

CALL FOR PAPERS

Beyond Methodological Nationalism: Researching Transnational Spaces, Cross-Border Diffusion, and Transnational Histories

International Conference

**Organized by the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology (BGHS)
Bielefeld University (Germany)
22 - 23 April 2010**

The criticism of methodological nationalism has opened up new ways to conduct research on global and transnational dynamics. Nowadays, the common methodological statement is that societal spaces cannot be regarded as equal to territorial spaces. Prominent methodological proposals are suggested by the global ethnography approach, the cosmopolitan theory, and the transnational approach. While the first combines large-scale ethnography with detailed examinations of everyday life, the second proposes to conduct research simultaneously on different spatial scales, such as global, transnational, national, and local dimensions. And the third, the transnational approach, refers to relational concepts of spatiality. Thus, this conference will link debates on new methodological approaches with the discussion of problematic issues within empirical research on global and transnational transformations.

Confirmed keynote speakers include David Fitzgerald, Zsuzsa Gille, Nina Glick Schiller, Akhil Gupta, Wolfgang Knöbl, Matthias Middell, Ludger Pries, Aihwa Ong, and Anja Weiß.

The major topics of interest include qualitative methodologies and methods of social research which refer to:

- Spatiality,
- Scale approach (global, national, transnational, and local scales),
- Reflexivity within the research process,
- International and transnational migration,
- Intercultural encounters,
- Multi-sited ethnography,
- Transnational networks, and
- Transnational historiography.

In particular, we look for papers that address some of the following themes and questions:

Methodological Approaches Focusing on Relations between Territorial and Social Spaces:

How does the distinction between territorial and social space influence the conceptualization of our research units? In which way do spatiality concepts transform definitions of social boundaries? In which manner does the distinction between territorial and social dimensions influence interpretations of temporal societal transformations on macro, meso, and micro levels?

Methods Concerning Spatial Dimension within Migration Research:

Which methodological approaches enable us to consider complex links between mobility, immobility, and spatiality? Which methods are useful for research on migrants' perceptions of geographic spaces and territorial boundaries? Which interconnections between social and territorial spaces can be analyzed within urban contexts of migration? Which methods (i.e. multi-sited research) can account for new methodological distinctions?

Appropriate Methods for Research on Transnational Diffusion and Cultural Translation:

Which methodological difficulties arise within the research on cross-border diffusion and adoption of knowledge, technology, and goods? Which methods allow to analyze the meaning transformation of the transferred social entities in question? Which methodological consequences arise from considering the specific role of old and new media in the context of cross-border exchange? Which modes of research organization (i.e. inclusion of 'native' co-interpreter) are useful for adequate ways of data interpretation?

Methodologies and Methods of Transnational Historiography:

Which methods of balancing different transnational influences within the process of nation-building are appropriate? Which methods are suitable for identifying selected influences of border zones on neighboring areas? Which forms of 'measurement' of mutual penetration of different cultural areas are suitable?

The conference has both, a theoretical and empirical focus, whereby the emphasis is on qualitative methodologies. It is aimed to be a forum for interdisciplinary debate and appeals to colleagues from a range of disciplines, including sociology, history, anthropology, international relations, and politics. It also intends to bring together established and junior researchers working on different methodologies of globalization and transnationalization.

Submissions of Proposed Papers

Submissions of short (**250-500 words**) abstracts are invited (for eventual presentation of papers that are no more than 3000 words). Please e-mail your abstract and a short biographical outline to the conference organizer, Devrimsel D. Nergiz, at **methodology-conference@uni-bielefeld.de**, by 30 December 2009. Accepted paper givers will be informed by 15 January 2010. Fully written papers must be submitted by 1 April 2010. We are able to pay for accommodation (but not travel expanses) for those participants whose paper is accepted.

Expected Outcomes

The conference aims to publish the selected papers in a volume at Palgrave Macmillan.

Conference location: Centre for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF), Bielefeld.

The conveners are Devrimsel D. Nergiz (Bielefeld University, BGHS), Dr. Anna Amelina (Bielefeld University, Centre on Migration, Citizenship and Development, COMCAD), Gilberto Rescher (Bielefeld University, BGHS), and Nazgul Tajibajeva (Bielefeld University, BGHS).

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