

Biography and Society

BIOGRAPHY AND SOCIETY
RESEARCH COMMITTEE 38 OF THE ISA

NEWSLETTER / OCTOBER 2004

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT GABRIELE ROSENTHAL

September 2004

Our **R**esearch **C**ommittee is looking back on an active year with several interesting conferences – as you may see in the reports in this newsletter – and on activities for the preparation of the next interim conference in 2005 and also for the sessions at the **W**orld **C**ongress 2006.

The interim conference this year, which took place in March in Roskilde/Denmark, was a very interesting interdisciplinary meeting with a lot of stimulating discussions. It was also an opportunity to welcome several new members in our RC-Committee. Thanks to some RC-members from France we had the chance to talk about the possibilities to reactivate our dialogue with researchers from French-speaking countries. And again I would like to invite them to participate more actively in our discussion in our newsletters. It is also no problem at all to publish parts in French.

In May 2004, the ISA Research Council Conference was held in Ottawa, Canada. Marilyn Porter was so kind to be our representative there (see her report in this issue). I am more than happy to publish her paper from this conference in this issue. It gives a wonderful and clear summary of the debates in our RC over the last ten years, about the tension between a more 'realistic' or a more 'constructionist' approach as well as some insight in Marilyn's work. With Marilyn I fully agree, that *Biography and Society*, as a Research Committee and as an endeavor, is better at questions than answers". I would like to invite you to react to this paper, to participate in our endeavor and to send us your comments.

I am happy to inform you that the next interim conference in 2005 will be organized by Brian Roberts at the University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield (UK), and be dedicated to the topic "Narrative, Memory and Knowledge: representations and contexts" on the 9th April 2005. Besides the announcement in this issue we will mail you soon with more details about this conference.

I am pleased to introduce you to the planned eight sessions (based on the number of ISA members in good standing¹ in our RC 38 at the moment) for the forthcoming ISA XVI World Congress of Sociology, scheduled for July 23rd – 29th, 2006 in Durban, South Africa. Sorry to remind our members in the ISA on the strict regulations of the ISA: In order not to be restricted to 6 sessions, we need your membership renewed for 2005 (April 15, 2005 is the basis for the number of our sessions) and we would also like to invite other RC members to become also a member of the ISA.

I think we could be proud about the interesting and wide spectrum of topics that our planned sessions represent. I am especially proud to have one session organized by Jan K. Coetzee with a focus on the country of the congress; e.g. on the marginalized in South Afri-

¹ Members in good standing are individual members who have paid both ISA and the RC membership dues for the current year. We have 53 members at the moment.

ca. The abstracts for the programs of the sessions you will find in this newsletter. If you are interested in presenting a paper in one of these sessions, please contact the appropriate session coordinators till **1st of October 2005**.

I would like to invite and encourage you to introduce your research or theoretical work in the next newsletter. Please take the opportunity also to give us any information on conferences, events and publications or other news that might be interesting to other members of our RC.

Futher information:

➤ Our e-mail address is: Biography-and-Society@gmx.de

➤ **Membership fees**

Please remember to pay your membership fee:

Two years: € 35

Four years: € 70

➤ **bank account**

Michaela Köttig
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account number: 100 378 257

➤ The **deadline** for the next newsletter is **May 2005**

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VIEWPOINTS

Marilyn Porter (Newfoundland)

Conflict, Competition, Cooperation: Research at the Micro-level: Some Lessons from Narrative Methods

Narrative methods of collecting and analysing sociological data focus on the micro elements of the society - the individual, the family, small groups. Conflict, competition and cooperation can occur in many ways between the individual and his/her societal context and within his/her own memories and understandings, and contradictions can occur simultaneously, even within the individual.

This paper will present some strands in contemporary biographical work that illustrates some of the approaches researchers have taken to expose and explore how such social interactions and interpretations actually take place in specific contexts. The paper will try to uncover the main theoretical differences in approach, especially between European and North American researchers, but it will also try to build towards a synthesis.

When I was first asked to present a paper on behalf of RC 38 *Biography and Society* at this meeting, I understood my task to be a contribution, on behalf of my Research Committee to 'a collective reflection about the contributions of specialised branches of Sociology to the description, interpretation and explanation of conflict, competition and cooperation as contemporary processes of social and societal relations.' There followed a learned elaboration of how these large themes might be conceived. Another missive pointed out that one of the 'founding projects of the discipline (was) the understanding of social (and societal) relations at the micro, meso and macro levels.' But I was quite daunted enough by this time to return frantically to my chair, who just e-mailed telling me to 'just talk about your own research.' As a relatively new member of RC38 (and new this year on the executive) I did not feel adequate to do that either.

What I have decided to do, which is a compromise, is to summarise some of the main disputes (conflicts) that have emerged in the *Biography and Society Newsletter*, and to add my own two cents (competition), together with thoughts gleaned from some of the many other examples of biographical, autobiographical and auto/biographical research that I have come across recently (cooperation). Where I can make it relevant, I will try to relate some of this to my own work-in-progress.

First, some general pointers: biographical and autobiographical research (or more shortly 'narrative research'), by definition, tends to focus on the microlevel. It takes as the central matter of its concern, the life and experiences of individual human beings. Except in very large projects (such as the European SOSTRIS project) this means that the number of participants in any one project are very small (sometimes only one). Most narrative researchers, especially those coming from a sociological background, tend to feel a little defensive about this, and make a point of relating their (individual) data to the wider social context. (This is also behind a key dispute in RC38, which we will come to in a minute).

While narrative research in various forms has been used in an astonishingly wide variety of contexts - police investigations, psychiatric and psychological treatments, medical 'histories', educational research, aging research and health research (and others described in Roberts *Biographical Research*) as well as in a wide spectrum of disciplines - literature, psychology, education, social work, history as well as sociology and anthropology, some of the theoretical concerns have been more limited in their discussion. One of these is the role of the researcher in narrative research, and especially the explication of the researcher's interpretation of the data in the context of their own lives. The interaction between participant (or narrator, 'researcher') and the researcher has increasingly become the subject of analysis and debate itself. This tendency, in various significant ways, returns the sub-discipline to the level of the microlevel.

It seems to me that these two concerns - the 'social' relevance of biographical and narrative data, and the analysis of the researcher/participant interaction are at the heart of much of RC38's current work and concerns.

I should start with a brief review of a debate (a fight, actually) that took up many pages in the Biography and Society Newsletter. (I should say that the Newsletter is much more than a series of announcements. The papers are often close to full length and are 'state of the art' positions and discussions). The debate began innocently enough with an article by Kochuyt (1995) in which he tried to defend the increasingly 'constructionist' emphasis in much biographical research. In other words, to be more postmodern about it - to dethrone the aura of certainty that went with earlier versions and to put more emphasis on trying to understand **how** biographical researchers worked, ('the difference between real life and talking about it, the difference between social reality and symbolic order, and also about how they are inextricably connected... (Fisher-Rosenthal and Rosenthal, 1997:6)). This produced, in the words of Fisher-Rosenthal and Gabriele Rosenthal (current president) 'a roaring reply which was three times as long and altogether out of proportion' (1997:5) by Daniel Bertaux, on the grounds that her had been accused of a 'naive realism which uses the life history as a documentary method to grasp external realities' (1996:2 and 6). Things got worse and much more acrimonious. My interest in this presentation is two-fold. One is to use the 'debate' to illustrate the hidden competitions that take place in academic discussions. It is axiomatic within RC38 that Daniel Bertaux (with some close colleagues, such as Paul Thompson) was the founding father of the distinct stream within Sociology called 'biographical research'. As Kathy Davis put it, 'Daniel Bertaux (1981) in his, by now, classic volume, *Biography and Society* (note the name) set the agenda for biographical research as a separate research orientation within Sociology' (Davis, 2003:5) However, if we return to that early work, and especially his influential work on Parisian bakers, we can see that it is rooted firmly in a Marxist, but more particularly **structuralist** view of how things should be. In Davis' words, it was a 'realist enterprise'. Bertaux wanted to understand the social through individual experience **because he thought that was a better way to get at 'the truth'**. It coincidentally added a much needed human face to the kind of Sociology that was going on at the time, and attracted many new adherents for that reason - including many feminists. What we are seeing in this debate - supposedly between realists and constructionists, or, in Bertaux's view between the Franco-Anglo purist school, and those fallen into the idealist error, led by the

Germans - is also a power struggle about whether founders 'own' their creations, or whether worthwhile creations, such as biographical research, eventually grow up and go in directions not imagined by their founders. So let us see this as 'conflict' between both ideas **and** people. Like many others, I can't see the debate in such polarised terms. As an old Marxist myself, I do see the value in recovering working class experience (and that of other marginalised people) **as part of our sociological understanding of 'what happened'**. On the other hand, I follow Gabriele Rosenthal's useful distinction between 'life history' - what actually happened, and 'life story', what we are told happened. I also follow those many theorists of narrative who point out the complex layering of accounts in any individual's story, and the tantalising difficulty of relating such accounts to the (contradictory) accounts of other individuals. I am experiencing this in my current project which studies the experiences of their reproductive lives of three generation families of women (across three countries). We have been struck once again by the differences in accounts provided by different women in the same families - in some cases by omission, in some by straight contradiction. One example was when we had interviewed the 'mother' and the 'grandmother' in a particular family, but it was the 'granddaughter' who casually informed us that the reason the family had gone to Alberta, and her father had studied at the Seventh Day Adventist college, was that they had had a disastrous house fire that had left them homeless and destroyed their business.

This research also returns us to a consideration of how much of the 'real' we are in search of. Of course, by using this method (of collecting life stories) we are putting the emphasis on the subjective accounts. But we also, at some level, need to know 'what really happened'. Did she have an abortion? what problems occurred in labour? did she endure sexual abuse or violence? In our baseline data collection we came across many (quantitative) studies of various aspects of reproductive health and illness, but if we want to understand how women actually experience such events, then we do need to know that they happened. In other words - we need both. We need to hang onto a sense of the 'realist' agenda, especially as that enables us to connect individual women's experience to 'the societal', but we also need to struggle with a constructionist approach in understanding what we are told and how we - as researchers in different social locations - 'hear' it.

This leads me to the second theme in this paper - the increasing concern with what goes on in biographical interviews. Kathy Davis, in a paper in an Integrative session at the Brisbane conference, drew attention to three kinds of 'reflexivity' growing up in biographical research. The first treats the interview as an interactive event - a performance that involves **both** the interviewer and the participant - the interview as a 'co-production'. The second kind is the increasing reflexivity in interpretation. On the one hand this has increased the amount of time (and effort) devoted to the painstaking analysis of single cases. On the other, researchers are now much more inclined to tell us exactly how they came to the conclusions they did. It has, in Davis' words 'opened our eyes to the fact that there is never just one story to be told about a person's life. It has also shown, more generally, just how inherently contested the production of social knowledge is' (Davis, 2003:8). Whether this brings us closer to the 'reality' of the social world, as she claims, is, in my view, more open to question. This is partly because of Davis' third kind of reflexivity - in (auto) biography. In other words, an increasing amount of attention (and writing) is devoted to the researcher, who now sees herself as

'part and parcel of the research enterprise.' We now learn almost as much, sometimes more, about the researcher's life and experiences, and her response to the participant, than we do about the participant's own account.

I have mixed feelings about this trend. On the one hand, I am enormously relieved to have the interview broken open in this way. It is many years since Anne Oakley pointed out that it made a difference if women interviewed women, and that this gave the interviewer certain responsibilities in the interaction (Oakley, 1981). She also joined with others in the final debunking of the so-called 'objective' interviewer. Manifestly, it is important that both sides of the conversation are treated more or less equally. Clearly we need much more research in what actually goes on in an interview. In our own research, in which each national team is made up of three core researchers, together with a team of graduate students and other associates, we have been struck by (although we have not yet analysed) the differences in the interviews carried out by each of us. We had a common core of questions and topics, but each of us picked up different 'leads' and followed them in different ways; each of us related better or worse to women of different ages or backgrounds, and that related to our own social positioning; each of us used our particular expertise (from Sociology, Health Sciences and English) to probe our participants. If we are to understand what our research tells us, then we have to understand these differences in the ways in which the interviews were carried out. The same is true about analysis.

But sometimes, one can't see the wood for the trees, and one certainly can't see the 'social'. I have used the example of Leslie Bloom's work before (*Under the Sign of Hope: Feminist Methodology and Narrative Interpretation*, 1998). In this work, Bloom discusses her biographical work with two subjects - Olivia, with whom she identifies with and likes, and Sandy, whom she doesn't like and with whom she becomes caught in a spiral of mutual misunderstandings. The problem here is that we learn far more about Bloom than we do about her participants - or certainly about Sandy. Sandy wouldn't open up to Bloom (for very good reasons, in my view) but Bloom provides us with an extended account of **her** - Bloom's - position, not Sandy's. It all gets rather exhausting and frustrating, and while the 'setting' is in New York, we learn nothing about how these three lives are 'constructed' socially. Liz Stanley, who is the doyen of much UK and feminist auto/biographical work has also moved in this direction, although her keen sense of both the social and the theoretical mean that her self examinations are much more illuminating. One example is her article "The knowing because experiencing subject: Narratives, lives and autobiography", (*Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 16. No. 3. pp. 205-215, 1993). In this piece, Stanley uses her diaries and tape-recordings to explore her feelings during the death of her mother. She treats the material as 'autobiographical' and explores 'some aspects of a feminist epistemology...and its relationship to a feminist ontology...I do so by engaging with debates concerning how we should understand and theorise the notion of 'self' inscribed in autobiography' (Stanley, 1993:205). Stanley's mother appears in this piece, but more important is Stanley's efforts to understand both her mother and her own changing perceptions. The diary extracts, apart from exposing subjective feelings, also provide an account of what it is to be terminally ill in UK. In any case, Stanley argues that 'the ordinary self, the conscious and experiencing subject, is much more complexly aware of its internal fractures, is more knowingly a **social** (my emphasis)

self composed through many overlapping patterns of interrelationship, than feminist post-modernist commentary on autobiography allows' (Stanley, 1993: 213). Its a fine example of how to do this work, and in my view, there is no other way to 'get at' such material than to delve into oneself, and especially if one has the theoretical tools to relate such material to the society in which we live.

I suspect that *Biography and Society*, as a Research Committee and as an endeavor, is better at questions than answers. The world of narrative and biographical research is large and expanding all the time. RC 38 cannot contain all the current strands, although it can, and does, try to make sure that the key developments are brought to the fore and discussed. I suspect that precisely because it is a 'method' rather than a discrete 'topic area' that we spend more time struggling through issues that either now, or in the future will be taken up by other RCs. I think the two issues I have tried to illuminate in this brief paper - the tension between 'realism' and 'constructionism' and the turn to reflexivity are both issues that other RCs are also dealing with. I would be interested to compare notes.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

INTERIM CONFERENCE ROSKILDE

4.-7. March 2004 the RC38 co-organized with the Biography and Life History research network of ESREA, European Society for Research into Education of Adults, a conference in Roskilde Denmark, with the long title

Biographical Research, Challenging the Boundaries: between the social and Psychological, Self and Other, Immediacy and Memory, Language and the Body, the Personal and Professional

The conference gathered around 100 researchers from adult education, sociology and several other disciplines. The idea of the co-organizing was to raise discussions about the relation between sociological research which addresses subjective accounts and learning research which is interested in societal context. Very many comments indicated that it was an interesting experience to meet across boundaries, and we feel confident that we have opened a very important development which may influence both sides in the years to come.

You can find all material on the website of ESREA, **www.esrea.org**, select conferences', select the right one in the list, and you can find buttons to all papers and programme. You can download the programme of the conference as a pdf file at the following address:

<http://www.esrea.org/conferences/Esrea%202004/ESREA%20March%20Conference.pdf>

Henning Salling Olesen (Denmark)

BIOGRAPHICAL PROCESSES AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES CONFERENCE FRANKFURT/M.

A summary report on the annual conference of the section "Biographical Research" of the German Sociological Association which was held at the Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe-University at Frankfurt/Main from April 22 to 24, 2004

The annual conference was prepared and organised by Ursula Apitzsch, Lena Inowlocki and Gerhard Riemann (in cooperation with the Research Committee "Biography and Society" of the International Sociological Association, the "Center on Culture and Development" of the Department of Social Sciences of the University of Frankfurt, the Cornelia Goethe-Center of the University of Frankfurt and the Hessian Böll-Foundation). The following call for papers had been issued in the fall of 2003:

"The annual conference will take place in Frankfurt/Main and present a forum for papers and discussions concerning the relation between individual biographies and collective – regional, ethnic, religious, national, and transnational – identities. A special focus will be the life historical relevance of traditional and newer orientations towards "imagined communities" (Anderson) in Europe. The broad definition of the conference topic aims at a general assess-

ment of what sociological biographical research can contribute towards an understanding of the complex and paradoxical identity processes in contemporary societies. The biographical and social dimensions of change become accentuated in the course of European unification, of systems transformation in central and eastern Europe, in the relation between centers and peripheries and in global migration.

What are the biographical consequences of the loss of collective identities, and what is the meaning of the emergence of newer collective identities? How do rediscovery and reinforcement of formerly rejected or presently devalued or disputed collective identities matter for the life history and for the style of life of society members? Which delineations between „us“ and „them“ are changing? Trajectories of uprooting and marginalization contrast with processes of social learning and creative development in "hybrid", bi- and multicultural life situations.

In view of the broad topic, we welcome contributions concerning developments within Germany and also within other societies. Researchers from other disciplines are encouraged to participate, e.g., sociolinguists studying newer linguistic phenomena and communicative problem solutions in migration societies, also ethnologists and cultural anthropologists. One session will be dedicated to a workshop on analyzing data materials relevant to the topic of the conference."

The organizers had expected that many colleagues in biographical research would discover their own research interests in this call for papers, but they were still surprised when they became aware of the great interest in the conference and when they received so many proposals for papers covering a large spectrum of topics. The Frankfurt conference certainly belonged to the larger and internationally oriented annual conferences in the history of the section, with quite a few contributions from colleagues from central and Eastern European countries. The media were interested, too, which probably had something to do with the fact that the topic appeared especially up-to-date a few days before the enlargement of the European Union: There were reports on the conference in the broadcasting services of Hesse and Austria, reports which were based on interviews with colleagues who presented papers and on interviews with the organizers.

Before we shortly refer to what happened at the conference we would like to mention why this event took place under the title "biographical processes and collective identities". The organizers had been asked if it was not appropriate to organize a conference of the section in honor of Fritz Schuetze who celebrated his 60th birthday in January 2004. Our reaction was a little reserved in this case since we suspected that Fritz would not be enthusiastic about the prospect of being honored in such a way or would even try to "escape". We thought it would be appropriate though if a conference had a close link with his current and long-term research problems and lines of thinking. This would also be an event in which he could give a presentation himself. We did not conceal the fact that the conference had something to do with Fritz Schuetze and his birthday. Ulrich Oevermann also mentioned and appreciated this connection at the beginning of his own speech.

Due to the multitude of exciting proposals for papers the organizers decided that the conference should last longer than had been planned in the beginning: It started in the early after-

noon of Thursday and lasted until the late afternoon of Saturday. Such a format was not an ideal solution, but in retrospect we still feel that this decision made sense because the presentation and discussion of the papers did not have to be shortened in a too rigorous way. The participation in the discussions stayed lively until the end.

There were several plenary talks: Ursula Apitzsch (Frankfurt) gave a talk on "the enigmatic ethnicity", Fritz Schuetze (Magdeburg) on "structural marginality and personal creativity: an analysis of the life histories of three protagonists of the Welsh cultural movement", Marek Czyzewski (Lodz) on "mediation work in public debates", Peter Alheit (Goettingen) on "biography and mentality: collective traces of individual experience" and Ulrich Oevermann (Frankfurt) on "nation and generation".

There were several working groups which were chaired by Michaela Koettig, Bettina Dausien, Maria Kontos, Roswitha Breckner, Ursula Apitzsch, Lena Inowlocki and Gerhard Riemann. The working groups dealt with the following topics:

- Generation, gender and biography (with contributions by Victoria Semyonova and Elena Meshcherkina)
- Migration, gender and identity processes of youths (with contributions by Anja Loewe, Arnd-Michael Nohl and Cengiz Deniz)
- Symbolic ethnicity, self-employment and migration (with contributions by Anne Juhasz, Raphaella Hettlage, Markus Otterbach and Julia Bernstein)
- Ethnic and religious membership (with contributions by Noga Gilad, Rosina-Martha Csoeff and Sabrina Boehmer)
- Processes of transformation in Eastern Germany (with contributions by Boris Traue, René John and Burkhard Schaeffer)
- Exclusion and the development of communities (with contributions by Iris Clemens and Andrea Neugebauer)
- Identity and marginality (with contributions by Katerina Janku, Kaja Kazmierska, Katarzyna Szafranska, Agnieszka Adamiak and Mikolaj Gurdala)
- Processes of migration between Eastern and Western Europe (with contributions by Martina Goblirsch, Roswitha Breckner, Birgit Griesse and Martina Schiebel and Fridrik Hallsson)
- Transnational identities (with contributions by Angela Franz-Balsen, Michael Corsten and Michael Kauppert, Silke Roth and Florian Kreutzer)

There was also a roundtable discussion on "new self-employment and transnational migration" which was chaired by Heinz Steinert and in which Andrzej Piotrowski, Maria Kontos and Ursula Apitzsch participated. In the beginning and at the end of the conference participants met in research workshops: In the beginning Kaja Kazmierska, Agnieszka Adamiak and Mikolaj Gurdala (Lodz) chaired a research workshop in which an autobiographical narrative interview was discussed which had been conducted with a Lithuanian woman living in Poland. At the end Bettina Dausien and Paul Mecheril (Bielefeld) chaired a research workshop which was organized around the topic "The trace of the imagined. On the empirical reconstruction of collective identities". The research of the Lodz group clearly demonstrated the relevance of biographical research for the investigation of the relationship between collective identities and biographical processes in post-socialist societies in Central and Eastern

Europe. This impression was also reaffirmed in the working group on "identity and marginality" which centered – roughly speaking - around the topic of the relationship between the majority and minorities in Poland and the Czech republic. The decision to incorporate research workshops was based on the fact that the cooperation in research workshops – the joint, intensive and extensive oral analysis of primary data like narrative interviews and other texts – has contributed to the development and the style of biographical research and other interpretive approaches.

We would like to mention a special working group in which Detlef Garz (Mainz) informed together with colleagues from Mainz and Oldenburg (Ursula Bloemer, Sylke Bartmann, Sandra Kirsch and Wiebke Lohfeld) about quite a few studies which had been produced in their research context: These studies are in-depth analyses of autobiographical manuscripts written by Jewish and non-Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. These manuscripts had been written in the context of a competition of the University of Harvard in 1939 on the topic of "My life in Germany before and after January 30th 1933". The Oldenburg and Mainz research projects did not just focus on the manuscripts, but also tried to reconstruct the fate of the writers and their families in the countries of their emigration.

We enjoy the memory of the evenings which the participants of the conference spent together. The lively, stimulating and very collegial atmosphere during the conference reminded us of a feast.

Lena Inowlocki, Gerhard Riemann and Ursula Apitzsch (Germany)

ISA RESEARCH COUNCIL CONFERENCE OTTAWA

Report to RC 38 on the ISA Research Council Conference *Conflict, Competition and Cooperation: Contemporary Sociological Theory and Research in the 21st Century*, May 28-29th 2004, and the ISARC Business Meeting, May 30th 2004

This is the first of these interim ISA Research Council conferences and meetings I have attended. I did so as the representative for RC38, and presented a paper on your behalf, entitled "Conflict, Competition, Cooperation: Research at the Micro-level: Some lessons from Narrative Methods".

Both the conference and the meeting were held at the University of Ottawa, the home university of Ann Denis (the Vice-President ISA for Research). I was surprised by what a small (and rather elite) gathering this was. With one rep from each RC plus some officers of the association - Piotr Sztompka, President; Susan McDaniel, VP Publications; Sujata Patel, VP for National Associations; Ari Sitas, VP for Programme, there were between 50 and 60 participants.

This meant that the conference sessions, even the plenary sessions, were intimate and lively. There was also plenty of opportunity to discuss informally during the breaks. It was certainly interesting to hear and meet sociologists from so many disparate views and interests. We all tend to work with colleagues who share our perspectives, and it was stimulating (and some-

times a little shocking) to realise what a wide field sociology is and how many different ways there are to do it. I was also surprised to find comparatively few RCs who focus on qualitative methods. There were many papers providing very broad overviews of the current situation, often globally, of the kind that we cannot aspire to in our RC. Some of them relied on masses of statistical data and sophisticated analyses. I found some of these impressive and useful, and some limited and boring. But I did here lots of interesting presentations, and my contribution on behalf of RC38 was well received.

The business meeting, held on the 3rd day began with presentations from the officers on their progress and issues since Brisbane. There have been some changes in the ISA publications, especially International Sociology, Current Sociology and the Monograph series. There was considerable discussion about the minutiae of running the RCs, with particular emphasis on having members in good standing, charging the appropriate fees and submitting the requisite reports. RC38 seemed to be conforming with all the regulations and to be in good shape. We do have to ensure that we get the money that our members pay to our RC (as opposed to the ISA fee) because this is ours to spend. We also need to ensure that our members are paid up in good time for Durban as this affects the number of sessions we can put on.

A large part of the meeting was spent in hearing from the Durban committee about their plans for the 2006 conference. They do seem to be quite marvellously organised already and to have heard some of the problems at previous conferences and made arrangements to circumvent them. The conference will be held in 3 buildings all very close together downtown, and even the most distant residences are reasonably easy to get to and from. Security issues are well covered, and there are plans to try to reduce the cost of travel as far as possible. Piotr described his plans for the 3 Presidential sessions. There will be a special African theme, and there will also be symposia and the integrated sessions that were piloted at Brisbane. As usual the RC programme will take place in the afternoon and evening.

The last part of the meeting elected members to the ISARC Nominating Committee and to the Dogan Prize subcommittee. I allowed myself to be nominated (and elected) to the Nominating Committee. This means that I can't be on the executive myself, but together with members of the nominating committee elected by the national associations, we have to receive nominations for all positions and prepare the slate for the elections, and can also encourage nominations so as to ensure that the executive of the ISA represents a broad spectrum of interests. My own sense is that there are plenty of ways in which the current executive is not very representative and our RC might have much to contribute to the executive that takes office at Durban. Please start thinking now of members of our RC who would make good candidates for the executive or for the various positions of VP and President.

There will be a formal report of both the conference and the business meeting, so these notes are just intended to provide my 'gloss' on my attendance.

Marilyn Porter (Newfoundland)

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON (AUTO)BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH, BRAZIL

In September the '1st International Congress on (auto)biographical research was held in Porto Alegre, Brazil. The congress was mainly based among brazilian scholars of history of education - and it was based on the presentation of a book:

A Aventura (Auto)Biográfica - teoria & Empiria, with the shadow title in English: The Autobiographic Adventure. The book was edited by Maria Helean Menna Barreto Abrahão, published by EDIPUCRS, and contains articles in English and Portuguese, with summaries in the opposite language. The contributions cover a wide scope topics from education, sociology and history. I was invited to write one of them, and have introduced our version of life history research from the Life History project at Roskilde University.

The programme of the congress and abstracts can be seen at the website

www.pucrs.br/eventos/cipa

Henning Salling Olesen (Denmark)

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Conference Announcement
Call for paper

The Life Course: Fragmentation, Diversity and Risk

Organizer: Dr. Jens Zinn
Date: Monday 21st - Wednesday 23rd March 2005
Venue: University of York
Call for Papers: 30 September 2004
Further details of conference:

Session on the BSA Annual Conference 2005 'The Life Course: Fragmentation, Diversity and Risk' Monday 21st - Wednesday 23rd March 2005, University of York

Session: The Management of Risks and Uncertainties in the Life Course

There is high correspondence between most sociologists that the ongoing processes of modernization are accompanied by increasing uncertainties. However, the valuation of these uncertainties differs widely from rather positive or ambivalent to mainly negative.

Even though - especially in Great Britain and the USA - the culture of fear and the individualization/individualisation of society seems to be more developed than in other western industrial societies it might be assumed that people are not generally paralysed by experienced uncertainties or fears. Rather they use social available strategies by which uncertainties are transformed into more or less certain notions of the world which still enables them to shape their life. The session aims to identify and collect these different strategies and semantics people refer to in order to enable them to act in an in principle uncertain world.

Contributions are welcome which are engaged with questions of how people act and make sense in order to manage uncertainties, for example by metaphysical strategies (referring to God, fate or luck), by rational strategies (referring to science or own weighing up between different possibilities, networking strategies with friends and family-members) or reflexive situational support to one or the other strategy.

Of interest are also contributions which are concerned with questions when people refer to specific certainty constructions, and how such concepts are defended by, for example, trust or normalisation-strategies. Also welcome papers concerned with the factors which cause the passage from one strategy to another and whether there are connections to socio-structural factors as social class, gender, age etc.

Information on the process how to send in an abstract to the BSA:

http://www.britsoc.co.uk/bsaweb.php?area=item3&link_id=30

Please send an abstract also to the session organizer (Dr. Jens Zinn): J.Zinn@kent.ac.uk

Conference Announcement

RC 38 – Interim Conference 2005**NARRATIVE, MEMORY AND KNOWLEDGE:
REPRESENTATIONS, AESTHETICS AND CONTEXTS**

Organizer: Brian Roberts
Date: Saturday 9th April 2005
Venue: The University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, UK
Keynote Speakers: 2 keynote speakers; 30 papers in one day in 3 strands
Call for Papers: in the next few weeks
Further details of conference:

The 5th annual conference of the Narrative and Memory research group in association with Biography and Society, RC 38.

The conference will include a meeting of the RC 38 Board and a meeting of the RC 38 Committee website for the conference will soon be available with details of submission of abstracts, fee, accommodation, travel and online booking - meanwhile further details from Brian Roberts B.Roberts@hud.ac.uk

Conference Announcement
Call for paper**CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR LANGUAGE STUDIES**

Organizer: Conference Chair: John Watzke
 University of Notre Dame
Date: Monday, April 18 - Wednesday, April 20, 2005
Venue: Montréal, Canada
Call for Papers: Deadline for proposals: 1 October 2004
Further details of conference:

The International Society for Language Studies (ISLS) promotes research on critical discourse and language matters, broadly conceived, including the teaching and learning of second / foreign languages and general education (mother tongue). Papers may be submitted for the following session strands:

Discourse and Identity	Pedagogy
Education	Policy
Interdisciplinary Foci	Research Methodology
Language Professions	Technology

Presentation proposals are accepted via the ISLS website. Various presentation formats are possible: individual paper, paper session, seminar. Multiple paper proposals as a venue for scholars engaged in research and dialogue on special interest topics are particularly welcome.

As an international organization with members from every continent, ISLS encourages a multilingual event. Although the principal language of the conference will be English, presenters may submit proposals and present papers in the language of their choice. In an effort to appeal to the broadest of audiences, presenters are strongly urged to prepare support materials in English (hand-outs, overhead transparencies, slides). Sessions will be organized by topic, not language, unless a group of authors propose an entire session.

The ISLS Conference directly follows the 2005 American Educational Research Association (AERA) conference. Conference web site: www.isls-inc.org

Conference Announcement
Call for Papers

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

Organizer:	Norman K. Denzin , Chair of the Organizing Committee
Date:	May 5-7, 2005
Venue:	University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Call for Papers:	Session and paper submissions will be accepted online only from October 1 until December 1, 2004. (There is a limit of two paper submissions per delegate)

Further details of conference:

Half-day (morning and afternoon) pre-conference workshops (May 5), will precede the two-day Congress (May 6-7) which will consist of plenary, spotlight, regular, and poster sessions. There will also be an opening reception with hors d'oeuvres and cash bar, and a closing reception with cash bar and a barbecue-cookout.

POSSIBLE SPEAKERS AND WORKSHOP FACILITATORS INCLUDE:

Jan Morse * Bryant Alexander * Kathy Charmaz * Antonia Darder * Stephen Hartnett * Robert Stake * Yvonna Lincoln * Linda Tuhiwai Smith * Della Pollock * Clifford Christians * Arthur Bochner * Carolyn Ellis * Virginia Olesen * Ernest House * Katherine Ryan * James Scheurich * Robin Jarrett * Larry Parker

THEME

The theme of the First International Congress of Qualitative Research focuses on "Qualitative Inquiry in a Time of Global Uncertainty." We call on the international community of interpretive scholars to gather together in common purpose to address the implications of the recent

attempts by federal governments and their agencies to define what is 'good science', and what constitutes 'good scholarship'. Around the globe governments are attempting to regulate interpretive inquiry by enforcing bio-medical, evidence-based models of research.

These regulatory activities raise basic philosophical, epistemological, political and pedagogical issues for scholarship and freedom of speech in the academy. Their effects are interdisciplinary. They cut across the fields of educational and policy research, the humanities, communications, health and social science, social welfare, business and law.

In the United States, the evidence-based experimental science movement, with accompanying federal legislation (Leave No Child Behind), threatens to deny advances in critical qualitative inquiry, including rigorous criticisms of positivist research. This legislation marginalizes indigenous, border, feminist, race, queer, and ethnic studies. The international community of qualitative researchers must come together to debate and discuss the implications of these new developments.

The mission of the First International Congress is to provide a forum for these critical conversations, to build and expand the already robust tradition of Qualitative Inquiry. This congress gathers together vibrant strands of qualitative research to produce innovative futures. We seek to generate lively, critical debate, foster contacts and the exchange ideas, and draw inspiration from each other. We encourage international participation from different countries, disciplines and cultural backgrounds, as well as from a wide range of research areas, including the humanities, medical and health care scholars.

SUGGESTED CONFERENCESESSION TOPICS

- | | |
|--|---|
| * Autoethnography & Performance Studies | * Grounded Theory & Social Justice Research |
| * Critical Ethnography as Performance | * Human Rights |
| * Critical Pedagogy | * Human Subject Research |
| * Critical Race Theory & Moral Activism | * Indigenous Approaches to Creating Knowledge |
| * Cultural Policy | * Indigenous Policy Studies |
| * Cultural Studies, Education & Pedagogy | * Investigative Poetry |
| * Decolonizing Neo-colonial Methodologies | * Mixed-methods designs & inquiry in Global Studies |
| * Decolonizing the Academy | * Nationhood & Nationalism |
| * Democratic Methodologies | * New developments with focus groups |
| * Developments in Participatory Action Research | * New Media & Information Technology |
| * Discourse Analysis | * Participatory Action Inquiry |
| * Ethics, IRBs & Academic Freedom | * Postcolonial Methodologies |
| * Ethnicity & Race | * Qualitative Evaluation & Social Policy |
| * Evaluating Inquiry | * Social Policy Formation |
| * Feminist Qualitative Research in the new Century | * The Active Interview |
| * Foucault's Methodologies | * The Audit Culture & Neoliberalism |
| * Funded Qualitative Research | * The Global Consumer Culture |
| * Global Ethnography | * The Science Wars |
| * Globalization & Transnationalism | * Video, Dance & Performance Technologies |
| * Governmental Regimes of Truth | * Working with Multi-cultural Populations |

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS (May 5, 2005)

1. Focus Groups: New Developments (TBA)
2. Case Study: Access and Intrusion (Robert Stake and Brinda Jegatheesan)
3. Performance Ethnography (Norman K Denzin)
4. Feminist Qualitative Research in the new Century (Virginia Olesen)
5. Foucault's Methodologies (James Scheurich (TBA) and Kathryn Bell McKenzie)
6. Grounded Theory Methodologies for Social Justice Projects (Kathy Charmaz)
7. Ethics, Human Subject Review Board & Qualitative Inquiry (Clifford Christians)
- 8 . Interpreting. Writing Up & Evaluating Qualitative Materials (Robin Jarrett)
9. Investigative and Ethno-Poetics (Stephen Hartnett)
10. Autoethnography (Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner)
11. Democratic Evaluation (Ernest House and Katherine Ryan)

We invite your submission of paper and session proposals. To learn more about the First International Congress and how to participate, please visit our website www.QI2005.org. For more information contact info@QI2005.org

It is assumed that the topics listed below will in one way or another be taken up in the sessions and in pre-conference workshops, but please feel free to nominate your own topic. (Please note that we are not soliciting workshop submissions)

Conference and workshop registration will begin Dec. 1, 2004.

Conference Announcement

EXPERIENTIAL COURSE: DIALOG WITH SELF AND OTHER

Organizer: Dr. Julia Chaitin (chaitin@nova.edu)/Dr. Susanne Marshall (msusanne@nova.edu)

Date: July, 18 – 20, 2005

Venue: Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale Florida

Call for Papers: in October 2004

Further details of conference:

The 3 day experiential course - Dialog with self and other - which will be combined with a 2 day international conference - Storytelling, Listening and Change - will be offered together as a 3 credit hour elective.

Course participants will have the opportunity to practice and learn group facilitation techniques based on the use of personal storytelling, narratives, and active listening, art-based techniques (art, photography, psychodrama, etc.) and more, that will help you become better scholars and practitioners.

This international course/conference is special in that it will be co-taught by members of the TRT - To Reflect and Trust. The TRT is an international dialog group comprised of descendants of Holocaust survivors and Nazi perpetrators, Israelis and Palestinians, Blacks and Whi-

tes from South Africa and Catholics and Protestants from Northern Ireland. The founder of the group is Prof. Dan Bar-On who will be taking an active role in the course/conference. Members of the TRT include psychologists, physicians, researchers, artists, organizational consultants, educators, grassroots peace workers, writers and more.

For first information on the course/conference, please visit -

<http://shss.nova.edu/events/DCAR-TRT/index.htm>

- where you can open up our flyer. Please feel free to print and to distribute the flyer to others. More information will be coming soon. This will truly be a multi-disciplinary, multi-ethnic, and international event.

During the month of October, we will be publicizing our "call for papers" for the conference. We invite you to submit abstracts for papers, panels, round tables, posters and workshops that you would like to present at the conference. It is our aim to give graduate students the opportunity to present their work and to gain academic and professional exposure. At the conference, we will present an award for the best student presentation/paper. The student whose presentation/paper is chosen will have his/her work published in a special issue of Peace and Conflict Studies. A similar award will also be made for the best presentation by a new researcher.

Please feel free to either contact Dr. Julia Chaitin or Dr. Susanne Marshall with any/all questions!

Conference Announcement
Call for Papers

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: STORYTELLING, LISTENING AND CHANGE

Organizer:	Dr. Julia Chaitin (chaitin@nova.edu)/Dr. Susanne Marshall (msusanne@nova.edu)
Date:	July, 21 – 22, 2005
Venue:	Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale Florida
Deadline for submissions:	December 31, 2004
Electronic submission to:	Dr. Julia Chaitin (chaitin@nova.edu)
Notification of acceptance:	February 28, 2005
Further details of conference:	

"Storytelling, Listening and Change" will bring together speakers and participants from around the US and the world with expertise and a deep interest in the many uses of storytelling, the sharing of personal experiences, active listening and the positive change that these can have on individuals, families and groups, organizations, communities and societies.

This international conference is co-sponsored by the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (DCAR) at the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nova Southeastern University and the TRT – To Reflect and Trust – an international dialog group

comprised of former “enemies.” DCAR and the TRT actively work toward a more peaceful world, by helping people learn how to better communicate with one another in order to co-create a better future.

Who is the conference for? – Scholars, educators and students from the disciplines of anthropology, behavioral sciences, communication, conflict management, education, family therapy, history, law, peace studies, organizational studies, peace studies, political science, psychology, social work, sociology and more. We also warmly invite grassroots workers, social activists, NGOs, organizational members, community leaders and groups, women’s groups, trauma specialists, and mental health professionals to submit proposals for conference presentations.

Planned Program – The conference will have 2 keynote speakers – Prof. Dan Bar-On, the founder of the TRT and the chair of the Behavioral Sciences department at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, and a second speaker TBA. The conference sessions will be comprised of panel discussions, round tables, workshops, papers, poster presentation, and video/film. Creative submissions are highly encouraged (e.g. presentations that include performance, music, art, etc.).

Special awards: We will present two awards: One for the best student presentation and one for the best new researcher presentation. Recipients of the awards will be honored at the conference and have their articles published in the peer-reviewed journal *Peace and Conflict Studies*, which appears in both online and print formats.

Guidelines for submission – Submissions of a maximum of 200 words will be accepted. Please include: Name of presenter(s), organizational affiliation, title of paper, type of presentation (paper, workshop, panel, round table, poster presentation, video/film session), and the abstract, submitted as Word document – 12 pt. font.

Questions? Please feel free to contact either Dr. Julia Chaitin – chaitin@nova.edu or Dr. Susanne Marshall – msusanne@nova.edu. (GRADUATE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, 3301 College Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314-7796, Phone: (954) 262-3000 or 800-262-7978, Fax: (954) 262-3968, shss.nova.edu).

Conference Announcement

XVI World Congress of Sociology
QUALITY OF SOCIAL EXISTENCE IN A GLOBALISING WORLD
July 23-29, 2006, Durban, South Africa

RC 38 PLANNED SESSIONS**Session 1: Men, Women and Memory**

What we remember, how we remember and how we 'tell' it is the stuff of biographical research. Like everything else it is gendered: how and what women remember is likely to be different to how and what men remember. Men and women have different speech patterns and this is likely to affect how they recount their lives. However, we know very little in detail about these gender differences, how they arise or what they mean.

This session will bring together researchers who have worked on collecting narrative material from either men or women or both, and have observed gender differences in either the content or the process of the narratives. The kinds of questions this session might address are: Do men and women recount different kinds of experiences in their life stories? Is the 'pattern' of remembered life different for men and women? Do men and women elide, change or repress different kinds of memories? Can we determine different sets of priorities in the kinds of markers men and women use to tell their stories?

Session coordination:

Marilyn Porter (mporter@mun.ca)
Memorial University, Newfoundland

Session 2: Biographical Analyses on, in and for Professional Practice

The session will provide a space for exploring and discussing developments in the relationship between biographical research and different kinds of professional practice. Biographical analyses have contributed to a deeper understanding of the far-reaching and subtle consequences of professional interventions (e.g., in medicine and social work) for biographical processes of clients, patients, "users" etc. and their theorising on their own lives and selves. This research has been helpful for sensitising (future) professionals with regard to the biographical contexts and conditions of clients' concerns and presentations as well as to the possible consequences of professional work for the life histories and life circumstances of clients and their families. In recent years there has also been a growing interest in the ways in which professionals themselves engage in their own biographical case analyses (e. g., in their joint case discourse) – an interest which was also encouraged by movements within the professions, e.g., "narrative medicine". Additionally, professional schools, especially in social work and the health sciences, have started to incorporate biographical research and other interpretative approaches into their training. The purpose of this session is to focus at

the relevancies of biographical analyses on, in and for professional practice and to foster a self-reflective and self-critical discussion of such developments and linkages.

Session coordination:

Gerhard Riemann (gerhard.riemann@sowes.uni-bamberg.de)
Otto-Friedrich-Universität, Bamberg, Germany

Session 3: Artists, Biography and Creativity

In this session we would like to invite papers focusing upon the life experiences and identity constructions of artists in the broad sense, that is individuals working professionally within the fine arts, literature, theatre, film and television, music and entertainment industries etc. Since the question of artistic creativity plays an important role in how artistic talents are recognized and creativity is also central in the type of work artists are engaged in professionally both as individuals and in their relations to other colleagues, organizations, milieus and the broader society, we especially welcome contributions which take the relation between biography and creativity among artists into account. Papers could be based upon traditional biographical interviews with artists, but we also welcome biographical analyses based on other types of biographical material such as letters, essays, novels and other types of artistic products, auto/biographies etc. as long as it can be argued that these are relevant from a biographical point of view. Methodologically reflections related to how such other types of biographical material can supplement traditional biographical interviews are encouraged.

Session coordination:

Feiwei Kupferberg (feiwei@dpu.dk)
Danish Educational University, Denmark

Session 4: Narrating social suffering among the marginalised in South Africa

This session aims at bringing together people's experiences of social suffering. The biographical accounts of people living on the margin of South African society will form the basis of papers. We will attempt to cover a variety of experiences of suffering - representing separate strands in the broad tapestry of poverty, underdevelopment, homelessness, ill-health, lack of education, inadequate access to political power, lack of social security, resorting to escapist solutions (such as alcohol and drugs), etc.

Session coordination:

Jan K Coetzee (J.K.Coetzee@ru.ac.za)
Rhodes University, South Africa

Session 5: Biographical processes and collective identities

The session will present a forum for papers and discussions concerning the relation between individual biographies and collective – regional, ethnic, religious, national, and transnational – identities. A special focus will be the life historical relevance of traditional and newer orientations towards "imagined communities" (Anderson). The broad definition of the conference

topic aims at a general assessment of what sociological biographical research can contribute towards an understanding of the complex and paradoxical identity processes in contemporary societies. The biographical and social dimensions of change become accentuated in the course of systems transformation, in the relation between centers and peripheries and in global migration.

What are the biographical consequences of the loss of collective identities, and what is the meaning of the emergence of newer collective identities? How do rediscovery and reinforcement of formerly rejected or presently devalued or disputed collective identities matter for the life history and for the style of life of society members? Which delineations between „us“ and „them“ are changing? Trajectories of uprooting and marginalization might be in contrast with processes of social learning and creative development in “hybrid”, bi- and multicultural life situations. In view of the broad topic, we welcome sociological contributions taking into account also developments in related interdisciplinary scientific fields.

Session coordination:

Ursula Apitzsch(apitzsch@soz.uni-frankfurt.de), J.W.Goethe University, Germany
Lena Inowlocki(inowlocki@soz.uni-frankfurt.de), J.W.Goethe University, Germany
Gerhard Riemann (gerhard.riemann@sowes.uni-bamberg.de)
Otto-Friedrich-Universität, Bamberg, Germany

Session 6: Different ways of analysing biographical case studies

This kind of session at the world congress has become an established forum for discussion of methodological approaches and methods of analysis - similar sessions have been very successful at the last two world congresses. Participants from different methodological approaches will be asked to exemplify their way of biographical case study analysis using the same biographical-narrative interview provided by the session organisers. Researchers will be invited to demonstrate their methodology and "techniques" and this will form a basis for comparison during discussion.

Session coordination:

Brian Roberts (B.Roberts@hud.ac.uk), University of Huddersfield, UK
Gabriele Rosenthal (g.rosenthal@gmx.de); University of Göttingen, Germany

Session 7: Transnational Biographies

Session coordination:

Helma Lutz (hlutz@uni-muenster.de)
WWU Münster, Germany

Session 8: Biographies and the Body

This session will explore the relation between the 'body' and biographical narration and associated methodological and theoretical issues. A number of possible themes will guide the session: the body and ageing; the body and health and illness; the body and emotionality;

body transformations; the body and its presentation. In general, the session is concerned with the empirical relations between the body and biography – how far biographical research can give insights into the social construction of the body and how we talk about it.

Session coordination:

Brian Roberts (B.Roberts@hud.ac.uk), University of Huddersfield, UK
Gabriele Rosenthal (g.rosenthal@gmx.de); University of Göttingen, Germany

If you are interested in presenting a paper in on of these sessions, please **send your abstract till the 1st of October** to the appropriate session coordinators.

Further Deadlines in the context of the World Congress:

31st October 2004: Our RC has to submit session topics and names and details of session coordinators to the ISA Secretariat in Madrid. This will become A Call for Papers.

Shortly after April 15th 2005: Our RC will be informed about the number of sessions we may organise at the World Congress, based on the number of our members in good standing at 15th April 2005.

1st October 2005: Deadline for submission of abstracts to RC 38 session coordinators

1st January 2006: Notification of acceptance

31st January 2006: Submission of the program of sessions to the ISA Congress Secretariat in Madrid.

By 31st March 2006 (precise date will be confirmed): Pre-registration deadline for presenters and deadline for electronic submission of abstracts of accepted papers.

31st May 2006: Pre-registration deadline for all other program participants (chairs, discussants etc.).

30th June 2006: Deadline for submitting accepted papers by e-mail to the Congress Secretariat in Durban.

PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT

Project: **Grandmothers' Stories: A Project to Research & Spread Information about Women's Roles in the Traumatic Twentieth Century**

Project management: Dr. Ardith Maney, Fulbright Lecturer in Public Administration, Kaunas Technological University (fall 2002) and Professor of Political Science & Women's Studies, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011, USA, e-mail – amaney@iastate.edu

Summary:

This project foresees the collection and dissemination of new information about women's roles in community life during the traumatic decade of the 1930s. Through involvement by scholars, women's organizations, and others in the participating countries, we will ask women to tell us stories about the lives of female family members – themselves, their mothers, or their grandmothers – in the 1930s. The transcripts and tapes of these stories will be made available to scholars and educators who will contribute their analyses for scholarly papers on the topics presented. All will be maintained in a database which will be available for use by future scholars interested in the study of women's and gender studies, by educators in basic and secondary schools, and other interested publics. At least two books are envisioned for publication – edited volumes of interdisciplinary papers about women's roles and of stories respectively – about each country project. At the conclusion of the project, the oral histories and other project materials will remain on permanent deposit in a library in each country committed to fostering continuing study of the project material as well as in linked country project websites.

Why This Project?

This project is possible because women's stories about their lives – previously told only within the confines of family and close friends – have begun to be told to others as a result of the social transformation that has taken place in the region after the collapse of the socialist bloc in 1989 and the breakup of the former Soviet Union in 1991. Also, during the past decade new connections have developed between scholars and independent women's organizations in countries like Georgia, Ukraine, and Lithuania, and with counterparts in western Europe and North America women's and gender studies, which make it possible to investigate women's roles in their societies and spread this information more widely. It also can be done because the format of story-telling is available as a methodology for this project.

The project is important in order to better understand women's history, which is often not recorded, to ensure that young people know about women's roles in their countries' past, and to honor women who made important contributions in their communities in the most difficult times of the last century. The time period chosen is also important. It begins just after most European countries had formally ratified women's entry into political life, which had been a major project of liberalism. For example, the extension of the vote to women

occurred in 1918 in Lithuania and around the same time in much of western Europe and North America. However, new opportunities for women in economic, social, and political life – including their participation in the Bolshevik revolution and the institutions in the Soviet Union as part of a second project of economic and social reform – are only part of the picture.

We are interested in hearing about stories about women's paid work outside the home and women's participation in the informal economy, their contribution to community life, and how women in these countries supported their families when political terror could and did appear. We are also interested in how they were influenced by family histories, an area of fruitful interest by scholars of social transformation. The end point for our study is roughly bounded by World War II, when women in all the countries were mobilized into the war effort, when many were targeted as political and ethnic minorities by their own government, as well as the erstwhile enemy, Nazi Germany, and when too many were caught up with their families in the fighting and uprooted from their communities.

The time is right to create a database for future scholarship while we can still interview the women who heard these stories from their mothers and grandmothers or told these stories to their children and grandchildren. In Ukraine and Georgia, we expect that many of these stories will include discussions about collectivization and political terror and inform our understanding about the effects of the political repression of the civil war years and its aftermath culminating in invasion by the Germans at the end of the decade in question. In the case of Lithuania, what we will hear about nation-building in the early period and the promise of socialism will also inform discussion about dislocation during World War II and loss of independence after 1945. Thus, this project coincides with – and can contribute to – the process of truth-telling about political repression with a special focus on women.

How the Project Will Work

A committee of scholars drawn from the participating countries will design the common project, develop its methodology, and solicit participation by colleagues from appropriate disciplinary backgrounds in their respective countries. Because of financial limitations, we will focus on a particular region in each country – Georgia and Lithuania are smaller in size so there is a possibility of getting wider geographical coverage – with each country project located at a university, gender studies center, or research institute.

These country headquarters will be located in Tbilisi, Georgia, Kharkiv, Ukraine, and Kaunas, Lithuania. Tbilisi was and is the capital of Georgia and Kharkiv was for a time the capital of Ukraine before Bolshevik rule was consolidated in the early 1920s. Lithuania was an independent country at the time this project begins, although Poland held onto Lithuania's capital, Vilnius. Thus, Kaunas, the former Lithuanian capital and the center of its intellectual and cultural life during the first Lithuanian republic, is an appropriate choice. In addition, we expect to commission similar studies in at least one rural and one urban area in the U.S.

An innovative feature of this project is the mixture of academic specialties – and disciplinary approaches – that will be involved. We also draw on experience and advice of specialists who have collected, documented, and analyzed stories told by Holocaust survivors who lived in some of these regions, such as the Jewish Museum in Vilnius. The project will also benefit

from the active participation in each country of two other communities. Information and curriculum specialists will be vital for the collection, dissemination, and preservation of the materials in each country. We also expect women's nongovernmental organizations to play a key role in each country project by building interest in participating by women who will tell us their stories and publicizing the project's findings.

The project will have three phases and take place over four years after initial financial support has been obtained. Once the project starts, the first phase will be devoted to developing and disseminating the common project methodology, establishing a committee to run each country project, selecting and training interviewers, and trying out the story-telling method on a pilot basis. We will also invite scholars of women's history to submit papers and/or participate in meetings to be held in each region to present baseline data on what is already known about women's role in community life during the time under study.

The second phase will consist of intensive data collection and analysis, supported by information sharing among the project partners. We will aim for forty full-length interviews in each country for analysis. In addition, we foresee collection of an additional number of shorter stories. In the third, dissemination phase, books and curriculum materials will be developed and the database and websites organized which will make the stories available for wider audiences. We encourage each country project to add elements that are of particular interest to their own history and will work with them to obtain additional funding needed for that purpose. At the conclusion of the project, we will commission a second conference in each country where papers will be presented analyzing the information contained in the oral histories from different disciplinary perspectives.

Results

This project is informed by the use of stories, biographical research, and life histories in a variety of social science and humanities disciplines including anthropology, psychology, history, and literature, as well as interdisciplinary fields such as holocaust, cultural and gender studies, and gerontology. We expect that the stories told to our interviewers will be deeply embedded in class, ethnic, and gendered relations and will reflect a discourse among women and girls in a given family over the generations where the meanings given to the stories will be subject to change over time because of the effects of social transformation.

This project is designed to counter the usual situation where the contributions of women are lost or undervalued. By re-telling to others stories that women have told to children, grandchildren, and close friends about their work outside the home, their relationships with friends and families, and their involvement in community life, we will document the continuing importance of women on others' lives. As daughters and grand-daughters tell us these stories, they will also be telling us what the stories have meant to them. Thus we will document a multi-generational dimension of women's lives during the decades since the 1930s and offer an innovative methodology for future scholarship.

Some sources consulted

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NEWS

FELLOWSHIP USA

Kathy Davis has a visiting fellowship at the Radcliffe Institute of Advanced Studies at Harvard University (Cambridge, USA) from September 2004 through June 2005.

FELLOWSHIP NETHERLAND

During the Academic Year 2004/5 **Helma Lutz** was granted a Fellowship at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS) in The Hague by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. She will be working on a book with the provisional title: Gender, Ethnicity, Identity: The New Servants in the Age of Globalization. This book is based on (biographical) interviews with

- a) Migrant women who work as domestic workers (cleaners, nannies, elderly carers) in private households in three German cities: Berlin, Hamburg and Münster;
- b) Employers of these domestic workers.

The book aims at shedding light on a phenomenon which presently occurs in post-modern-households of Western industrialized countries: household tasks in middle class households are increasingly outsourced to hired maids, nannies and domestic workers. The book will consider four questions:

Why does this phenomenon occur?

How is this work and the work relationship organized between the employer and the involved employee(s)?

How do migrant domestic workers respond to social downgrading and biographical ruptures?

How do migrant workers manage life in a dually illegalized life situation and how do they organize transnational households and life-styles?

ELECTED NOMINATING COMMITTEE

We proudly like to inform you, **Marilyn Porter** was at the ISA Research Council Business Meeting elected as a member of the Research Council Nominating Committee, whose tasks shall be to draw up slates of nominations for the eight places on the Executive Committee to be filled by the Council of National Associations and the Research Council respectively. Each of the two Nominating Committees shall comprise only regular individual members in good standing. Not more than two may be members of the retiring Executive Committee; each CNA representative should be drawn from a different national association, and each Rese-

arch Council representative from a different RC. Each Nominating Committee shall select from among its membership a chairperson, who will be responsible, in cooperation with the Secretariat, for organising its work.

PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES

ISA offers a list comprises journals that are identified as core to the sociological literature by [CSA Sociological Abstracts](#). The list includes also information on journals submitted directly to the ISA. Link to the journal Web sites provided below for information on journal mission, author submission guidelines, and contact addresses. More information: http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/publ/publ_opp.htm

JOUNAL OF LANGUAGE

The Research Center "Discourse, Politics and Identity" (DPI) is interdisciplinary and is based on many years of investigations at the Institute of Linguistics (University of Vienna) and at the Wittgenstein Research Center (March 1997 – March 2003, University of Vienna, then Academy of Sciences) on the relationship between language and society.

Discourse – in the traditional sense of Wittgenstein's language games – is understood as a social practice that constitutes and is constituted by social structure.

The center proceeds with the work of the Wittgenstein Research Center and focuses on the numerous interactive relationships between discourse, politics and identity in present day society.

Using systematic interdisciplinary analysis of linguistic data, DPI attempts to propose innovative explanations of the current process of political and social change in Europe.

The DPI just published a new journal: Journal of Language and Politics: Volume 3, Number 1, 2004. Further information: <http://gerda.univie.ac.at/diskurs-politik-identitaet/index.php>

NEW PUBLICATIONS – BOOKS

Biographical methods and professional practice: An international perspective

edited by Prue Chamberlayne, Joanna Bornat and Ursula Apitzsch

This book theorises and reviews applications of biographical methods in a range of professional contexts in Europe and beyond. Drawing on local and comparative projects, it considers institutional arrangements and cultural contexts which support effective and sensitive interventions, and critically evaluates subjective and reflexive processes in interactions between researchers, practitioners and users of services.

The twenty-one chapters are arranged in five sections: putting the subject into policy and practice; subjectivity in context; self-awareness in research and practice; recognising trajectories of disempowerment; biographical resources in education and training. Chapters of especial interest to comparativists include: Biographical methods and social policy in European perspective Prue Chamberlayne; Balancing precarious work, entrepreneurship and a new gendered professionalism in migrant self-employment Ursula Apitzsch; A socially and historically contextualised psychoanalytic perspective: Holocaust survival and suffering Daniel Bar-On; Professional choices between private and state positions in Russia's transformation Victoria Semenova; Maintaining a sense of individual autonomy under conditions of constraint: a study of East German managers Ulrike Nagel; 'It's in the way that you use it': biography as a tool in professional social work Riitta Kyllönen; In quest of teachers' professional identity: the life story as a methodological tool Marie-Françoise Chanfrault-Duchet.

Methodological issues and practices are detailed throughout the book, for example: Considerations on the biographical embeddedness of ethnic entrepreneurship Maria Kontos; Ethical aspects of biographical interviewing and analysis Kaja Kazmierska; Ghost writers: using biographical methods across languages Bogusia Temple

We hope you enjoy it, and do please send us your comments!

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Prue Chamberlayne, UK

NEW PUBLICATIONS – JOURNALS

Journal of Language and Politics

Edited by Ruth Wodak and Paul Chilton, University of Vienna / University of East Anglia

The *Journal of Language and Politics* represents a forum for analyzing and discussing the various dimensions in the interplay of language and politics. The basic assumption is that the *language of politics* cannot be separated from the *politics of language*. The notion of 'Political Discourse' opens up to the 'institutional' field of politics (e.g. parliamentary discourse, election campaigns, party programs, speeches, etc.) and to all linguistic manifestations that may be considered to be political. In order to illuminate new and old forms of political discourses inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives and elaborated linguistic methodologies have to complement each other.

Articles bring together sociological concepts, political theories, and historical analysis focusing on different dimensions (pragmatics, semantics, social cognition, semiotics) of political discourse, interdiscursivity and intertextuality with other discourses, e.g. economic and scientific discourses.

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- Mayall, Berry/Zeiher, Helga** (2003): Childhood in generational perspektive. London: bookshop at the Institut of Education; University of London; ioe@johnsmith.co.uk; www.johnsmith.co.uk/ioe
- Roberts, Brian** (2004): 'Narrative Analysis'. In: S. Becker and A. Bryman eds. Understanding Research Methods for Social Policy and Practice, Bristol, UK: The Policy Press/Social Policy Association
- Roberts, Brian** (2004): 'Life Lines/Life Connections and Biographical Forms/Traces' in D. Robinson, C. Horrocks, N. Kelly, and B. Roberts (eds.): Narrative, Memory and Identity: Theoretical and methodological Issues, Huddersfield: The University of Huddersfield
- Roberts, Brian** (2004): 'The Construction of Personal Myths', in Interaction. Interview. Interpretation, (Moscow), vol. 2, pp. 7-15 (Russian); pp. 115-122 (English)
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