

Sektion Biographieforschung

»Biography and Violence: Violent dynamics and agency in collective processes and individual life histories«, 9th and 10th February 2018, Center of Methods in Social Sciences (Qualitative Methods), University of Göttingen

The conference was organized by a team consisting of Eva Bahl, Isabella Enzlet, Hendrik Hinrichsen, Kristina Meier, Miriam Schäfer, Katharina Teutenberg, and Arne Worn. The words of welcome of the organizing team summarized their objective as to contribute to the »plea for a more empirical, micro-sociological and interactional research approach to study dynamics of violence in different societal contexts«. It brought more than 60 scholars from 14 countries and across disciplines together in the convention center by the historical observatory for two days, during which the participants could listen to three keynote speakers and seven parallel sessions, visit an exhibition entitled »Changing Vistas of Europe: Refugees' Concepts of Europe Before and After Arrival«, and also watch documentary-film »Infancia Falada – Histories of Transformation Based on Dialogue« directed by Hermilio Santos.

In her opening words, *Gabriele Rosenthal* (Göttingen) addressed the lack of sociological studies regarding »armed conflicts, collective violence, war, crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide, colonial rule, and domestic violence«. She argued that the silence over these societal phenomena began in Germany after World War II and continued until the 1980s, and it had a lot to do with the reluctance to confront the Nazi crimes and Holocaust. What eventually turned sociology into an ahistorical field of study, according to her, was not specific to Germany but endemic to social sciences in general. This is what allowed many social scientists disengage their discipline from that of history, and thereby focus on the present independently from the past, which was weaved with collective violence, slavery, racism, genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. On a more optimistic note, Rosenthal concluded that there is a gradual progress especially since the establishment of sociological biographical research in Germany in the beginning of the 1980s because it is the biographies of people that connect traumatic experiences of the past with the present.

The conference began with the two keynote speakers, *Katharina Imbreth* (Siegen) and *Hermilio Santos* (Porto Alegre, Brazil). Imbreth pleaded for a more elaborate understanding of borders in their relevance to refugees.

Drawing on ethnographic and biographical data she collected in refugee camps in Zambia, she stressed the ambivalence of border crossing for refugees – not only as an obstacle to overcome but also as a protection from the violent national actors if crossed successfully. Her talk was followed by Santos' presentation on women as actors of violent actions. Pointing at the contradiction between the recurrent victimization of women in the current sociological literature and the findings of his ethnographic and biographical research with women in Brazilian Favelas, Santos argued that women can be perpetrators of violence more often and in more pragmatic ways than what has been assumed and represented in the sociological discourse.

The conference continued with seven parallel sessions that were organized thematically. In »Changing Discourses – (Re-)Appraisal of Societal Processes«, *Vivekar Mir* (Delhi, India) talked about a resistance movement against *enforced disappearances* in Kashmir through the biography of its most prominent figure, Parviena Abangar. *Kanithar El-Qasbi* (Düsseldorf), argued that targeted communities, such as Palestinians, produce and circulate a specific knowledge, and emphasized the significance of oral transmission. *Stefanie Rauh* (London) spoke about the influence of shifting discourses of justice, legality, and legitimacy on meanings of violence and agency for those who were somehow involved in *Nazi crimes*. Finally, *Rasa Balckaitis* (Kaunas, Lithuania) talked about the narrative of the wartime sexual violence, and the ways it is remembered and represented through monuments.

In the session on »Changing Perspectives – (Re-)Interpretations of Violence«, *Martín Hernán Di Maro* (Buenos Aires, Argentina) discussed the effect of *dispositivos* (judicial and psychological discourses) in memory and interpretation of the past through a comparison of the life stories of two men who had committed homicide. *Oksana Danylenko* (Charkiv, Ukraine) compared two Ukrainian soldiers returning from the war in Eastern Ukraine and trying to adopt civilian life. *Ute Zilling* (Frankfurt am Main) talked about transgenerational consequences and dynamics of violent experiences through the examples of mothers experiencing sexual abuse and violence. Finally, *Arne Worn* (Göttingen) drew attention to the significance of the figurations of Syrian refugees in order to understand *the dynamics of forced migration*.

In the session »Domestic Violence and Police Interventions«, while *Susanne Nef* (Zurich), talked about the ways in which people who were subjected to domestic violence interpret their experience, *Miriam Schäfer* (Göt-

tingen) focused on the interpretations of police officers of the cases of domestic violence. She argued that their interpretations depend mostly on their stereotypical assumptions about the people involved.

In »Everyday Violence and Othering«, *Vimal Kumar* (Mumbai, India) presented his first-hand experiences during an ethnographic study on the everyday violence of caste system in an Indian village. *Gertraud Kremmer* (Vienna) and *Denisa Butnaru* (Konstanz) presented the results of their biographical research with people with disabilities particularly focusing on the ways in which they experience violence in institutional settings. *Eva Bahl* (Göttingen) discussed the social and discursive practices of marginalization of Moroccan juveniles in the Moroccan-Spanish Border Zone.

»Violence-Borders-Migration« began with *Arnab Roy Chowdhury's* (Moscow) presentation on the results of his ethnographic fieldwork with refugee boat people in Bangladesh and Thailand. *Lucas Cé Sangalli* (Porto Alegre, Brazil) discussed the results of a biographical case reconstruction of a migrant from Haiti that crossed several borders. *Efrit Ben-Ze'ev* and *Nir Guezit* (Emek Hefer, Israel) presented an approach of the Egyptian-Israeli border as a contact zone between the global south and the global north as well as a passageway for Asylum seekers. *Dolly Abuhai Karim* and *Johannes Becker* (Göttingen) presented their first results of reconstructions of (multiple) processes of migration and their relation to multi-layered experiences of violence in Amman, Jordan.

In »Women in Violent Actions, first *Michaela Köttig* (Frankfurt am Main) presented on the problems of and alternatives for the ways in which female violence has been conventionally studied. *Sevil Çakar Kılıncoglu* (Leiden, The Netherlands) discussed the differences and similarities in the everyday life experiences of Turkish and Iranian women who were involved in revolutionary activism in the 1970s. Later, *Johanna Mascé* (Québec, Canada) compared political agency of women in the violent settings of Northern Ireland and Palestine while *Karina Schub Reif* (Porto Alegre, Brazil) talked about the experience of freedom by women after a period of incarceration.

»Genocide-Ethnicized conflicts-Political Persecution« began with *Arthur Bogen's* (Bayreuth) discussion of the role of discourses as constitutive parts of various figurations including the one between researcher and subjects, which was based on his narrative interviews with *lyppeople* in Ghana, Togo and Uganda. *Daniel Balthmann* (Berlin) presented on the ways in which »civil war commanders make their soldiers fight and risk their lives in combat«.

Sandra Gruner Domit (Los Angeles, USA) talked about the personal experiences of violence of survivors of the Guatemalan Genocide.

In the final keynote of the Conference, *Teresa Koloma-Beck* (Munich) questioned the concept of *trauma* and its widespread use to describe everything related to the negative influence of armed conflicts on people not only in the mainstream discourses but also in sociology. Based on her fieldwork experience in Mozambique, Angola, and Afghanistan, she made a case for when and why people living in conflict zones are actually traumatized. Both the final and previous presentations have triggered fruitful discussions among the participants and led many to conclude that the Biography and Violence Conference already sowed the seeds for further discussion and prospective studies in the fields of both biographical research and violence.

Sevil Çakar Kılıncoglu, Lucas Cé Sangalli

Sektion Kultursozio-logie

Tagung »Soziologie wiederkehrender Religionen – Originalität und Relevanz der Religionssoziologie von Wolfgang Ißbach« am 13. und 14. März 2018 am Institut für Kulturwissenschaften, Universität Leipzig

Die Tagung Sektionen Kultursozio-logie und Religionssoziologie (in Kooperation mit der Kolleg-Forscherguppe »Multiple Secularities« und dem Institut für Kulturwissenschaften) galt Wolfgang Ißbachs *Religionssoziologie I. Glaubensstetig und Revolution als Wege neuer Religionen* (2014). Gegenstand des Buches sind die historischen Formen europäischer Religionen, zu deren Analyse Ißbach einen instruktiven Beitrag liefert – es ist eine neue Stimme in den Debatten um Säkularisierung, religiöse Revitalisierung usw. Ißbach entfaltet diese neue Stimme wesentlich als historische Soziologie. Der Blick fällt auf die in Diskursen von intellektuellen verdichtete europäische Religionsgeschichte seit der Reformation. Die These ist: In dieser europäischen Geschichte haben je drängende und prägende Zeiterfahrungen neue Thematisierungen des Religiösen ausgelöst: die Glaubenskriege, die Revolutionen, die Marktgeseellschaft, die Artifzierung der Lebenswelt. Die historische Verarbeitung dieser beunruhigenden Zeiterfahrungen erfolgte je in neuer, religiöser Form. Es entstanden je neue Religionstypen: die