



## **Mid-term Conference 2016**

### **European Sociological Association**

#### **RN03 BIOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EUROPEAN SOCIETIES**

*University of Latvia, Advanced Social and Political Research Institute*

*22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016*

## **Biographical Research: Inequality and Innovation**

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## **Mid-term Conference 2016**

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**RN03 BIOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EUROPEAN SOCIETIES**  
*University of Latvia, Advanced Social and Political Research Institute*

*Riga, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016*

### **Biographical Research: Inequality and Innovation**

Theoretical and methodological discussions in RN03 over recent years have focused upon: theoretical and applied biographical approaches; creative and innovative methodologies in biographical research such as sensory and visual approaches; memory and methodologies; and also in applying biographical research. The mid-term conference at the University of Latvia on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016 will focus upon the contribution of biographical perspective to sociological debates on recent developments and will discuss important social issues in contemporary Europe.

Conference is supported by:



European Sociological Association

This project of the Baltic-German University Liaison Office is supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with funds from the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic Germany



### **Information about Book:**

Kirsti Joesalu and Anu Kannike (eds). **Cultural Patterns and Life Stories**. Tallin: ACTA Universitatis Tallinnensis, 2016

The articles collected in this book were initially presented at a conference dedicated to Aili Aareleid-Tart's memory on August 27, 2014, in Tallinn. Aili Aareleid-Tart (1947-2014) was a well-known Estonian cultural researcher and sociologist, member of ESA RN03.

**Cultural Event** with filmmaker and media artist Bettina Henkel.

**Conference Fee:** Includes conference registration, lunches, refreshments and conference dinner: 50 Euros. 40 Euros for ESA members and 30 Euros for PhD students.

**Conference Venue:** Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia, Lomonosova street 1a, Riga, Latvia.

**See the website:** <http://www.szf.lu.lv/eng/>

Conference venue is just around 10-15 minutes from Old Riga by public transport - **Trolleybus No 15**. To get on the trolley at the centre of city look for trolley stop located nearby University of Latvia main building (19 Raina Blvd). Trolley bus is located on Inženieru Street, on the right side from the University. Trolley bus 15 starts his way from “**Inženieru iela**” (to Ķengarags) and leaves once in each 5-7 minutes (<http://saraksti.rigassatiksmelv/index.html#trol/15/a-b/en>). Get out of the trolley on the stop “**Lomonosova iela**” – it is located opposite the Faculty of Social Science (<http://www.szf.lu.lv/eng/contacts/>).

### **Hotels:**

We recommend that you choose hotels in or near old Riga however the conference venue is located in the ‘so called Moscow’ neighbourhood and is easily reached by trolley bus.

**Radi un Draugi** is a very centrally located hotel in the heart of Old Riga.

<http://www.hotelradiundraugi.lv/en/>

**Konventa Sēta Hotel** is a very centrally located hotel in the heart of Old Riga.

<http://www.hotelkolonna.com/hotels/en/>

**Monika Centrum Hotel** is located near Old Riga (7-10 minutes walking distance), in the Art Nouveau style neighbourhood, in front of the park. <http://www.monika.centrumhotels.com/en/>

**There will be an informal guided tour around Old Riga. This will be held on Wednesday, September 22, at 18.00. The meeting will be at the small square in front of the University of Latvia main building, Raiņa blv 19.**

If you have any queries about the conference please contact: [rn03conference@gmail.com](mailto:rn03conference@gmail.com)

*We look forward to welcoming you to the Conference and to the University of Latvia*

*Kaja , Baiba and Ina*

## PROGRAMME

Location: Faculty of Social Sciences, Lomonosova 1a, Riga

### Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016

- 9.00-9.30            Opening (Isaiah Berlin auditorium)  
Jānis Ikstens (UL, Vice Rector for social Sciences and Law, ASPRI Director),  
Kaja Kaźmierska (Chair of ESA RN03), Ieva Pranka (Executive Director, Baltic-  
German University Liaison Office)
- 9.30-10.30           **Keynote** (Isaiah Berlin auditorium)  
Vieda Skultans: "I have no future" Narratives of Despair and Hopelessness  
in Post-Soviet Latvia. [*Chair: Baiba Bela*]
- 10.30-11.00           Coffee break
- 11.00-13.00           **Session A** (Isaiah Berlin auditorium)  
***Social Innovation and Biographical experiences*** [*Chair: Katinka Meyer*]
1. Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas: Social innovation in innovators' biographical experiences
  2. Jost Gerhard: Identities of Social Entrepreneurs.
  3. Bartosz Ślawecki and Maciej Ławrynowicz: Identity Work at the Periphery: Constructing New Professional Identities of Social Coops' Presidents
  4. Baiba Bela: Personal experience of poverty - intersection of individual and social in search for social assistance.
- 13.00-14.00           Lunch
- 14.00-15.30           **Session B** (Isaiah Berlin auditorium)  
***Social Activism and Methodological Questions*** [*Chair: Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas*]
5. Ina Alber: Why do you (not) engage in this discourse? Methodological remarks on the triangulation of discourse and biographical analysis
  6. Katarzyna Waniek: The Auto-biographical Approach to Analyze Challenges and Potentials of Liaison Work in European Context
  7. Piotr Szenajch: Extreme cases and their unique epistemic value in biographical sociology
- 15.30-16.00           Coffee break

16.00 -17.30 **Session C**

**World War II – Memories and Consequences** [Chair: Kaja Kaźmierska]

1. Katinka Meyer: Living without a past – Silencing of memories of the GDR’ ‘re-settlers’
2. Filip Pazderski: Acculturation of people from Polish Warmia/Ermland in Germany (1950ies-80ies) - implications for the biographical research on the socio-cultural barriers overcoming
3. Ieva Garda-Rozenberga and Kaspars Zellis: Silenced voices, silenced history – Romanies’ memories of genocide during World War II

18.00–19.00 **Cultural Event with Bettina Henkel** (Isaiah Berlin auditorium)

**Children below Deck**

A lecture-performance about a personal story of three generations: the (late) grandmother, the father and the daughter, who is the director of the film. It focuses on the trans-generational transfer of traumatic experiences, resulting from historical transformations in north-eastern Europe.

19.30 Conference Dinner (Daily in Riga City Council, Ratslaukums 1, entrance from arcade in the basement)

### Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September

9.30-10.30 **Keynote** (Isaiah Berlin auditorium)

Ursula Apitzsch. European migration and its consequences. Generational experiences and biographical differences among migrant workers and their children [Chair: Ina Alber]

10.30 -11.00 Coffee break

11.00 -12.30 **Session D** (Isaiah Berlin auditorium)

**European migration and difficult experiences** [Chair: Katarzyna Waniek]

1. Marta Eichsteller: Globalisation of power, national politics and individual experience – the biographical perspectives on the cross-country mobility in Europe
2. Anna Dolinska: Biographical experiences of highly skilled female migrants from post-soviet countries in Poland
3. Hanna-Mari Husu and Minna Ylilahti: Finding a place after life transition: the Bourdieusian approach to experience of the long-term unemployed young adults.

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-15.30 **Session E** (Isaiah Berlin auditorium)

***Silenced voices and biographies*** [Chair: Maruta Pranka]

1. Noga Gilad: Reconstructing Silencing in an Era of Empowerment
2. Drew Dalton: Speaking out in silence; the silenced voices of people living with HIV/AIDS and the contribution of biographical research to challenge HIV-related stigma
3. Jakub Gałęziowski: Silenced biographies of Children Born of War in Poland
4. Annele Teter: Lived experience of coping with domestic violence in women`s life stories

15.30-16.00 Coffee break

16.00-18.00 **Session F** (Isaiah Berlin auditorium)

***Division and Unity of Europe*** [Chair: Ina Alber]

1. Maruta Pranka: The same events - different experience. Common memories
2. Edyta Andrzejczak: The cultural unity of Europeans in the context of the Erasmus experience -biographical perspective
3. Edmunds Šūpulis: A 'geopolitical disaster' and revisited biographies of belonging
4. Kaja Kaźmierska: Biographies and the Division of Europe – contemporary perspective

18.00-18.15 **Summary and closing remarks** (Isaiah Berlin auditorium)

18.15-19.00 Business Meeting RN03

## Biographies of Keynote Speakers

### VIEDA SKULTANS



Vieda Skultans is emerita professor of Social Anthropology in the School for Sociology, Politics and International Relations at the University of Bristol. Her books include *Intimacy and Ritual: A Study of Spiritualism, Mediums and Groups* (1974) *The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in post-Soviet Latvia* (1998) and *Empathy and Healing. Essays in Medical and Narrative Anthropology* (2007). She is currently research director of a project entitled *Ethnic and Narrative Differences in the Construction of Life Stories in Latvia* at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia.

### URSULA APITZSCH



Ursula Apitzsch is Professor of Sociology at the Goethe-University of Frankfurt/Main and Director of the Cornelia Goethe Centre for Women's and Gender Studies (CGC). She has been member of the Executive Committee of European Sociological Association (ESA) from 2007 – 2011 and is a long standing member of ESA RN 03 as well as a founding member of the ESA RN 33. For four years she has also been member of the Publications Committee of ESA and the Editorial Board of "European Societies". Since 1998, she is board member of the RC 38 "Biography and Society" within the International

Sociological Association (ISA). She has published broadly in the field of migration and biography with special regard to the analysis of transnational and trans-generational social processes, gender and care. Among her book publications are: *Migration und Biographie* (1990); *Migration und Traditionsbildung* (1999); *Biographical analysis and professional practice* (co-ed., 2004); *Migration, Biographie und Geschlechterverhältnisse* (co-ed., 2003); *Self Employment Activities of Women and Minorities. Their Success or Failure in Relation to Social Citizenship Policies* (co-ed., 2008); *Care und Migration. Die Ent-Sorgung menschlicher Reproduktionsarbeit entlang von Armut- und Geschlechtergrenzen* (co-ed., 2010). Among her articles: *Transnational Migration, Gender, and European Citizenship*. In: Aino Saarinen and Marina Calloni (Eds.), *Builders of a "New Europe" - Women Migrants from the Eastern Transregions*, 2012.



## **ABSTRACTS OF SESSIONS**

### **Keynote**

#### **VIEDA SKULTANS. "I have no future" Narratives of Despair and Hopelessness in Post-Soviet Latvia**

A perennial challenge for the social sciences revolves around collectivist versus individualist approaches to social life. Does society mould individuals to its requirements by shaping values, beliefs and actions or do individuals construct societies through their contribution to what Eriksen describes as "the eternal becoming of society" (1995: 76). I suggest that biographical research can supply answers to some of these questions about structure and agency. Life histories reveal both the shared structures of thought, their "regulated improvisation" (Bourdieu, 1977: 78) and the scope for individual challenging of hegemonic ideology.

Interviews conducted throughout Latvia between 2006 and 2009 reveal life stories as a resource for disputing ideologies. In particular, the extreme individualist ideologies that characterize the post-Soviet society are questioned in Latvian life stories. The idea that we are each blacksmiths of our own destiny is brought into sharp relief by presenting the actual constraints on social and economic opportunity.

#### **URSULA APITZSCH. European migration and its consequences. Generational experiences and biographical differences among migrant workers and their children**

In 1955 the Italian and the German government signed the first contract for the recruitment of guest workers in Germany. Similar contracts with more countries around the Mediterranean Sea were following. Millions of South European migrants have been living permanently in Northern and Western Europe for several decades by now. Analyses of empirical data show that despite hard working conditions, the first generation of immigrants after 1955 in general went through the biographical experience of an improvement of their lives. Their children, however, (those born in the sixties) often suffered from the separation of their families and a lack of cultural recognition in both countries. Scientific reports on the schooling level and the professional careers of members of the second and third generation reveal that many of them are disadvantaged in comparison with other parts of the population. This paper makes an effort to explain these heterogeneous findings. Firstly, it aims at identifying the different experiences of the first and the second generation. Secondly, it tries to explain how the two different generations were coping with the difficulties and the new chances of the trans – national space that has developed in Europe. Thirdly, the paper refers to the vast social inequalities between the families of former migrants nowadays. The hypothesis is that there is no homogeneous "third generation" of former migrants. On the contrary, we find that on the one hand grandchildren of former guest – workers could take advantage of the chances of the new trans – national structures (by professional careers and also by creating various forms of migrant self-employment), thus creating a new affluent middle class. Those, on the other hand, who passively had to experience the separation of their families as a threat to their lives and who suffer from a lack of human capital are forming a new under – class, together with members of the non – mobile part of the autochthonous population in the single nation states who never experienced the new chances of the emerging transnational European space.

## **Session A Social Innovation and Biographical Experiences**

### **AGNIESZKA GOLCZYŃSKA-GRONDAS. Social innovation in innovators' biographical experiences**

The paper presents the preliminary assumptions of the project devoted to the biographies of persons who have introduced innovations in the area of social policy in Poland. Biographical interviews will be conducted with Polish members of Ashoka (the worldwide network of social entrepreneurs with the mission of "changing the world") and other innovators, the authors of model systemic solutions in the area of social support and education, mainly leaders of non-governmental organizations. On the basis of first conducted interviews I will consider the impact of biographical experiences and biographical work on the process of social innovation introduction.

### **JOST GERHARD. Identities of Social Entrepreneurs**

Social entrepreneurs are devoted to sustainable objectives and change in social relations. They act innovatively as "path-breaker" and "change-maker" by taking up problems with social and environmental concerns. Engagement and innovative ideas are developed in different fields such as education, environmental protection, inclusion (e.g. people with mental and physical impairment, poverty or migration and integration issues). Located between state and market the role of Social Entrepreneurs became more important in the last decade: problems within the ecological system, health care, the labour market and inequality of chances give need for acting. At the same time (social) policy retreats and the ideology of the free market economy increases. This contribution deals about self-images of social entrepreneurs and the problems they have to cope with. Generally the central theme is which identity constructions; do they build up as innovative persons? The basis of the presentation is a study that includes 37 qualitative interviews with Social Entrepreneurs about their biographies and the development of their enterprises.

Biographical constructions do provide orientation for others. They do not only indicate the person and his individual experiences, but describe in the same way the relationship to social structures. Therefore narratives represent the understanding about self and the social localization of persons. The contribution will discuss both: biographical structuring as well as the social (self-) positioning. Considering a heterogeneous field of social entrepreneurship in pluralized societies, different reconstructed types of biographical identities will be presented.

### **BARTOSZ SŁAWECKI and MACIEJ ŁAWRYNOWICZ. Identity Work at the Periphery: Constructing New Professional Identities of Social Coops' Presidents**

Identities describe the relationship between an actor and the field in which that actor operates. They also have been found to be tightly linked to practices in the field (Goodrick & Reay, 2010). In the paper we study the formation of new professional identities of a group of people who after long periods of social exclusion began to work as presidents of social cooperatives. The main idea of such organizations is to create institutional and organizational instruments and privileges for economic activity to support those who find it difficult to cope with social reality. Our purpose is to explore the process of identity work seen as interplay between identity and alterity (Czarniawska, 2002). We want to unpack this process and find out how new professional identities of the social co-ops presidents' are constructed. During the analysis we want to focus on intra-habitus tensions or general incongruences between dispositions that push to reflexivity and secure one's sense of identity (Mouzelis, 2007). The study draws on a biographical approach bringing a focus on individual life-stories. The data have been gathered through biographical narrative interviews in social cooperatives from the region of Wielkopolska in Poland. In the paper we will also discuss some methodological issues concerning the use of the biographical method in professional identity work studies

## **BAIBA BELA. Personal experience of poverty - intersection of individual and social in search for social assistance.**

The paper explores the intersection between people's personal experiences and social security system. The being at risk of poverty and social exclusion and the search of social assistance will be studied, using biographical research methodology and analyzing approximately the 20 life story interviews carried out under the state research programme: SUSTINNO. The poverty is understood as lack of capability and lack of various forms of capitals (Ansari et al, 2012, Rod, 2014), while the way into poverty is addressed through critical events or failures and also through the accumulation of adversity (Martilla et al, 2013). Biographical study provides a more detailed understanding of everyday life and needs of different groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion, allowing to develop more targeted instruments of social assistance. However the paper will focus on a more narrow aspect of the study, discussing the concept of "decent society" (Margalit, 1996) in Latvian context and exploring the social assistance recipients' subjective experiences of institutional attitudes, when searching for social assistance.

## **Session B Social Activism and Methodological Questions**

### **INA ALBER. Why do you (not) engage in this discourse? Methodological remarks on the triangulation of discourse and biographical analysis**

The European discourse is closely linked to the civil society discourse, for instance, when it comes to democracy, human rights and participation. Both are highly diversified, normatively loaded and powerful, yet hard to explain or define. They are reproduced and transformed by social actors in various ways. The sociological questions are: why, how and by whom are these patterns of interpretation (re-)constructed? The biographical perspective offers a way of approaching these questions by considering the background of the social actors who engage in these discourses. Especially due to distribution possibilities of the internet and social media today, activists can participate directly and immediately in debates and discourses. What we publish today either as advice or as a political pamphlet should be analyzed taking into account the genesis of our action and interpretation patterns. In my paper, I'll suggest the triangulation of discourse and biographical analysis in the tradition of sociology of knowledge (Keller 2012; Rosenthal 2004) to approach these questions. The methodological argumentation is based on my case study about civil society activism in post-socialist Poland. Starting from the biographical cases I analyzed the biographical narrative interview text but also further sources like archive material, newspaper articles, history text books and scientific literature about civic engagement in Poland after 1989. My focus was on the interdependency of action and discourse at the level of the biographers themselves. Triangulating biographies and discourses was fruitful to show motivations for civic engagement, but also to find non-hegemonic narrations in these diversified discourses.

### **KATARZYNA WANIEK. The Auto-biographical Approach to Analyse Challenges and Potentials of Liaison Work in European Context**

Two autobiographical narrative interviews with Polish women who voluntarily engaged in intercultural practices in Europe are the starting point for the analysis of challenges and potentials of liaison work. The concept – developed by Fritz Schütze – originally derives from the term liaison communication introduced by Everett Hughes who used it in reference to bilingual secretary in Quebec whose task was not only to interpret from French to English and the other way round, but also to "translate" cultural codes (including also communication styles), i.e. to translate and explain the other's point of view and scheme of reference. Additionally, Marek Czyzewski shows that there are three types of liaison work: 1) hegemonic, 2) symmetrical and 3) asymmetrical.

The paper will discuss two of them:

1) Hegemonic liaison work that is grounded in stereotypical and paternalistic approach to the cultural other, which ignores his or her standpoint and consequently destroys the moral basis of interactive reciprocity and cooperation. The case of Magda who worked with young Pakistani women in Italy will be considered here. It will be shown how her good will and compassion for immigrants that does not take their cultural background into account and therefore ruins the communication process.

2) Symmetrical liaison work means including and considering the other's different (sometimes unaccepted) points of view or modes of action. This involves attempts to understand and to translate it into one's own culture but having regard to its specific frames. The case of Ewa – a nursery school teacher working with disabled children will serve an example here. It will be shown how she creates a sort of European space for effective communication – a model of dialogue in which different perspectives are presented and final conclusion does not have to be formulated (e.g. attitude towards therapy of autistic children).

### **PIOTR SZENAJCH: Extreme cases and their unique epistemic value in biographical sociology**

This paper aims to reflect on life stories that can strike a biographical researcher as extreme, atypical, unlikely or rare in various ways. Insights offered in the paper will be illustrated by vivid case material from two research projects: one based on life stories of renowned contemporary visual artists, and the other based on life stories of scholars and students in three Polish cities.

Several possible understandings of an extreme life story will be discussed (inspired by the material), such as: a socially and culturally mobile individual who travelled from one extreme of the social structure to the other; two cases from one research project that seem to lie on the extremities of the research field and the studied social space; a life history that seems extremely rare and unlikely in the context of established sociological knowledge, an 'outlier'.

Intentional searching for extreme cases in a pool of collected interviews could be a stage of a qualitative analysis helpful in generating new insights (an analysis such as 'contrastive case comparison' proposed by Fritz Schütze). It could complement the 'theoretical sampling' procedure and possibly widen the borders of the research field. It might particularly enhance writing qualitative sociology – ignite the sociological imagination of the writer as well as of the reader. The common practice nowadays is to describe cases 'representative' of the material rather than those seemingly rare and outlandish. Focusing on extreme cases may result in constructing the sociological object one works on differently. But first and foremost, talking to 'marginal men', 'outsiders' or multi-dimensionally mobile 'cultural chameleons' might give access to a unique reflexivity and biographical work, their 'epistemic privilege' (as authors like Everett Stonequist, Howard Becker, Erving Goffman, bell hooks, or Bat-Ami Bar On suggest). Likewise, it might offer insight into rare social processes, obscure institutions and niche discursive formations.

## **Session C World War II – Memories and Consequences**

### **KATINKA MEYER. Living without a past – Silencing of memories of the GDR 'resettlers'**

In my PhD project I analyse the silencing and resurgence of the memory of the so-called 'resettlers' in order to study the deep impact of discourses on the constitution of memory. This analysis is based on biographical-narrative interviews with Germans, who were relocated from the former eastern part of Germany to the GDR after WWII.

The group of the 'resettlers' made up a quarter of the population in the GDR. The assimilation of the group into the socialist society was of great importance to the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. Since 1950, the recollection of 'flight and expulsion' vanished as a topic from the public; the expellees were neglected and integrated into the antifascist foundation myth of the GDR. In contrary the expellees of the western part of

Germany were considered as a 'revisionist' counterpart. Thus, in the new socialist society the figure of the expellee did not (longer) exist and was furthermore silenced in individual memory.

Throughout the process of social transformation in 1989, new opportunities of recollection arose. But also the post-1989-discourse about the 'flight and expulsion' was dominated by the federation of the expellees. The frame of remembrance shifted and enabled resettlers in East Germany to recollect former tabooed experiences. At the same time this shift canonized them and neglected narrations of experiences of 40 years in a socialist system – with all its problems and possibilities. Again, the individual memory of the everyday woman became invisible in the public (space) or had to subordinate under hegemonic discourses. In my presentation, I would like to explore the transformation of individual and collective memory and how it is influenced by hegemonic discourses of 'flight and expulsion' and social change.

### **FILIP PAZDERSKI. Acculturation of people from Polish Warmia/Ermland in Germany (1950ies-80ies) - implications for the biographical research on the socio-cultural barriers overcoming**

How perspective for perceiving somebody as "one of us" has changed in one of the European countries (namely: Germany) alongside modification of its migration policy during last decades? How this process manifest itself in the biographical narratives of the particular group of migrants to German society that went through primary culturisation to German culture at the territories of Warmia/Ermland region (currently in Northern Poland) in the 1st half of 20th century? How possessing cultural attachment to German symbolic word has influenced the process of adaptation in German society of the immigrants from Western and Northern territories of post-war Poland? In what way above process has been influenced by the attitudes towards those immigrants (so-called Spätaussiedler) by the hosting community and changing migration policies of German states? How, due to the conditions encountered in Germany, a sense of nationhood of the immigrants from Western and Northern regions of Poland has changed? What modifications have occurred in the area of their communicative and cultural memory? In what extent observed people define themselves with connection to the region in Poland where they (or their parents) grew up and what does this belongingness mean for their life in the new country with partially different national identity / cultural values (Germany)? How experience of own migration influence attitudes of this group members to people that have arrived in Germany after them?

In order to elaborate on these questions this paper is going to focus on the situation of people of German or regional (indefinite) identity that have migrated from the land of Warmia (ger. Ermland), historical Polish-German borderland, to Germany in the post Second World War decades (starting from late 1950ies and going on up to the 1980ies). The situation of these group members will be used as a case study to identify the biographical strategies taken up by this people in order to overcome inequalities they have faced in the sending (post-war Poland) and receiving (Germany) societies. This analysis will be based on the content of migrants from Warmia (Ermland) living in Germany cultural and communicative memory observed through the results of biographical interviews performed in 2015-2016. Their main objective to be reached in result of such process is to observe analysed group members' current state of integration in German society and its implication visible in their biographical narratives.

### **IEVA GARDA-ROZENBERGA and KASPARS ZELLIS. Silenced voices, silenced history – Romanies' memories of genocide During World War II**

During World War II several kinds of terror were realized in the territory of Latvia. First of all, communist terror against the enemies of class and the new regime in 1940–1941, later on – Nazi terror against the Jews, Romanies, patients of mental hospitals, Soviet prisoners of war; and at the conclusion of the war communist terror which returned in 1944–1945.

The Romany memory of their tragic past has been marginalized for a long time, and the reason was both the peculiarity of the community itself (i.e., its small size) and the oral character of memories. Several

researchers have stressed that life stories have a very important role in research of the history and social memory of the Gypsies, because their culture and its handing down to future generations traditionally has been based on oral stories. The given research, whose aim is to ascertain the Romany communicative memory of genocide, is based on 20 biographical interviews. Analysis shows that memories of genocide, regardless of the shortage of public representations, are present in the Romany life stories, although the motive of genocide is weakly expressed and the narrative of Jewish Holocaust is often used.

Romany memory of genocide during World War II is still a marginal theme in the leading memory discursive practices and memory policy in Latvia. The idea of a remembrance day of the Romany genocide and a place of remembrance devoted to the annihilated Romany population has not been realized as yet, both due to low activity of Romany societies and to lack of political lobby. These measures not only would promote the integration of the Romany population into the space of the collective memory of Latvia, but would also allow both nations to notice their forgotten heroes – rescuers of the Romany people.

## **Session D European migration and difficult experiences**

### **MARTA EICHSTELLER. Globalisation of power, national politics and individual experience – the biographical perspectives on the cross-country mobility in Europe**

The current refugee and migration crisis in Europe exposes the inability of Europe as well as individual nation states to act and respond accordingly to the challenges posed by the influx of people from outside the European community. The perception of who holds the power in ‘glocalised’ Europe – the nation state or other economic and political structures with global reach - lies at the centre of the current migration debates in Europe. Insights into these mostly hidden structures of power can be found in the biographical narratives of people who have experienced cross-border mobility within Europe. These experiences, embedded within the biographical choices and individual actions, expose vast differences in meanings, chances, restrictions and opportunities for mobile individuals and for receiving societies. The conceptual framework characterising cross-border mobility is, however, often held hostage to the wider political and public discourse.

### **ANNA DOLINSKA. Biographical experiences of highly skilled female migrants from post-soviet countries in Poland**

Since 1989 in the course of political transformation Poland has developed the structures of multinational corporations, cosmopolitan work environments, and to an appreciable extent has fostered a culture of mobile workers. However, I argue that Poles will more likely understand ‘professional mobility’ as the opportunity to work in other EU countries, or participation in student exchange programmes, and to a much lesser extent, will associate mobility with the increased inflow of foreigners from the ex-Soviet republics to Poland.

On the other hand, females from the post-Soviet countries especially from Ukraine, but also from Russia and Belarus, constitute the largest immigrant groups in Poland. Most of them migrate for economic reasons and seek better work opportunities. In the collective consciousness of the Polish people these immigrants are largely perceived as physical workers who take up non-prestigious jobs requiring little or no qualifications. My PhD research undertakes a contrary direction - its primary focus is on professional biographies and experiences of entrepreneurial, white-collar female migrants from post-Soviet countries (mainly from Ukraine and Belarus) to Poland. On the basis of the conducted biographical interviews I wish to explore the experiences of the female migrants – to what extent they experience the open and cosmopolitan Europe, and what are the possible inhibitors of ‘careers beyond borders’ from the perspective of the peripheries of the European Union.

### **HANNA-MARI HUSU and MINNA YLILAHTI. Finding a place after life transition: the Bourdieusian approach to experience of the long-term unemployed young adults**

We explore the experience of unemployed young adults in the context of life course transition. Young adults in general encounter growing insecurity in terms of labour markets or education while they are expected to make active choices. Life course transition including negative experiences of alienation, anxiety and uncertainty of the young adults are broadly known as a risk for the future life. By referring to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence we suggest that young adults are unequally rewarded in their access to valued resources, which causes the limited sense of agency. The data consist of life-history orientated interviews of unemployed young adults aged between 20 and 32 in Jyväskylä-region. We analyzed the material concentrating on the expressions of emotional states of the life course situations. As a result, we suggest that disadvantageous positions and the lack of usable resources - the restricted access to labour markets and education - create certain types of emotional tendencies such as frustration, insecurity and feelings of apathy and hopelessness, which are emotional states that strongly orient individual practices limiting the scope of everyday life.

## **Session E      Silenced voices and biographies**

### **NOGA GILAD. Reconstructing Silencing in an Era of Empowerment**

Striving for social justice and empowerment of disempowered, literature has rightly marked giving voice for silenced biographies as one of its central goals. But clearly, if individuals are being silenced they must be silenced by someone "out there". If we really want to advance methods of giving voices, we must work at understanding the opposite positioning's (Bamberg, 1997). We must turn our eye the other way, try accounting also for discursive methods through which silencing becomes hegemonic (Gramsci, 2004).

What makes it appear natural so that it has become legitimate? My paper describes one such type, reconstructed in my PhD study about Israeli Settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In fact, reconstructing these life story texts has been so complicated, that a new method for deconstructing and reconstructing was developed.

Reconstructing that innovative positioning has required conceptualizations of hegemonization (Gramsci, 2004), appropriation (Feige, 2009), and positioning (Bamberg, 1997). Literature has already argued, that in order to appear as hegemonic, Israeli settlers have appropriated legitimate practices and discourses (Feige, 2009; Shor, 2008). To appropriate means to treat something naturally as "mine". My analysis shows, that silencing is facilitated by exchanging positionings between "self" and silenced. Ostensibly, the narrative makes sense. Only for some reason, it sounds not so clear. But looking into the details it resembles a photos' negative: everything originally "white" appears now black, while anything originally black appears as "white". Consequently, the image of reality appears as surreal. I have conceptualized that: "Negating Construction".

Ostensibly, the others marginalized leave the self as hegemonic. However these processes are so confusing, delicate and also numerous, that apparently the narrator too gets lost in the contradicting processes, becoming Disengaged from any real link to anything. Presenting the new method supporting that, I will describe the controversial process.

### **DREW DALTON. Speaking out in silence; the silenced voices of people living with HIV/AIDS and the contribution of biographical research to challenge HIV-related stigma**

In collaboration with Body Positive North East, Drew Dalton completed the North East of England's first 'life histories' research, documenting the lived biographical histories of people living with HIV in the region. This empirical piece of work outlined the challenges of those living with HIV in a growing culture of the UK where the voices of those living with HIV have 'fallen off the radar' (or are silenced) and have been replaced with the voices of bio-medical institutions. Themes emerged from this research from the life histories; such as the need to tackle HIV specific stigma generally, but also stigma found in GPs, mental

health and healthcare, as well as employment and education. However, this is increasingly difficult in UK society whereby HIV is not spoken about outside of the lives living with it and dominant bio-medical discourses around it. This paper will examine the research process, as well as offer some theories as to why HIV within the public discourse has become 'silenced.' It will also offer the recommendations and outcomes of the research project, whereby life histories can be developed into tools in which to tackle HIV-related stigma.

### **JAKUB GAŁĘZIOWSKI. Silenced biographies of Children Born of War in Poland**

This paper will give an overview of the research project conducted in the frame of big international network called: Children born of war – past, present and future. The aim of my subject is to document and describe the phenomenon of Polish children born of war (namely fathered by enemy soldiers and local mothers) in the post-war history, and to develop a qualitative analysis of their life experience behind the "iron curtain" based on biographical narratives. On the basis of the available historical sources (queries in archives and libraries) and narratives, I will, on the one hand, be reconstructing conditions in which the CBOW existed in Poland in the span of more than 40 years (reconstructive current). On the other hand the biographies of the interviewees will become the basis for an interpretation of their experience and the extent of the narrator's biographical work undertaken in the span of the biography (interpretative view).

Children born as a consequence of sexual relationships (both as a result of rape and the great love) of foreign soldiers and local women in (post) World War II Europe can be defined as a hidden population: not much is known about them, their population size can only be estimated and they are difficult to reach for researchers. In the paper I would like to introduce and discuss specifics about methodological approach as well as the specifics of the target population, especially that this phenomenon has been a taboo nor in private neither in public discourse.

### **ANNELE TETERE. Lived experience of coping with domestic violence in women's life stories**

The paper has been elaborated in the perspective of interpretative sociology, giving a voice to women and applying narrative analysis: structural and thematic analysis. The central theme of the paper is the women's lived experience of coping with domestic violence. The aim of the study is to investigate the dynamics of women's experience and its variety in the process of coping with domestic violence. The key issue that the author seeks to illuminate in her research is to understand the ways in which women overcome social and psychological consequences of domestic violence and rebuild their lives. The research questions are:

- What is the dynamics of women's experience in the process of coping with domestic violence? How does individual empowerment transform?
- What kind of obstacles and support are identified through the viewpoint of the victims? What resources help to cope with this situation and stop the violent relationship?
- How do women live this period of life? What kind of strategy is chosen to cope with violence and its social and psychological effects?

The theoretical framework of the research is based on anthropology of experience and feminist standpoint theory. The presentation of the epistemology of the theoretical framework is been provided by means of analytic description, along with assessing possibilities for applying this framework in the context of studying lived experience of women coping with domestic violence. Theoretical perspective focuses on the analysis of gender habitus and agency (Bourdieu, McNay). The research strategy is the biographical research. Empirical part of the research presents narrative analysis of biographical interviews with ten women who were victims of domestic violence. The process of coping has been analysed using the concept of resilience which is approached through informants' life stories. Continuity and dynamics of women's agency, ranging from helplessness, distancing, maneuvering and opposition to



resistance indicate the coping as a survival strategy. It is concluded that by maternity and everyday practice of coping agents recreate themselves into “survivors”.

## **Session F      Division and Unity of Europe**

### **MARUTA PRANKA. The same events - different experience. Common memories**

The process of investigation the transcultural dynamics of often conflicting memories in the present Europa integrates studying the memories of society living in a one country. It is impossible to talk about unitary memory even in such a small country as Latvia. This problem could be related also to the other post socialist countries. There is a problem of conflicting memories among different ethnicities, different social groups. The Second World War and the radical political-social changes of 1990-ties are the critical points (Giddens) or historical markers (Mandelbaum) arousing individuals' biographical disruptions and consequently conflicting memories.

The paper focuses on the analysis of biographical narratives of respondents representing different ethnicities living in Latvia. The events which could be defined as historical markers or turning points (Denzin) are conversing and are evaluated from diverse angles depending on respondents' or their ancestors' experience. The different experience and the opposite memories are communicated both in a close circle and in public sphere promoting failure of understanding among different social and ethnic groups. Study of memories, trying to understand the different opinions in one society, identification of common values, the communication of unitary aspects of memories into public sphere is the gateway to creating common European memory.

### **EDYTA ANDRZEJCZAK. The cultural unity of Europeans in the context of the Erasmus experience -biographical perspective**

This paper is devoted to the multifaceted phenomenon of the European integration and the feeling of belonging to the Old Continent. Contemporary problems affecting Europe (such as the recent massive influx of immigrants, economic problems, the growing popularity of the authoritarian parties, or the strong growth of Eurosceptic tendencies) undoubtedly lead to the inevitable search for those that are guilty of the current situation and the division into them and us. Looking at today's initiatives that support the idea of the cultural unity of Europe, I devote special attention to the Erasmus Programme that was set up in order to establish intercultural relations. Analyzing the results of this initiative and indicating its positive and negative sides, I attempt to answer the question if this program has helped to exceed social divisions and inequalities in Europe and the general Eurocentric tendency to oppose the other. In particular, I wonder if and how the primal ideas of Erasmus have a chance to enhance the real European integration and the building of a sense of cultural and mental unity among young Europeans. These considerations are supported by my personal, cultural and sociological experience gained during the Erasmus student exchange. In the paper, I also refer to the Seventh European Commission's Programme 'European identity', as well as the still little known term - the "European Mental Space", which in all kinds of research often replaces the problematic concept of "European identity".

### **EDMUNDS ŠŪPULIS. A 'geopolitical disaster' and revisited biographies of belonging**

Latvia, while under the communist rule, was one of countries where immigration from different parts of Soviet Union was a common practice. After the collapse of the Soviet Union considerable part of so-called Soviet citizens found themselves in a "foreign" country. A commitment and identities of these residents after the restoration of Latvia's statehood had been confused and nowadays is ambiguous. In what sense do they belong to the Latvian nation? Many of them applied for Russian citizenship, however significant part stay without any. How do people cope with the twist of history and sudden status of alien in the

country they call, in fact, a homeland? There are popular discourses which challenge former immigrants' identities, but also personal narratives to adjust new identifications. Must they revisit biographies to feel at home again, or people just find a suitable discourse to live with? Life stories reveal complicated memories, ambivalent feelings and conflicting identities of those whose country of residence changed so radically. In my study of biography and belonging the focus is on both memory and politics of national identity.

### **KAJA KAŻMIERSKA. Biographies and the Division of Europe – contemporary perspective**

Biographies and the Division of Europe. Experience, Action and Change on the 'Eastern Side' (edited by R. Breckner, D. Kalekin-Fishman., I. Miethé) - is the book (based on the papers from very interesting conference in Berlin) published in 2000. All authors of the following chapters focused on Eastern European perspective rooted in biographical experiences of the World War 2 and the time of communism. The texts emphasized various aspects of these experiences and their difference from Western European experiences. Since that time a lot has changed: European Union has accepted new members from Eastern Europe, more than 25 years have passed from the end of the communism. Europe experienced both prosperity and crisis time. Recently the problem of mass refugees coming to Western Europe and acts of terrorism have become the main problem and the topic in the public discourse. Thus, having in mind all these events, we may put the question whether the division of Europe still exists and if so what does it refer to.

In my paper I would like to present general reflections, related to some biographical experiences, showing what are the contemporary lines of divisions between Western and Eastern Europe, to what extent they can be expressed as meaningful in European discourse, to what extent there is possible the reciprocity of perspectives (Western and Eastern European), which narratives are hegemonic and legitimate in public discourse.

### **ABSTRACT OF DISTRIBUTED PAPER**

#### **Elena ROZHDESTVENSKAYA. Narrativisation of Russian National Idea**

The report examines the potential of transmedial storytelling to analyze national Imaginary on the basis of deliberative public debate involving the opinions, ideas, narratives and images of various social groups. The reason for research came from the presentation of the sculpture « Russia. Try to kill!» of Denis Saunin and George Mamin (CF Art Group) at the 2013 Venetian Biennial. The author starts with this art object created on the basis of the All-Russian competition of art concepts on the topic "the Russian National Idea." The object of visual analysis contains a dynamic political representation: the unification of the images a sovereign's orb and a traditional tilting doll, creating a provocative effect alongside the slogan "Try to kill!" in an aggressive counter-game with the viewer. Textual analysis is conducted with 458 art ideas which were submitted to the contest and which have shown a significant range of substantial references for understanding the national idea of Russia. The next stage of the textual analysis focused on the selected of art concepts representing a storytelling or narrative description of art object (N=130). The most widespread symbols, which cumulate in a traditional and archaic complex, are state symbols, family and children, Christian symbols, living images, anthropocentric images. Thus, the national unifying idea is visually aggressive and substantially traditional - it is better for Russians to live in the shadow of the state and Christianity and a pagan heritage, with family and children.

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#### Distributed Papers

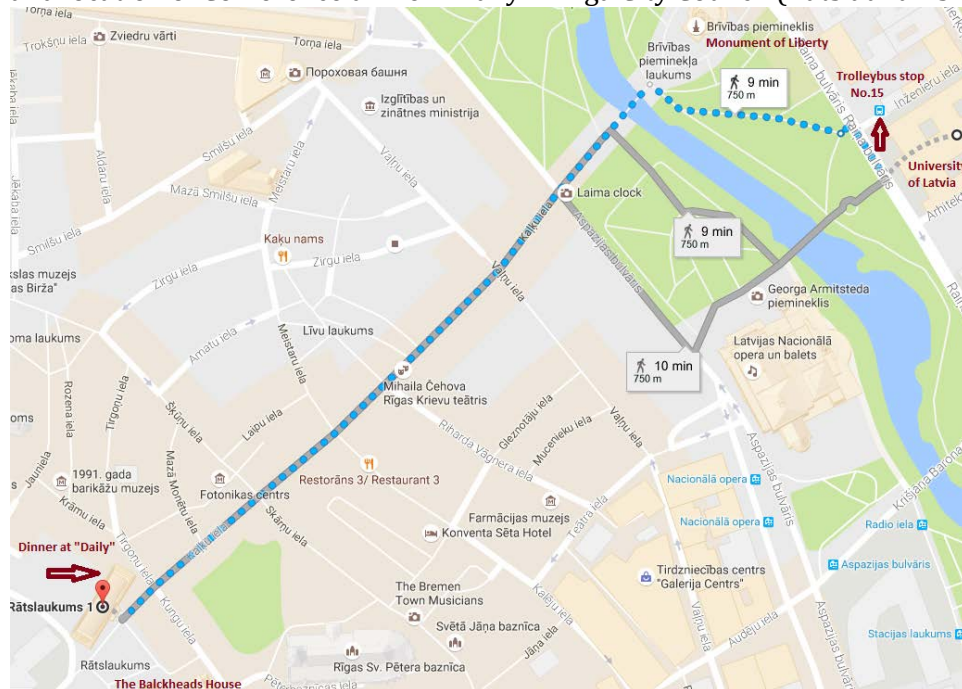
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## MAP

### Conference venue:

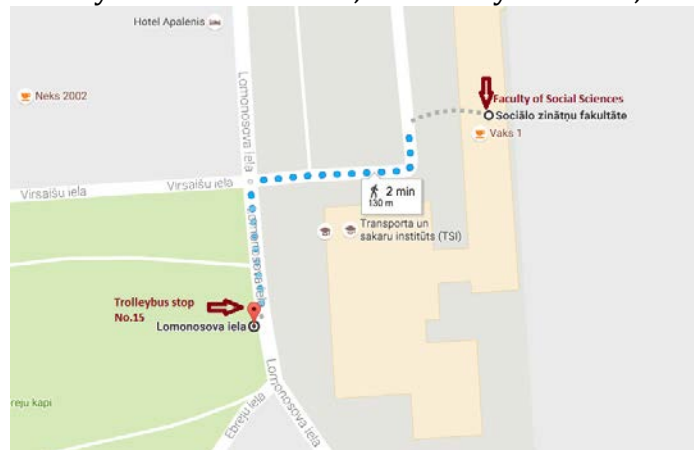
Location of trolley stop nearby University of Latvia main building (19 Raina Blvd, Riga, LATVIA) and location of Conference dinner - Daily in Riga City Council (Rātslaukums 1, Riga, LATVIA)



Conference dinner: "Daily" in Riga City Council. Address: Rātslaukums 1, Riga. The entrance is from the Passage (Rātes pašāža) that is situated behind the Riga city council. In the middle of the Passage there is a green sign "DAILY", little stairs will bring you to the basement.

### Conference venue:

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia, Lomonosova street 1a, Riga, LATVIA



### Prices of Public transport

A regular ticket for one trip can be bought from the bus driver 2.00 EUR. But if you buy it before commencing your trip, the regular one-way ticket, will cost you 1.15 EUR. Regular tickets, time tickets and tickets for a certain number of trips can be bought in ticket vending machines at the bus stops, press kiosks of "Narvesen", "Latvia Post" offices in Riga and ticket trade outlets of "Rīgas satiksme", as well as at the airport services and tourism information bureau "Welcome to Riga". (Please see the list of trade outlets here: <https://www.rigassatiksme.lv/en/tickets-and-e-ticket/ticket-trade-outlets/ticket-trade-outlets/>);

### Taxi:

Baltic Taxi - +371 20008500 (reliable, can get receipts); Panda Taxi - +371 67600006 (low fare)

## **CONFERENCE NOTES**