



GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT
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Abstracts

**International Conference to be held at the Center of
Methods in Social Sciences (Qualitative Methods)**

Biography and Violence

**Violent dynamics and agency in collective processes in
collective processes and individual life histories**

9th – 10th February 2018

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Biography and Violence

Violent dynamics and agency in collective processes and individual life histories

9-10th February 2018

University of Goettingen

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

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

To discuss these questions, we have organized a promising program with international researchers who will present empirical studies dealing with migration, borders, ethnicized conflicts, women in violent action, everyday violence, domestic violence, violence in institutional settings and changing perspectives on violence.

Organizing Team: Eva Bahl, Isabella Enzler, Hendrik Hinrichsen, Kristina Meier, Miriam Schäfer, Katharina Teutenberg, Arne Worm

Opening Keynote I

Katharina Inhetveen (University of Siegen, Germany): Violence, Fleeing, and Borders

The contribution examines the relevance of violence in the experiences of refugees fleeing war, persecution, and colonial domination. Drawing mainly on ethnographic material from refugee camps in Zambia, it is shown that in the course of refugee journeys, the crossing of a national border from the country of origin to another state often constitutes a crucial point. Looking at biographic experiences of violence, fleeing, and borders, the latter not only represent barriers to refugees' and other migrants' mobilities; they also blockade national actors of war and persecution, thus allowing – if crossed – an escape from violence. This begs the question if our understanding of borders in their relevance to refugees is differentiated enough. Political and scholarly critiques of powerful border regimes notwithstanding, studying refugees' biographic experiences points us to the ambivalence of borders in flight trajectories.

Opening Keynote II

Hermílio Santos (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil): Women as Actors of Violent Actions: Biographical Trajectories in Brazilian Favelas

The objective of this presentation is to point out the relative lack of attention given by the sociological literature worldwide in general, and specifically in the Brazilian sociology to the involvement of women in crime and violent action, exploring possible reasons for such disregard. A great part of studies that analyze the participation of women in criminality and violent action come to the conclusion that this involvement occurs under the subordination to a male partner or assuming secondary roles determined by men. Based on findings of on-going and already concluded researches, it comes to other results than those available in the sociological literature. These researches are based in a combination of different data collection instruments, including discussion groups, questionnaires and biographical narrative interviews, among others, which preliminary conclusions are that women play a more relevant role in violent everyday actions in Brazilian Favelas than admitted so far by the sociological literature and studies on violence. For some social scientists and members of feminist social movements this

issue may still appear to be misplaced, considering the recurrence of the victimization of women. However, the author will plead that qualitative social research should avoid defining its objects according to the statistical appearance of a problem, especially with the objective to disclosure veiled aspects of the violence phenomenon in contemporary societies

Changing Discourses – (Re-)Appraisal of Societal Processes

Vekar Mir (University of Delhi, India): Resistance of the Erasing Violence of 'Enforced Disappearances' in Kashmir: The Biography of Parveena Ahangar

Kashmir has been a bone of contention between India and Pakistan since 1947, following India's independence from the British and the creation of Pakistan. Despite the legal ambiguities surrounding its accession to the Indian Republic, Kashmir remains central to India's imagination of its own identity. It is widely viewed through its geopolitical framing as an area of 'strategic' significance and as an arena for contesting Pakistan's ambitions to destabilize India. As a result, Kashmiris are at the receiving end of a governmentality that is sustained through a biopolitical framework of the Indian state that functions through the prism of 'security' and management of daily lives. This translates into the deployment of army in massive numbers and the imposition of laws granting impunity and immense powers to the military; turning Kashmir into a prison camp gaining the title of the most militarized zone in the world.

Within this context my MPhil thesis titled "Enforced Disappearances in Kashmir: A Sociological Analysis of the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) as Resistance" focuses on the concept of enforced disappearances as a tool of state violence which gained momentum in the post-1990 Kashmir conflict and foregrounds a counter-resistance to the same - highlighted in human right accounts as a 'transitional justice' mechanism - through an analysis of APDP. The helplessness of the families and relatives of those who were victims of the 'erasing violence' of enforced disappearances brought them together over the years to fight for the cause of bringing back their loved ones, and evolved into one of the most powerful movements that Kashmir had ever witnessed in the form of APDP. The history of formation of APDP as a counter-narrative to state violence through the processes of collectivization of memory and occupation of public spaces, is primarily charted and narrated through the transformations and travails in

the life of one of its most important protagonist – Parveena Ahangar, sometimes referred to as the ‘Iron Lady of Kashmir’. The journey of APDP corresponds to the journey of Parveena Ahangar’s life - the critical event, the disruption, the transformation and the consolidation. By attempting to tell the story of a movement and its significance through the life of an individual, the intention is not only to highlight the individual human passion that has gone into shaping the movement into what it is now in the face of complex geopolitical realities but also to emphasize the larger project of bringing bodies to the center of geopolitical discussions on violence after decades of subordinating bodies to the landscape and political “macro”. Therefore, my paper, which would be excerpted from my thesis, would highlight not only how a biographical life account plays out in the context of violence but also how violence emerges and is responded to in a biographical account; thus, underscoring biography as methodology in sociology of conflict.

Kawthar El-Qasem (University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf, Germany): The (Im-)Possibility of Violence – Exploring Strategies in Dealing with Contingency

The impacts of violence and violent conditions as part of a superordinate process of deculturation are neither unidimensional nor are they limited to one aspect of life or a defined period. They are intertwined to a degree that they rather become a condition that the protagonists have to cope with while trying to maintain their own social order.

Meanwhile, experiencing violence and vulnerability extends the range of the possible and thereby means experiencing contingency. In a dynamic of ongoing (violent) change exceeding contingency becomes a central trait of the deculturative condition. At the same time, the experiences of the targeted (communities) are only valid within the frame of deculturation and remain invisible, impossible or unbelievable outside. Thus, the knowledge of the (im-)possible becomes an intimate knowledge that members of the targeted communities share. This intimate knowledge is indispensable since it plays a vital role in dealing with the conditions they are exposed to.

This paper wants to understand how targeted communities produce and circulate this specific knowledge? How is the experience of contingency reflected within this knowledge and which strategies do protagonists develop in dealing with it?

Researching Palestinian Orality among Palestinian refugees in Jordan, the Westbank and Israel, oral transmission turns out to be a tool of knowledge production that reflects among others the experience of violence. This paper examines the way in which Palestinian protagonists in the Westbank narrate the experience of violence and negotiate contingency in their lives and interactions. It traces the way they construct their own position within the deculturative condition by employing the strategy of inversion. Inversion as *Modus Operandi* of Palestinian oral transmission is based on the potential permutability in the protagonists' conceptualizations of their own or their "particular", as Abu Lughod calls it. An increased awareness of contingency turns out to facilitate inversion while it is at the same time reproduced through it and turned into a resource for thinking the future.

This paper presents results of a Reflexive Grounded Theory Study (RGTM) conducted between February and September 2011 using participatory observation and guided interviews. The analysis according to the RGTM combined with elements of the Systematic Metaphor Analysis allowed the reconstruction of the practice of Palestinian Orality and the discovery of inversion as a strategy in dealing with deculturalization.

Stefanie Rauch (University College London, UK): Legacies of Violence: Changing Discourses of Justice in Post-war Narratives about the Nazi Past

Since the 1990s, "perpetrator research" has focused on "ordinary" perpetrators of the Holocaust, such as reserve police battalions and Wehrmacht soldiers, many of whom became complicit in deportations, mass shootings, and other atrocities. Another strand of research has explored the aftermath of war and genocide, and biographical recollections and justifications among "perpetrators" and "bystanders". Yet issues of wider complicity in and facilitation of Nazi crimes among the non-Jewish German and Austrian populations, and the ways in which they later sought to make sense of their involvement, remain little understood.

This paper will consider what it means to "ordinary" Germans and Austrians to have stood on the "wrong side of history" after 1945, when legal and moral frames had changed, taking into account the relationship between people's actions and attitudes during the "Third Reich", and their post-war representations. It draws on case studies from oral accounts collected in differ-

ent contexts since the 1980s, held at different archives, including interviews with former Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS members, secretaries in Nazi organizations and commercial companies, nurses, farm workers, and homemakers. These sources remain greatly under-utilized in Holocaust studies, which has focused more strongly on survivor testimonies. Based on select accounts, I will evaluate the impact of changing public discourses of justice, legality, and legitimacy, alongside a personal need to keep intact one's sense of self, on representations of violence and agency.

I will demonstrate how, among people who stood on a wide spectrum of complicity, changing public discourses relate to widespread post-war condemnation of the Holocaust, and the simultaneous normalization and justification of forced labour, pre-war concentration camp internment, and violence against partisans. Finally, the paper will consider potential implications for processes of post-conflict reconciliation, demands for penance, accountability and responsibility, and the pursuit of justice.

Rasa Balockaite (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania): Monuments to the Victims of the War Time Sexual Violence: Cultural Interpretations and Ideological Connotations

The aim of my presentation is to illuminate, how war time sexual violence is being actively remembered (or forgotten), how it is being interpreted in different social and historical settings, and how it is represented through monuments and memorials. The research is not based primarily on the biographies of the survivors, but still closely linked to them, as the monuments indicate how does society see the life histories of the survivors, and how do survivors see it by themselves.

The major question of the research is - what is the narrative of the war time sexual violence, how it is remembered, articulated, represented, what are the ideological, political, cultural, psychological and emotional connotations of the monuments?

So far, the research has revealed how monuments serve different purposes, such as instrument in political dialogue between Japan and Korea ("Comfort women" monument in Seoul, Korea), as a mean for fostering reconciliation and acceptance of the victims and survivors in strongly

patriarchal societies (“Heroinat” memorial in Pristina), a way of coping with trauma or spontaneous traumatic reaction (“Komm Frau” memorial in Gdansk), Christian imperatives of love and forgiveness (“Mamma Ciociara” monument in Italy), etc.

Particular attention is devoted to memorial and general commemoration of Elena Spirgevičiūtė and Stasė Žukaitė, who have been killed in 1944 by the Soviet partisans while resisting rape attempts. In public discourse, their deaths were interpreted in traditional catholic patriarchal narrative of “choosing chastity over life”. During the Soviet years, their original gravestones containing inscriptions about “woman’s honour,” heroism of Lithuanian females” and “martyr’s crown” attracted too much public attention and soon the graves were transferred from central to peripheral cemetery. Public memorial to both women was erected on the private initiative of their relatives after the fall of the Soviet bloc in 1998 and two years later, Bishop Sigitas Tamkevičius initiated the process of beatification of Elena Spirgevičiūtė.

Whereas in other cases monuments function as instruments of political dialogue (Bosnia, Korea), as recognition of the women’s suffering (Korea, Bosnia, Italy), as a way of coping with trauma (Poland), or as critique of patriarchal system and patriarchal values (Kosovo), in Lithuanian case, the war time sexual violence is articulated in a very traditional catholic patriarchal narrative, to re assert traditional catholic and patriarchal values.

Changing Perspectives – (Re-)Interpretations of Violence

Martín Hernán Di Marco (National Scientific and Technical Research Council, Argentina): Reconstructing Palimpsests: Life Stories of Men Who Have Committed Homicide in Buenos Aires
Conurbation

Research about violence has proven that the complexity of this phenomenon not only requires population-based studies, but also in-depth analyses to explain its meanings and dynamics. Biographical strategies have demonstrated that its conditions of possibility, among other aspects, can only be analysed from subjective experiences. Despite the fact that it is crucial to understand the meanings that performers of violence attribute to their actions, they are seldom studied from their own perspective.

This paper has two complementary objectives. First, to describe social trajectories of men who have committed homicides in Buenos Aires Conurbation, from their point of view, to analyse relationships and events in the light of social contexts. Second, since most of these subjects are incarcerated, a methodological objective is to analyse a limitation of biographical methods: the effect of dispositifs (judicial and psychological discourses) in memory and interpretation of the past. A qualitative methodology was designed, consisting of in-depth life stories of men (22-32 years old) who have committed homicide. Unstructured interviews were conducted to identify meaningful biographical events and to avoid directive questions and underlying assumptions. The life stories of these men can be described as a palimpsest —juxtaposed composition of heterogeneous memories and interpretations— typified in two interconnected levels. First, men described their lives in a structured sequence, emphasizing their personality traits and lack of norms during their upbringing. However, after further interviews, biographical turning-points were identified by them: close experiences with violent deaths, socialisation of violent practices and economic burden. Interviewed men emphasized events and interpretations more linked to discourses circulating in the judicial system, downplaying other interpretations of their lives. This study illustrates how physical violence is socialised and suggests how dispositifs shape memory and promote psychological interpretations of violence.

Oksana Danylenko (Kharkiv National University, Ukraine): “The Homecomer” in Present-day Ukraine: The Everyday World of Ukrainian Soldiers After Returning from the War

This talk is a presentation of the results of qualitative social research carried out in Ukraine. It is based on interviews with two Ukrainian soldiers after their return from the war in eastern Ukraine. The cases are very similar, but at the same time they are also very different: the main difference lies in whether or not the returnee feels that he has come home for good.

The study is a synthesis of the biographical method (as developed by Gabriele Rosenthal) and the linguo-conflictological method (study of the language of conflict and the images of conflict). The methodology and empirical interpretation is based on Alfred Schütz’s sociology of everyday life, and especially on his work “The Homecomer”. Here, the terms “home” and “coming home”

are central concepts, and the question arises as to whether it is possible to adapt these ideas for use in qualitative social research.

The aim of this study is to identify the special features of transformed life worlds, relevance systems and horizons of meaning in the context of actual and potential conflicts.

The main research questions, which are answered by interpreting the interview texts, are the following: How do the returnees adapt themselves to peaceful civilian life? What do they feel? How do the soldiers interpret the social conflicts in Ukraine? How do these interpretation patterns influence their actions, and have they been changed by doing military service? What layers of new experiences have the soldiers gained in the war, and in what ways have these influenced their biography since returning home? What special features can be identified in respect of the Ukrainian soldiers?

And one of the most important questions, which is directly connected with these contrasting cases: when a soldier returns from the war, what determines whether or not he feels that he has come home for good? What role does the person's biographical situation play? Is the extreme experience of soldiers in the war the key factor in their ability to adapt? These and other related problems will be examined by analyzing the interview texts.

Ute Zillig (Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Germany): Processes of Change in Transgenerational Relationships – A Reconstruction of Biographical Paths Out of Violent and Traumatic Experiences

In my paper I would like to present some findings of my PhD-research based on biographies of mothers suffering from complex trauma after biographical experiences such as sexual abuse, exploitation and neglect. I will focus on transgenerational consequences and dynamics of violent experiences.

At first, I will point out that the transgenerational transfer of trauma was experienced as unavoidable by the interviewed women. These experiences were accompanied by strong feelings of guilt and self-devaluation. However, processes of self-understanding leading to a change of feelings of guilt and self-devaluation were seen as well. With a focus on the German psychiatric and child welfare system and by analysing biographical narratives I would like to provide in-

sights on how trauma-specific concepts (e.g. dissociation, Inner Child work) offer ways of support and contribute to the women's self-understanding. Through these processes of self-understanding, mothers with complex trauma were enabled to begin to change their transgenerational relationships as well. The transgenerational transfer of violence and trauma was not seen as unavoidable anymore.

Furthermore, I would like to discuss the significance of specific working relationships with psychosocial professionals. Through these encouraging relationships that focused on the present and its differences from the violent and traumatic past, the interviewed women could gain self-confidence and gradually distance themselves from their feelings of inevitability about their current situation.

Arne Worm (University of Goettingen, Germany): The presence of (collective) violence, or: How do Syrian refugees reconstruct their biographies within the figurations of (illegalized) migration from a (civil-)war

In this paper I will present empirical findings from my PhD project on changing constructions of belonging and processes of (re-)grouping within the biographies of Syrian refugees, which forms part of the bigger DFG-funded research project "The Social Construction of Border Zones". In the field of sociology of violence/violent conflicts, and in migration research, changes in the social order and in relations between groupings, as well as transformations of images of the self, group belonging and perspectives on other groupings on different levels (e.g. gender, religion, ethnicity, class) have long been important topics. Yet, these two perspectives have rarely been combined.

Based on biographical case reconstructions from our fieldwork in the Spanish exclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa, and drawing on considerations of the sociology of violence and figuration sociology, I will present different courses of illegalized migration against the background of an ongoing (civil) war. I will highlight that specific experiences of (collective and individual) violence in the past and the present play a crucial role in the processes of biographical re-orientation of my interviewees and thereby the dynamics of (forced) migration. To understand these courses, I will argue that we have to pay attention to the complex interrelation

between life courses and the collective and family histories of refugees, as well as their figurations with other groupings before, during and after their migration projects from a (civil) war.

Domestic Violence and Police Interventions

Susanne Nef (Zurich University of Applied Science, Switzerland): Reconstruction of the (Processes of) Interpretations of Violence, from the Perspectives of Persons Affected by Domestic Violence

Within the ambit of the international conference, the theoretical framework, methodology and methodological approach utilised in the dissertation, as well as first findings on the dynamic interplay between biography and subjective interpretations of violence and being affected by violence will be presented and discussed.

The dissertation examines persons affected by domestic violence (partner violence). The analysis seeks to understand what individual life situations and interpretations influence the respective manifestations of agency, how those affected interpret the respective forms of violence, and in what contexts. Grounded Theory methodology (GTM) is the fundamental theoretical research methodology utilised, along with its constructivist renewal (KGT) (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 2010). In keeping with the epistemic research focus centred on the subject, the underlying aim is to investigate the constructions of the power to act (and its absence) and the subjective interpretations of injurious relations and being affected by violence. That is because in the course of the analysis, the great relevance became manifest of the gendering of violence, and more particularly, the gendering of the social and subjective interpretation of the ability for action and conceptions of effectiveness of action, above all also against the backdrop of an individual's own personal experiences. To this end, the forms (inter alia) of effectiveness of action and impact which, for example, are ascribed to individuals, and the interpretations of violence, being affected by violence and action are examined (Helfferich, 2012, p. 13). In this connection, the analysis seeks to reconstruct how a person's own biography is referred to in the subjective interpretation as a background foil in order to render explainable (a) one's own encounter with and experience of violence and (b) the dynamic interplay be-

tween biography and one's own subjective interpretations and (self-) theories regarding violence ("What actions and forms of behaviour do the persons affected perceive as violence // injurious relations and how do they perceive and interpret these?").

Miriam Schäfer (University of Goettingen): The Construction of Suspicion. Processes of Typification in the Context of Domestic Violence

In my current research about occupational choices of police officers and their everyday police life I conducted Interviews and did ethnographic observations. Based on findings of my empirical fieldwork I will discuss how suspicion becomes constructed and proceeded and which interpretations of the situation are relevant to different contexts.

I will show how police officers interpret the situation, how this interpretation varies in the situation according to their (modified) assumptions and how this structures the progress of the situation. Basically, in the context of domestic violence it means to reconstruct what happened and linked to that to decide "who" the perpetrator is. Based on two cases I will explore which typifications appear and how the police officers try to verify them. Furthermore, I will discuss, what happens if the police officers assumptions and typifications do not frame the situation as a domestic violent one.

Everyday Violence and Othering

Vimal Kumar (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India): The Everyday Violence of Caste in India. An Ethnographic of Gorakhpur Village of Haryana

Caste violence is not an uncommon in India. In the last decade, there were a number of incidences of caste violence in various parts of the country. In caste based Indian society, generations of Scheduled Castes have been facing Caste-based discrimination and. The National Crime Records Bureau of 2012 reveals that 33655 crimes were committed against Scheduled Castes. The state of Haryana is regularly in news for atrocity against Scheduled Castes. Haryana is one of the states in India where there was a high acquittal rate, cases involving offenses against Scheduled Castes. Cases of atrocities against Scheduled Castes in Haryana rose from 303 in

2009 to 380 in 2010 and to 408 in 2011. This marks 35 percent increased between 2008 and 2011. Of 408 cases registered last year, 60 concerned rapes of Scheduled Caste.

On the other hand, due to the lowest rung in the caste hierarchy the scavenger community is the most oppressed on various socio-economic grounds. They sweep the roads and streets, clean the sewage, remove dead animals and work as manual scavengers. They are suffering not only from physical violence but also from, economic exploitation, social boycott, sexual assaults, bounded labor etc. The situation has become worse than before and violence is increasing in everyday life of Scheduled Castes.

The focus of the research is on caste violence and its productive role in the dynamic caste relations. It involves a case study of Gorakhpur village in Fatehabad district of Haryana. This paper is the result of an ethnographic research done by spending two years in the field and data is collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews during the stay in Gorakhpur village 2015- 2016. The paper argues that the frequency of changing relationships as "Jajmani System" increases the problems for scheduled castes. The problems of caste politics, untouchability, the hierarchy among scheduled caste and everyday violence on scheduled castes will be discussed in this paper.

Gertraud Kremsner (University of Vienna, Austria): Violence Against People with Learning Difficulties in Institutional Settings

Located within the framework of Dis/Ability Studies, the proposed paper addresses the question of how people with learning difficulties experience institutional and personal structures in the context of care facilities with a special focus on how violence and the abuse of power occur in their biographies. Dealing with these questions, the biographies of 6 persons have been surveyed. All participants have been labelled as „people with learning difficulties“ at some point during their lifespan. Most have lived in „total institutions“, e.g. psychiatries, children’s homes or large institutions for people with disabilities, for several years. All are currently using care facilities for people with learning difficulties.

The study is located within the framework of Inclusive Research, supplemented by a Life History Research-approach. Following Clarke’s Situational Analysis, 43 interviews have been analysed.

Results have been generated which display the complexity of living a life as a person labelled with learning difficulties in institutional care.

(Total) Institutions for people with learning difficulties can be described as “locations of coercion” which are responsible for changing people or rather trim them towards „normalcy“. Within the context of care facilities, multiple forms of violence can be identified which are inflicted on people with learning difficulties.

According to the experiences of the 6 participants, „disabilities“ are socially constructed and are reproduced within an institutional framework. Hegemonically interwoven social worlds and actors play a key role in this process; people with learning difficulties themselves are overlooked and are made „subaltern“. (Total) institutions can be described as „hegemonic apparatus“: Based on broad societal consensus, they have been entrusted with pedagogical interventions on people with learning difficulties. Alternative services, e.g. personal assistance, are not applicable. Considering the experiences of the research participants, they feel excluded from society and imprisoned in institutions.

Denisa Butnaru (University of Konstanz, Germany): The Body Against the Self – how Bodily Disability Grounds Violence

The development of disability studies in the past twenty years has drawn attention to major phenomena, such as discrimination and various forms of violent behavior or symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1993: 256) to which persons having disabilities are confronted. In the case of a disability which is not seen – for instance of psychological nature – the violent behavior may not develop at the level of primary perception. On the contrary, in the case of a person who has a visible disability, as for instance cerebral palsy (CP), one may be often confronted to violent reactions and violent contexts from the first moment of the disability perception by another human fellow.

Using narrative interviews with persons having cerebral palsy, it shall be shown in the following how their bodies become in some specific social contexts the scene of violent behavior. Examples such as attending schools and universities, looking for a job, or being present in public spaces where leisure activities are carried (movie theaters, restaurants), or smaller contexts

such as parties shall be evoked in order to show how the corporeal repertoire of what is socially marked as disability becomes a field contributing to mechanisms of violence.

In order to analyze this disability example, the conceptual frame of the phenomenology of the body (Maurice Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2012) and disability (Leder 1990) shall be used. Especially central notions such as body image and body schema, essential in phenomenology, shall be considered and related to the empirical material. This correlation shall further be used to show how the visible body of motility disability becomes an antagonist part of one's self. In addition, what shall be inquired is how the corporeal visibility of disability develops into a specific background for situations of violence perpetrated against the interviewees. These forms of violence are either invisible, or concrete and material in their consequences. They shall be discussed with respect to the above mentioned social contexts.

Eva Bahl (University of Goettingen, Germany): The Construction of "the Other" in the Moroccan-Spanish Border Zone: Violence in the Life Stories of Moroccan Juveniles

In this paper, I want to explore life stories of Moroccan juveniles in Ceuta and Melilla, Spanish Enclaves in North Africa. It is based on my field research in the postcolonial border zone between Morocco and Spain, which is part of my PhD research and embedded in the project "The Social Construction of Border Zones", funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

There was a recurrent pattern in the biographical narrative interviews which I conducted during my fieldwork with young Moroccans in Ceuta and Melilla: they had run away from home as children after suffering from poverty and violence (in many cases domestic violence), and had traveled without their parents to one of the Spanish enclaves – more or less directly, more or less voluntarily. Up to the time of the interview, they had lived in this border zone, generally with contacts on both sides of the border, and were affected by residential and work restrictions, and various forms of exclusion. What began to interest me was the big gap between their self-presentations, on the one hand, which were characterized by violence and suffering, but also by their self-assertion and their will to survive and, on the other hand, the construction of them as "the other" by the established population.

In this paper, I will contrast they-images and biographical self-presentations based on my empirical material and biographical case studies. I argue that the precarious situation of these Moroccan juveniles and their transnational biographies are constitutive for the Moroccan-Spanish border zone. They are in a complex outsider position within the figurations of Spanish-Christian and Moroccan-Muslim local populations. Drawing on Elias's concept of established-outsider relations I will discuss the social and discursive practices of marginalization and how (shifting) asymmetrical power balances are interrelated with the construction of belonging and we-images.

Violence – Borders – Migration

Arnab Roy Chowdhury (Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia): Chronicles of Violence and 'Bare Life': The Rohingya 'Boat People' of Asia

In May 2015, a large group of about eight thousand people travelling in fishing boats and trawlers attempted to illegally enter Malaysia (via Thailand) through sea-faring routes. The Malaysian government refused them entry into the country and left them floating in the sea. This led to the death of many children, women and older people. Later, with assistance of aid from the Qatar government, Malaysia agreed to give the stranded people temporary asylum.

Mediated by human traffickers, each year, huge numbers of poor 'Rohingya' Muslims from Myanmar try to migrate to countries like Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia, illegally on boats' through sea-routes. Typical of 'forced migration', they are completely hapless people fleeing from torture, rape and persecution in Myanmar. They were officially made 'stateless' by the Myanmar government by mooting the 1982 Citizenship law whereby their ethnicity was de-recognised and they were labelled as outsiders.

In order to flee from Myanmar, they pay a proportionate sum of money to human trafficking agents just to find their way in the 'host' countries, and instead end up being slaves, or, even worse, facing gruesome death. If they remain alive, these traffickers take extortion money from their impoverished families before releasing them.

This paper is the result of the author's 'ethnographic' involvement as part of a two-year long project (2015-2017) among these refugee 'boat people' in Bangladesh and Thailand. The paper discusses what leads these poor people to embark on such insecure and dangerous journeys. The paper talks about the precariousness and liminality of their lives in Myanmar and outside it by taking a biographical and narrative based analysis. It engages with issues of 'forced migration', 'statelessness', 'human rights', and issues of violence that is both corporeal and structural in nature. It interprets violence from the standpoint of various actors involved, in a synchronic and diachronic perspective.

Conceptually Agamben's notion of 'bare life', where 'life' is reduced to an entity without legal rights and is exposed to the vagaries and monstrosities of various state and non-state actors will be useful as a heuristic device to understand this violent political geography of forced migration in South and Southeast Asia.

Lucas Cé Sangalli (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil):
Violence in Various Figurations: Experiences of Violence in the Life of a Haitian Migrant

This paper presents the results of a biographical case reconstruction of a Haitian migrant that crossed various social figurations in his dislocation process from the Haitian countryside to Southern Brazil. The focus is the experience of violence he underwent during this dislocation through different figurations. The violence is related to different aspects of his biography and range from gender to racial violence. These differences appear in relation to the different figurations the migrant experiences during his life course. The investigation is theoretically grounded in the Phenomenological Sociology (Alfred Schütz), the Sociology of Knowledge (Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann), and the Sociology of Processes and Figurations (Norbert Elias). The biographical narrative interview method of the German tradition (Fritz Schütze, Gabriele Rosenthal) was used to reconstruct an empirical case, which encompasses the analysis of a Haitian migrant's life and of its relatives in Haiti, Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil. Therewith empirically grounded knowledge on the experiences of violence in the life trajectory of a Haitian migrant living in Brazil was possible. Based on the analysis of the empirical case, a few remarks regarding the entanglement of the dislocation process and violence are presented, such as the shifting nature of the prevalence of racial violence in some social figurations and not in others.

Efrat Ben-Ze'ev/Nir Gazit (Ruppin Academic Center, Emek Hefer, Israel): The Dialectic Border:
An Ethnography of the Egyptian-Israeli Contact Zone

Our study of the Egyptian-Israeli border approaches it as a contact zone between the global south and north and as a passageway for Asylum seekers. Between Egypt and Israel is the Sinai Peninsula, a partially-controlled frontier reminiscent of other international buffer-zones such as the Sonoma desert and the Mediterranean Sea. These fundamental elements construct this border and are somewhat similar to border-zones elsewhere. Our study takes an ethnographic approach and asks what are the reactions and interpretations of this border's populations to the global phenomena that manifest themselves here? How do these populations practically respond to the changes taking place in recent years? We take a bottom-up approach to illuminate the forces that shape this border at ground level and posit that these forces are crucial to the understanding of the social construction of borders.

This study is part of a German-Israeli project financed by the DFG. It began in 2014 and will continue through 2018. It is comprised of dozens of participant observations along the border, including a follow-up on the erection of the border-fence. We conducted in-depth interviews with over eighty people and analyzed media coverage and court cases dealing with this border. We discovered that this border's populations shared a dialectical stance towards it, hoping to keep it open as well as sealed off, interchangeably. Jewish-Israeli settlers feared insurgents from the Sinai and the growing numbers of arriving asylum-seekers but also wished for a frontier, open to the Sinai; Israeli soldiers' role was to keep the border sealed off due to security threats yet it was also kept open for gathering intelligence and occasionally humanitarian aid and "hot returns." African asylum-seekers sought refuge by crossing this dangerous border, yet having arrived, hoped for it to close-down behind them, protecting them from the violence lurking in the Sinai. The indigenous Bedouins, low in the national packing-order, exploited the border for illicit economic activities such as smuggling and trafficking, made possible only because there is a border. This border, we argue, is not a fixed entity; rather, it is a dynamic one evolving in response to the ways various populations engage with it.

Dolly Abdul Karim/Johannes Becker (University of Goettingen, Germany): Intertwined Experiences of Violence and Migration and their Relevance for Everyday Lives

Based on research in Amman, Jordan, we will reconstruct (multiple) processes of migration and how they were intertwined with differing and multi-layered experiences of violence. We will highlight the continuing relevance of these experiences in the present.

Our discussion is based on first results from our research in the context of the project 'Dynamic figurations of refugees, migrants, and long-time residents in Jordan since 1946: between peaceable and tension-ridden co-existence?' (funded by the German Research Organisation DFG, led by Gabriele Rosenthal).

We will introduce case reconstructions based on narrative-biographical interviews with two women who came to Jordan from different countries in different socio-historical periods. The analysis highlights the ways their processes of migration were intertwined with various and differing experiences of violence (e.g. in the context of wars or state persecution and/or within the family), how these dynamics effect their constructions of belonging as well as their social positioning in Amman, their daily lives and social interactions, and the ways the women have developed to work through these experiences of violence.

Women in Violent Action

Michaela Köttig (Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Germany): The Role of Family History and Biography in the Genesis of Female Violence: A Gap in the Academic Debate in Germany

In Germany, the academic debate on female violence has always centred around issues such as differences in the violent behaviour of men and women, and how much violence is carried out by women. The reason for this focus lies in the historical development of the debate itself. Besides looking at the quantity and quality of female violence, this paper is devoted to a discussion of the academic discourse as it has developed in Germany in the field of gender and research results. Past research shows that there is a need to study the relationship between

causes and effects, in other words the genesis of present violent behaviour. The reconstruction of biographies shows causal connections between present violent behaviour and family history and biography. In my paper, I will discuss empirical cases which exemplify this interrelationship.

Sevil Cakir-Kilincoglu (Leiden University, Netherlands): Everyday Experiences of Activist Women and Leftist Clandestine Political Violence in Iran and Turkey during the 1970s

The beginning of the 1970s marked the fading away of the spirit of the student movements and the flourishing of militant revolutionary activism in most countries including Iran and Turkey. Convinced that their governments were collaborating with the United States and a comprador bourgeoisie was ruling over their country, numerous left-leaning men and women from Turkey and Iran adopted armed struggle as the only way to get rid of those regimes and eventually establish a socialist or communist society. Inspired by the victories of guerrilla struggles in Latin America and the so-called Cultural Revolution in China, they embraced an eclectic mix of Maoist ideals and urban guerrilla warfare. In these unique conditions, the women among them had such extraordinary experiences that challenged not only traditional gender relations in their societies but also the growing sexual emancipation trajectory of the global sixties.

In this paper, I examine what sorts of challenges and opportunities women were presented with while pursuing armed and clandestine left-wing activism, especially in the safe houses of their revolutionary organizations. Through life history interviews I have conducted with former activist women, I focus on their everyday lives, which revolved around organizational duties, daily chores, and responsibilities for disguising the house, and analyze the characteristics of gender roles and relations between men and women. In order to explain the similarities and dissimilarities in the everyday experiences of Iranian and Turkish militant women, this paper strives to present a multi-level analysis by drawing on dynamic and interactive relations between various actors from the state and its security forces to rival or counter-movement organizations. Besides, it also pays a special attention to the ways in which political violence was legitimized and employed in meso-level and how they might have influenced women's experiences.

Johanna Masse (Université Laval, Québec, Canada): Re-evaluating Women's Political Agency in Violent Settings. A Comparison Between Northern Ireland and Palestinian Women

Despite the continuous involvement of women in terrorist groups since the 19th century, the appraisal of women's political violence is still subjected to substantial bias, notably regarding their often-denied political agency. Women involved in "terrorist" organizations are therefore often "exceptionalized" in academic literature; as is questioned the "political" dimension of their actions. As we will show, such assumptions need to be questioned as it hinders a global appreciation and understanding of women's roles in such groups; and more generally of the multifaceted dimension of violence itself. The fact that women members generally occupy "behind-the-lines" functions (logistic, communication, etc.) should not presume of a lesser engagement in the group. Moreover, operating in a patriarchal and often oppressive context (civil wars/occupation) do not automatically imply that these women are not autonomous agents. Using semi-directed interviews about the life story of women activists involved in the Northern Ireland conflict during the "Troubles" (1969-1999) and Palestinian women, as well as autobiographical accounts and second-hand materials, we will expose that much can be learnt from the personal narratives of women perpetrators. Not only it permits us to question the widely-held understanding of political agency as binary, it also highlights the pervasive character of violence – too often understood as only referring to a direct and "physical" act.

Karina Schuh Reif (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil): In Freedom: Biographical Narratives of Women Experiencing Violence and Incarceration

This paper is part of my Master's degree's research, concluded in 2016, in which I analyzed the experiences of women's freedom after a period of incarceration. Through the methodological approach of biographical narrative it was possible to identify the main topics presented in the speeches during their freedom after a period of detention. Biographical interviews were conducted with seven women who were imprisoned in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul. One of the interviews was analyzed using sequential manner and the others were evaluated in a global

manner, following the pattern of biographical narrative analysis developed by Gabriele Rosenthal. The biographical narratives highlighted three aspects: ex prisoner stigma, expressed as a latent manner, such as it appears in the biographical reports of Marilene (one of the interviewees) and others. The second point presented is the reinforcement of gender roles, used to mitigate the image of ex-prisoners. The third point emphasized in the interviews and analyzed in this research is the correction of character that ex-prisoners attributed to the prison system. All women interviewed had experienced physical and psychological violence either as the author or as the victim. This research intended to contribute to understanding the experience of freedom after a period in jail. Biographical narratives demonstrate that analysis of prior biographical periods, such as incarceration and prior experiences, might contribute to comprehend the way freedom is experienced. Amongst the outcomes of this work is the finding that the data gathered from the individuals interviewed does not support the logic suggested by some writers that the jail would work as a “crime school”. The considerations lead to the understanding that prisoners interviewed want a new opportunity. The priority given to their families is used as motivation to prevent relapsing. The research suggests the necessity to increase the number of interviews to be sequentially analyzed, in future work, with the purpose to build defined biographical typology for the experience of freedom after a period of incarceration.

Genocide – Ethnicized conflicts – Political Persecution

Artur Bogner (University of Bayreuth, Germany): Everyday-Knowledge Explanations of Inter-Ethnic Violence. Positioning and Positions in Relations to Figurations and Discourses

This paper will deal amongst others with the following assumption: As discourses are parts of “social” figurations (in the sense proposed by Elias) the relationship between the researcher and the field of inquiry is always mediated by discourses as constitutive parts of figurations, or in other words by figurations that include the discourses which exist in a relationship of mutual constitution with them.

The empirical material will be interpretations of inter-ethnic violence or armed conflicts as collected chiefly in narrative interviews with scientific non-experts or ‘laypeople’ in Ghana, Togo and Uganda. The presentation will deal with the following research questions:

1. Which constellations of (“social”, collective-historical, biographical, etc.) circumstances are likely to evoke everyday-knowledge explanations of inter-ethnic violence and its causation? And which constellations do not do this, or not as much?
2. How do these explanations differ in connection with the belonging (especially membership of diverse and varying we-groups), position, status, and life course of the interlocutor or interviewee?
3. How may these explanations assist the de-escalation or escalation of violence? And how may various courses or stages of conflict promote different types of explanation?

One perhaps significant observation is that in some situations or settings it is apparently necessary to be in a relatively “strong” position in order to deviate from an established discourse. In other situations, or settings this does not seem to be required.

Daniel Bultmann (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany): *Habitus Hermeneutics and the Cambodian Field of Insurgency*

How do civil war commanders make their soldiers fight and risk their lives in combat? Why do some use physical violence to make their followers respond to orders, while others engage in complex psychological education and mental preparation? Why do some train their rank-and-file soldiers, while others simply hand them weapons without further preparations? And how do soldiers themselves respond to command structures and disciplinary systems? The presentation will provide answers to these questions, thereby shedding light on how power and social hierarchies are being reproduced in insurgent movements. It will explain the importance of social structure and, more precisely, the habitus of agents within the field of insurgency in maintaining hierarchy and command in organizing and enforcing consent. Commanders and soldiers, in this perspective, structure their disciplinary practice according to incorporated behavioral and cognitive schemes that relate to the social position of the respective agent, his resources and the patterns of his life course. Moreover, their social position within society and within certain social networks in particular decides over trajectories into these groups.

The presentation is based upon eighty-six qualitative interviews with commanders and soldiers from three insurgent groups operating along the Thai-Cambodian border during the 1980s and 1990s. Using the technique of habitus hermeneutics, interviews were conducted with members of the Khmer People's National Liberation Armed Forces (KPNLAF), the Armée Nationale Sihanoukiste (ANS), and the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK, better known as the Khmer Rouge). The presentation will provide insights into the social structure of these groups, how power becomes reproduced through disciplinary practice, and which role symbolic violence plays in the formation of insurgent groups and their internal hierarchies. It shows how biographical research informed by sociological theory may not only help to understand the inner hierarchies and power structure, but possibly also the dissolution of armed groups after war's end.

Sandra Gruner Domić (University of Southern California/Shoah Foundation, Los Angeles, USA):
Useless Suffering: Indigenous Guatemalan Lives

This proposal is based on my empirical research that looks on memories of violence interpreting biographical narratives of survivors of the Guatemalan Genocide. The larger project does not limit itself to mass violence or the context of civil war, but also includes the pre and post-conflict. It uses biographical interviews recorded by the Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala, in collaboration with the USC Shoah Foundation that preserve and make accessible this Guatemalan collection.

For the presentation at the conference, I would like to focus on some of the personal experiences of violence as part of their everyday life throughout their entire biography. In their biographical accounts, especially among indigenous community members, the reflection on past events recalls collective, familial and personal history.

The violence that Mayan's from the Highlands and the regions under conflict in Guatemala, experienced does not reduce alone to the time frame of the 36 years of civil war, nor the moments of genocidal campaigns during the 1980ies. In their biographical narratives, the interviewees mention many different moments of their lives in which the impact of larger structural and social violence as schools, seasonal work, shaped their personal life and their collective perception.

The fear experienced by Guatemalans after the disappearances of loved ones created what Maria Langer called “frozen grief” nurturing the imagination of the death or the survival and torture of their relatives after witnessing displayed corpses in public. This form of violence inhibited sharing experiences and silence even creating a sense of guilt. The concept of violence is certainly one of the most difficult terms to configure either in their narrow understanding, as well as in a processual and unfolding moment. My intention is to present some of these examples that reach from schooling experiences, displacement, disappearances, hiding in forest to mass killings. The intention to focus on everyday violence is to compare and understand if the legitimate and routinized acts of violence could make structural violence and genocide possible following Nancy Sheper-Hughes thesis of “genocidal continuum”.

By using a sample of 50 interviews from the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive analyzed from a social anthropological perspective, I try to understand from a culture-historical point of view meanings and practices of silent violence. Avoiding to sociologize this biographies as source for social, class ethnic grouping my intentions is to interpret with an open and non-ethnocentric view.

Closing Keynote

Teresa Koloma Beck (Bundeswehr University, Munich, Germany): War-Related Distress and Biographical Disruptions: Sociological Considerations on the Concept of Trauma

In debates about the effects of armed conflicts on people, »trauma«, including »Post Traumatic Stress Disorder« (PTSD), has emerged as the dominant concept to refer to the negative impact of war experiences and to describe the condition of people who cannot cope with these experiences easily. Although the notion is rather narrowly defined in clinical psychology, it is omnipresent in political as well as in academic discourses and is employed to refer to a range of negative effects of war on people around the world. This extensive use, however, obfuscates the complexity and social embeddedness of the phenomena described: what is expressed and recognised as »mental illness«, i.e. PTSD, in the context of a modern Western(-ised) public health system, might appear as »spirit possession« elsewhere. What is expressed in words and unusual behaviour in one place, might be expressed through bodily symptoms in another.

Against this background, the universal validity of Western concepts of mental health has been fiercely discussed in recent years. This presentation will show that at stake here is more than cultural hegemony: the medical language of traumatization systematically narrows the analytical focus by concentrating on the individual as well as on extraordinary cases. To understand the social dynamics and societal significance of war-related psychosocial suffering, moving beyond this individualizing perspective seems imperative.