



GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT
GÖTTINGEN

Call for Papers:

Biography and Violence

[Violent dynamics and agency in collective processes and individual life histories](#)

International Conference to be held at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences,

University of Göttingen, on 9-10 February 2018

In European societies, current media reports on (civil) wars, armed conflicts, terror attacks, illegalized migration, or attacks on migrants show that physical violence and violent phenomena attract great attention, albeit often in a very charged and selective manner.

The high number of studies devoted to violent phenomena and their causes, dynamics and consequences means that today there can be no question of a general neglect of violence in the social sciences any more, at least with regard to empirical research. Much recent research in this field has focused on violence in the narrow sense of the word, meaning the social dynamics organized around physical injury to, and the vulnerability of, social actors. This conference tries to go beyond a normative perspective limited to the study of isolated “causes”, and strives to understand the interactive dynamics of violence that creates and destroys social order. In addition, increased attention is paid to the history and experiences of the actors involved, and their social networks.

Sociologists interested in biographical research, or in other forms of research into everyday life, have explicitly studied contexts structured by violence, such as wars and violent conflicts, migration courses, or domestic violence, and have focused, for example, on the biographical, familial and transgenerational consequences of violent experiences. A biographical research approach must include contextualizing the phenomena under study socio-historically and diachronically. Moreover, an interpretative research approach that focuses on the biographical experiences, perspectives and relevances of the actors in their social fields of action, and, if possible, their historical genesis, frequently leads to the discovery of violent phenomena, which have significantly contributed to structuring the biographical courses of these actors, even without an explicit focus on violence. In other words, researchers commonly find traces of experiences of violence and violent behavior in various biographical fields. A biographical research approach makes it possible to examine the processes that lead to experiences of violence, whether as targets or performers, on both a personal and a collective level.

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?

We therefore invite papers based on empirical research in the following interrelated areas:

- Reconstruction of processes of the development, continuation and change of (physically) violent behavior, and interpretations of violence, from the perspectives of actors involved in different socio-historical contexts.
- Reconstruction of interrelations between members of different groupings and individuals in violent situations.
- Empirical perspectives on violent dynamics in different regions of the world and different social contexts.
- Figurations of groupings in violent or armed conflicts.
- Experience of violent conditions as part of everyday life, and as part of an actor's collective, familial and personal history.
- Violence in organizational contexts (such as police or army): development, continuation and change of patterns of interpretation and action in connection with armed violence in organizational contexts; practices of organizational violence and their legitimation, and interrelations between biographical and organizational-professional patterns of action.
- Interdependencies between violence and collective belongings.
- Opportunities and limits in respect of the thematization of violence in different social contexts (also: in the research context) and in biographical courses.

Please send your paper title and abstract (not exceeding 2300 characters, including authors and affiliations) to conference.mzs2018@uni-goettingen.de.

Deadline: September 1st, 2017.

We especially invite junior researchers and young academics. Travel expenses can be partially covered for contributors of papers or presentations.

For current information visit our website at: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/562269.html>