRB reviews books, but also regional or local debates, as well as non-book materials (audio-visual materials, blogs, zines, etc.) that could be of interest to an international community of sociologists. I should also mention that we are *especially* interested in reviews of materials available in languages other than English.

## NEW PUBLICATION



**Miller, Robert/Day, Graham (Eds.)(2012): The Evolution of European Identities. Biographical Approaches Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan**

The 'European project' is in a state of perpetual crisis in which the root cause is a lack of identification by ordinary citizens with Europe and European institutions. The Evolution of European Identities employs state of the art analysis of in-depth interviews by renowned practitioners to give a unique 'bottoms up' perspective on the development (or its lack) of a sense of 'European mental space'. Linking conceptual findings with case studies, the book provides unique insights into groups that have been especially sensitized by their life experiences to question what it means to be European in the twenty-first century. The groups explored in this

book include: adults who experienced European education exchanges when young; transnational workers; civil society organization activists; persons involved in cross-border intimate relationships; farmers who are subject to European markets, regulations and subsidies; and migrants into 'fortress Europe'.

## CONTENTS:

- Dimensions for the Expression of European Identity;** R.Miller, M.Domecka, D.Schubotz & M.Svašek
- Method in Practice: Autobiographical Narrative Interviews in Search of European Phenomena;** M.Domecka, M.Eichsteller, S.Karakusheva, P.Musella, L.Ojamäe, E.Perone, D.Pickard, A.Schröder-Wildhagen, K.Siilak & K.Waniek
- International Education in the Life Course;** H.Davis, G.Day, S.Baker & M.Eichsteller
- Identity Project Under Construction: European Identity and Educational Mobility in Majka's Case Study;** M.Eichsteller
- Transnational Work in the Biographical Experiences of Traditional Professions and Corporate Executives: Analysis of Two Cases;** K.Kazmierska, A.Piotrowski & K.Waniek
- Farmers: More and Less Europeans;** M.Draganova, R.Jeleva, D.Pickard & S.Karakusheva
- 'Europe' As Hope: a Farmer's Viewpoint from Bulgaria;** R.Jeleva, M.Draganova, D.Pickard & S.Karakusheva
- Exploring European 'Potential Space': A Study of the Biographies of Former Foreign Exchange Students;** L.Inowlocki & G.Riemann
- Discoverers in European Mental Space: The Biographical Experiences of Participants in European Civil Society Organisations;** F.Schütze, A.Schröder-Wildhagen, U.Nagel & B.Treichel Miriam, An Environmental Activist; A.Schröder-Wildhagen, F.Schütze, U.Nagel & B.Treichel
- Into and Out of Europe: Dynamic Insider/Outsider Perspectives;** D.Schubotz, M.Svašek, R.Miller & M.Domecka
- Europe out of Europe: The View from the Other Side of the World: The Case of Matt;** M.Domecka
- Cross-cultural Exchanges: Intimate Relationships and Transforming Societies;** K.Paadam, L.Ojamäe & K.Siilak
- Cross-cultural Couples in the Old and New Europe: From Bi-localism to Emotional European Mental Space and its Biographical Relevance;** F.Schütze & A.Schröder-Wildhagen

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The **deadline** for the next newsletter is end of **April 2013**

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