

# Biography and Society



Conference: Biographical research quo vadis?

Eötvös Loránd University

Budapest, Hungary



Biography  
and Society

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NEWSLETTER/JULY 2024

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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to share with you the latest edition of our newsletter. This issue is brimming with exciting updates, including news about our upcoming event in Budapest and highlights from the latest research by members of our community.

In this issue, we will also celebrate the RC 38's 40th birthday which is upcoming in September, coinciding with our conference in Budapest. For the past months, we have been working hard to organize our conference "Biographical Research Quo Vadis? New and Recurring Challenges in the Study of Life (Hi)stories and Social Change" from 4-6 September 2024 in Budapest. We are very happy to be able to share the preliminary program in this newsletter. The conference is a collaborative effort between Júlia Vajda and Juli Székely (ELTE University), RC 38, and the CEU-Democracy Institute, in cooperation with the Section for Biographical Research of the German Sociological Association (DGS). We have received over 80 submissions and have selected more than 65 papers to be presented during the event at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) and the CEU-Democracy Institute in Budapest. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who dedicated time to preparing the event. We are looking forward to seeing all of you in Budapest and engaging in what promises to be a stimulating and enriching conference.

Furthermore, we are preparing for the upcoming Forum in Rabat, Morocco, in July 2025. RC 38 is involved in the organization of more than 20 sessions, many of them in the form of Joint Sessions with other RCs. Submission of abstracts will be open from August 5, and we are looking forward to receiving your proposals. Important information about the next Forum in Rabat, including relevant deadlines and the conference format, can be found at this link: <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/conferences/forum/rabat-2025/5th-isa-forum-guidelines/duties-and-deadlines>

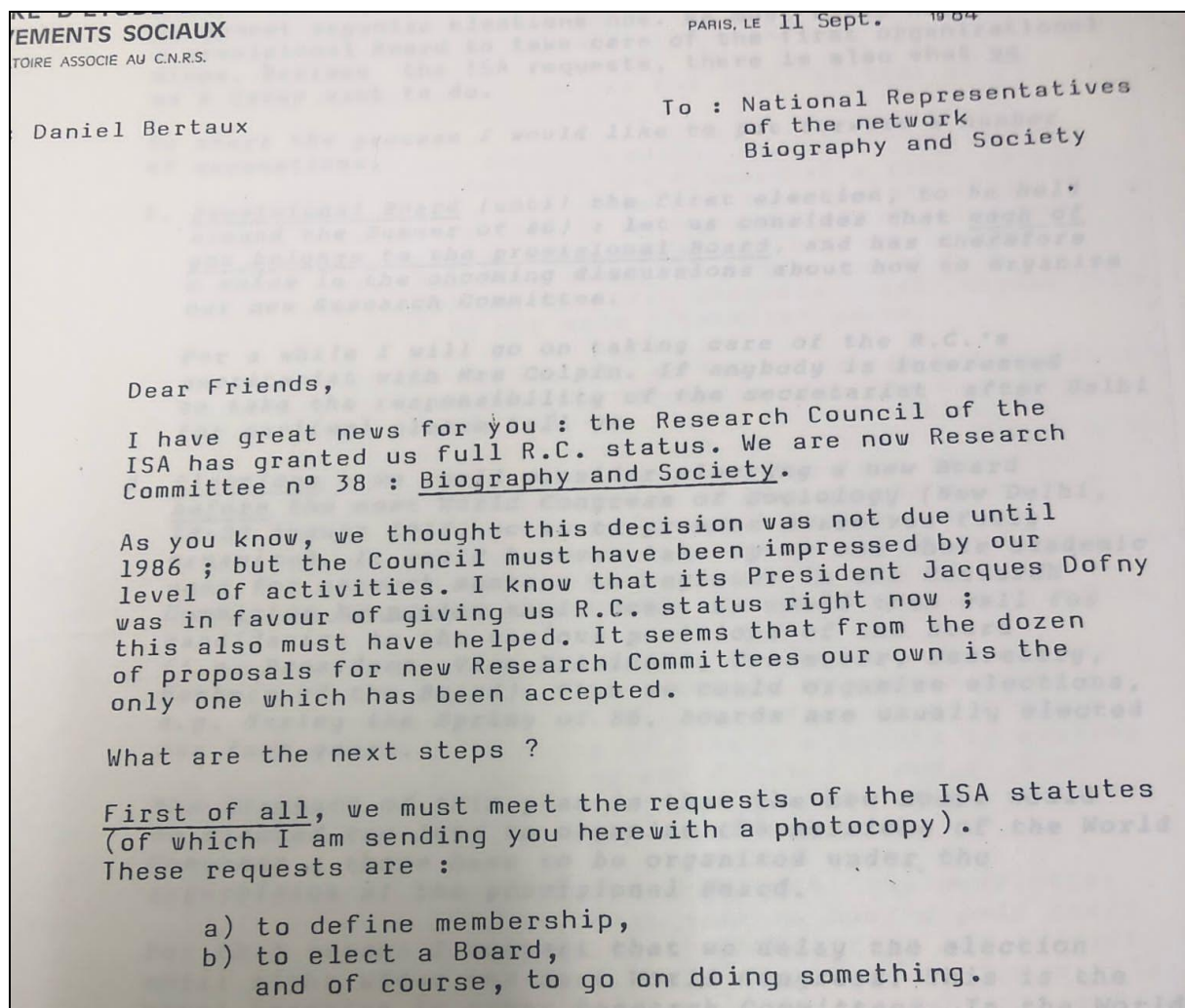
Besides internal meetings, the board has closely followed the ISA Research Council Meetings. Most important for the practical work of our RC is that ISA is now offering institutional email accounts for all RCs. We will use this opportunity and migrate there for future correspondence. We will notify you about this change in a separate email.

Thank you for your ongoing support and engagement. We look forward to seeing many of you at our future events and continuing our collaborative exploration of the intricate tapestry of biography and society.

Priscila Susin, Johannes Becker, Martín Hernán Di Marco, Maria Pohn-Lauggas,

Georgios Tisolis

## Happy 40th birthday, RC 38!



Some months ago, I received the photo of this letter via WhatsApp from a colleague of mine, Clara Ruvituso, board member of the RC "History of Sociology". She sent it to me "live" from the archive of Elizabeth Jelin, an Argentinian sociologist whose correspondence she looked through in Buenos Aires. She thought the letter, dated 11 September 1984, might be interesting for me.

And indeed, coincidentally, it is a great document to celebrate our RC's 40th birthday this year. After becoming established as a working group within the ISA in 1980, with Daniel Bertaux as president, the Research Committee "Biography and Society" was formally accepted by the ISA Research Council in 1984. It was the founding board members (shown below), and especially Daniel Bertaux as founding President, who pushed for this tirelessly and we would like to thank them for their initiative! Without the energy of this "first generation", the RC wouldn't be what it is today. We would also like to extend our wholehearted thanks to all following Presidents (shown below) and to the many people who have served on the executive committees and

on the Board over the years (all previous RC 38 boards are listed at: <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/research-networks/research-committees/rc38-biography-and-society/rc38-past-boards>) .

The letter also shows that from its inception biographical research was not limited to Europe-an contexts, as is sometimes suggested, but that it has always been global in its reach, aiming at comparative studies. Elizabeth Jelin, for example, worked in Argentina on human rights, social inequality, gender and family, and social movements.

The questions that are addressed by sociological biographical research have always been broad, and have further widened in recent decades – the RC 38 is a thriving and active inter-national sociological community. Most recently, this was evident in the enthusiastic response which we received to the call for our RC 38 conference “Biographical research quo vadis” in Budapest in September 2024. Over 80 submissions of proposed papers are a good indicator of how lively the field is.

We are very happy that we will be able to celebrate our 40th birthday together in Budapest from 4 to 6 September, and to take a look back, but most importantly, we will think about the future of biographical research.

Johannes Becker

Founding board members 1984: Aspasia Camargo, Cristine Colpin, Norman K. Denzin, Franco Ferrarotti, Francesco Hernandez, Erika Hörning, Elizabeth Jelin, Martin Kohli, Francesco Mercade, J.P. Roos and Paul Thompson.

Previous RC 38 presidents: Daniel Bertaux (1984-1990), Wolfram Fischer-Rosenthal (1990-1994), Kathy Davis (1994-2002), Gabriele Rosenthal (2002-2010), Roswitha Breckner (2010-2018), Hermílio Santos (2018-2023).

## MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 2023-2027

### **Johannes Becker** (President)



I am currently a substitute professor of sociology at the University of Leipzig, Germany, after more than 10 years as a researcher at the Center for Methods in Social Sciences at the University of Göttingen, Germany. Both my doctoral and postdoctoral research are based on sociological biographical research. In my PhD, I combined biographical research with approaches from the sociology of space, and in my subsequent research I have used approaches from historical sociology and migration studies. As a biographical researcher committed to global exchange between qualitative sociologists and with an international research agenda, RC 38 has been a central reference point in my scholarly career.

### **Maria Pohn-Lauggas** (Vice-President)



Maria Pohn-Lauggas is a sociologist and professor at the Institute for Methods and Methodological Principles in the Social Science at the University of Göttingen. She is doing research on the impact of the violent collective past of National Socialism. Within this topic, she asks for biographical processes constituted by narratives and photographs. She teaches interpretative methods and multi-method designs. Her main research fields are: intergenerational transmission, visual and verbal memory practices, collective memory, discourse analysis, biography research and image analysis. From 2014 to 2018 she was secretary/treasurer of the RC 38, since 2018 she is one of the vice-presidents of the RC 38.

### **Giorgos Tsiolis** (Vice-President)



Giorgos Tsiolis is a Professor of "Research Methodology in Social Sciences – Qualitative Research Methods" at the Department of Sociology, University of Crete (Greece) and is currently Head of the Department. His academic interests include issues on social research methodology, qualitative methods, qualitative data analysis, and the biographical narrative approach. His research focuses mainly on issues in the sociology of work (de-industrialization, unemployment, precarious employment). He has published in international journals as well as in collective scientific volumes. G. Tsiolis has also written two books in Greek on the biographical narrative approach and on qualitative analysis methods and has edited volumes on related issues. He is also the author (in common with Michalis Christodoulou) of the monograph "Social Causation and Biographical Research. Philosophical, Theoretical and Methodological Arguments"

London / New York, Routledge (Serie: Routledge Advances in Research Methods), 2021.

**Priscila Susin** (Secretary)



Priscila Susin is a research fellow at the Center for Research & Development in Human Factors and Resilience at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. She is co-coordinator of the Research Committee 29 "Biography and Society" of the Brazilian Society of Sociology (SBS). Her areas of interest include qualitative research methods, reconstructive biographical research, gender studies, inequalities and social stratification in urban contexts, and organizational and work studies.



**Martín Hernán Di Marco** (Treasurer)

Argentinean Sociologist, PhD in Social Sciences (Buenos Aires University). Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Oslo. His work focuses on biographical analysis of people who have committed homicide in Latin America.

## BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH QUO VADIS?

In the following pages you will find the preliminary program for the RC38 conference “Biographical research quo vadis?”, to be held in Budapest, in September of 2024.

Our conference will be open for anyone who would like to join, however, participants who will not present their work will have to register in advance, until the 18th of August. The link for the registration is: <https://forms.gle/jEJbdfPzbhedYxnU8>

ISA RC 38 CONFERENCE BUDAPEST 2024 BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH QUO VADIS?		Venue: Social Science Faculty of ELTE Pázmány Péter sétány 1/A.	
	SESSION A	SESSION B	
04.09. – Wednesday	9:45 - 10:30	Welcome	
	10:30 - 12:10	A/1 -The Dialectic of Remembering and Forgetting	B/1 - Critical Biographical Situations and Complex Contexts
	12:10 - 13:30	Lunch	
	13:30 - 15:20	A/2 - Methodological Challenges in Biographical Research	B/2 - Social Movements, Activism and Collective Memories
	15:20 - 15:50	Coffee	
	15:50 - 17:20	A/3 - Transformation of Labor under the “New Spirit of Capitalism”	B/3 - Health and Illness
	17:20 - 17:30	Break	
	17:30 - 18:30	Roundtable I <i>Biographical Research: Where from and where to?</i>	






ISA RC 38 CONFERENCE BUDAPEST 2024 Venue: CEU campus  
Nádor utca 15.  
 BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH QUO VADIS?

	SESSION A	SESSION B	
05.09. - Thursday	9:00 - 10:50	A/4 - Political Belonging, Communities and Generation	B/4 - Professionalisation and Life Paths
	10:50 - 11:20	Coffee	
	11:20 - 13:10	A/5 - Mediated Narratives: Social Networks, Arts, Visual (Hi)stories	B/5 - Continuity and Change in Migration Biographies I
	13:10 - 14:10	Lunch	
	14:10 - 15:30	A/6 - Social Transformation, Class and Mobility I	B/6 - Continuity and Change in Migration Biographies II
	15:30 - 16:00	Coffee	
	16:00 - 17:00	Roundtable II <i>Social/Historical research under political pressure</i>	
	17:00 - 19:00	City walk I <i>Rewritten narratives of the past: Hungarian political memory tour</i>	City walk II <i>Budapest - Jewish district: cultural history and unique heritage</i>

ISA RC 38 CONFERENCE BUDAPEST 2024 Venue: CEU campus  
Nádor utca 15.  
 BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH QUO VADIS?

	SESSION A	SESSION B	
06.09. - Friday	9:00 - 10:20	A/7 - Social Transformation, Class and Mobility II	B/7 - Political Regimes and Transformations I
	10:20 - 11:00	Coffee	
	11:00 - 12:40	A/8 - Challenges, Dilemmas and Tensions in Professional Practice	B/8 - Political Regimes and Transformations II
	12:40 - 13:00	Closing of the conference	



## LIST OF PRESENTERS FOR EACH SESSION

04.09. 10:30-12:10	NAME, INSTITUTION	TITLE OF PRESENTATION
SESSION A/1 THE DIALECTIC OF REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING	Maria Pohn-Lauggas, Miriam Schäfer University of Göttingen, Germany	<i>Remembering, Forgetting and Remembering Again. How To Approach Forgetting Theoretically and Methodologically</i>
	Merle Hinrichsen, André Epp Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany	<i>Forgotten Directions in Biographical Research - Forgetting as a Catalyst for Social Change?</i>
	Andrea Radvanszky University of Zürich, Switzerland	<i>What Remains When Memory Falls?</i>
	Claudia Mock Technical University Berlin, Germany	<i>"My Dad Is a Big Shot, He Used to Drop Us off in the Mercedes Benz" Biographical Topostorytelling and Mapping in Nairobi and Berlin.</i>
SESSION B/1 CRITICAL BIOGRAPHICAL SITUATIONS AND COMPLEX CONTEXTS	Júlia Vajda, Juli Székely Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>Parallel Figures of a Perpetrator and Helper: The Double Story of Delivering the "whatsitsname" during the Shoah in Hungary</i>
	Valéria Kiss Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>Biographic Methods in Socio-Legal Research</i>
	Youssef Abid, Gwendolyn Gilliéron Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Germany; Strasbourg University, France	<i>Unaccompanied Minors in France and Germany - A Biographical Policy Evaluation of Highly Complex Social and Political Situations</i>
	Arianna Zottarel University of Milan, Italy	<i>Invisible Life Stories: Biographical Research in Prison, Between Social Change and Criminalization</i>
04. 09. 13:30-15:20	NAME, INSTITUTION	TITLE OF PRESENTATION
SESSION A/2 METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES OF BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH	Lena Inowlocki Goethe-University Frankfurt, Germany	<i>What's in a Life Story? Reconstructing Processes of Awareness and Understanding of Social Inequalities and Discrimination Among Students Doing an Autobiographical-Narrative Interview</i>
	Georgios Mantikos	<i>Navigating Beyond Epistemicide. Biographical Research Within the Theoretical Landscape of Critical Theory</i>
	Katarzyna Waniek University of Lodz, Poland	<i>Therapeutic Discourse and the Psychologisation of Everyday Life in Autobiographical Accounts - Methodological Challenges for Biographical Sociology</i>
	Karoline Staude Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany	<i>Exploring the 'Auto' in Biographical Research: Methodological Challenges and Analytical Insights from a Study on the Post- Reunification Generation in Eastern Germany</i>
	Maciej Krzywosz University of Białystok, Poland	<i>Religious Revelations of the Folk Visionary Katarzyna Szymon as a Source For Biographical Research</i>
SESSION B/2 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, ACTIVISM AND COLLECTIVE MEMORIES	Eva Bahl University of Göttingen, Germany	<i>Elmina and Cape Coast (Ghana) as Points of Intersection: Entangled Histories and Relational Memories</i>
	Gaku Oshima, Japan	<i>Queer(ing) the City: Queer Performances Meet HIV/AIDS Activism and Their Inheritance</i>
	Lou Antolihao National University of Singapore	<i>Evangelist or Imperialist? Postcolonialism and Writing the Biographies of Early 20th-century American Christian Missionaries in Asia</i>
	Victoria Taboada Gómez University of Göttingen, Germany	<i>Negotiating Indigenous Memory Amid Power Inequalities in the Paraguayan Chaco: Contributions and Challenges of a Biographical Analysis</i>
	Priscila Susin Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil	<i>Biographical Narratives in the Face of Housing Instability</i>

04.09. 15:50-17:20	NAME, INSTITUTION	TITLE OF PRESENTATION
SESSION A/3 TRANSFORMATION OF LABOR UNDER THE "NEW SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM"	Giorgos Tsiolis University of Crete, Greece	<i>Processes of Worker Subjectivation in the Creative Economy: The Construction of a Constantly Renewed Singular Professional Profile</i>
	Ismael Tabilo Prieto Finis Terrae University, Chile	<i>University to Work Transition in First-Generation Students: Biographical Articulations and Moral Foundations of Sociofessional Projects in Contemporary Chile</i>
	Antonia Anastasiadou Social Policy Department at Democritus of Thrace University, Greece	<i>The Economic Crisis as a Turning Point for Changing Employment Policies at the Local Level</i>
	Mè-Linh Riemann University of Flensburg, Germany	<i>Biographies in the Platform Economy: Observations From the Field</i>
SESSION B/3 HEALTH AND ILLNESS	Johanna Sagner University of La Frontera, Chile	<i>Care of Children with Disabilities: Parental Biographical Experiences in Neoliberal Economic Contexts</i>
	Miriam Schäfer University of Göttingen, Germany	<i>Intergenerational Effects of Nazi Persecution on the Body and Health</i>
	Idalina Odziemczyk-Stawarz Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland	<i>Biographical Health &amp; Illness Narratives of the Older People Vaccinated and Unvaccinated Against Influenza During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Their Adult Children</i>
	Vicky Kafetzaki KETHEA - Therapy Center for Dependent Individuals, Athens, Greece	<i>Exploring Personal and Social Transformation through Autobiographical Narratives: A Study in a Therapeutic Community for Drug Users in Athens Greece</i>

05.09. 9:00-10:50	NAME, INSTITUTION	TITLE OF PRESENTATION
SESSION A/4 POLITICAL BELONGING, COMMUNITIES AND GENERATION	Michaela Köttig, Paula Matthies, Viktoria Rösch Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Germany	<i>Exploring Gender Profiles: Biographies of Far-Right Social Media Users</i>
	Isabel Georges Tarcisio Araújo Perdigão Filho The French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development, France	<i>In Between Lived Life and a Social Policy Agenda: The Global South Social Question From the Inside (Brazil)</i>
	Róbert Szabó Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>(Collective) Biography in the Historiography of War Criminals</i>
	Maryam Rahmani University of Erfurt, Germany	<i>Genealogy of Change: Generational Memory, Subjectivity, UND Constructing a Theory From the Ground</i>
	Balint Mezei Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>The Last Generation of Soviet Veterans in Post-Soviet Eastern Europe</i>
SESSION B/4 PROFESSIONALISATION AND LIFE PATHS	Ilona Kappanyos Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>Social and Demographic Transformations Reflected in the Life Stories of Visiting Nurses</i>
	Keller Márkus Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary	
	Viktor Papp Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>Law Practice on the Horizon of Expectation: Motivations for Becoming Lawyer in the Nineteenth Century</i>
	Viktor Tátraí Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>Professionalization as Social Change. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Biographical and Prosopographical Methods</i>
	Zsuzsanna Kiss Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>Land Agents in a Changing Society: Structural Transformations of the 19th-Century Hungarian Society Reflected in Personal Sources</i>

05.09. 11:20-13:10	NAME, INSTITUTION	TITLE OF PRESENTATION
SESSION A/5  MEDIATED NARRATIVES: SOCIAL NETWORKS, ARTS, VISUAL (HI)STORIES	Roswitha Breckner University of Vienna, Austria	<i>Visual Biographies in Social Media – How Do They Emerge, What Are They Used for and How Do They Expand Our Understanding of Biography?</i>
	Thorsten Fuchs, Wiebke Lohfeld University of Koblenz, Germany	<i>Digital Narratives of Biographical Self-Transformations – Visiting a TikTok Story of Biographical Success</i>
	Aleksandra Drączyk University of Lodz, Poland	<i>Can You Make Money From Being Homosexual? Sexuality as a Social Capital - Cases of Internet Content Creators</i>
	Kathy Davis VU University, Amsterdam, Netherlands	<i>Dancing Tango After the Pandemic: Why We Need to Rethink Our Concept of Transnational Biography</i>
	Gucsa Magdolna Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>Artist Biography as Object of Fictionalization</i>
SESSION B/5  CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN MIGRATION BIOGRAPHIES I	Monica Massari, Gianluca Gatta, Simona Mice University of Milan, Italy	<i>Reflexivity, Migration and Memory: Exploring the Entanglement of Biographical Research and Creative Methods</i>
	Anna Schnitzer, Arne Worm University Halle-Wittenberg; University Goettingen, Germany	<i>Change as a Tricky Concept in the (Re)Construction of Migration Biographies</i>
	Maria Admopolou European University Institute, Italy	<i>(Re-)Working Change: Women Migrant Workers' Life Stories and Their Radical History Potential</i>
	Liyun Wan University of Frankfurt/Strasbourg, Germany	<i>Intersecting Narratives: Biographical Insights into Syrian Refugee Integration in France and Germany</i>
	Johannes Becker, Orhan Nassif Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient Berlin, Germany	<i>Successive Arrival in a Local Migration Context: Discourses and Power Relations in Different Generations of Syriac-Orthodox Migrants in Germany</i>

05.09. 14:10-15:30	NAME, INSTITUTION	TITLE OF PRESENTATION
SESSION A/6  SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION, CLASS AND MOBILITY I	Kaja Kaźmierska University of Łódź, Poland	<i>A New Dimension of Social Change From the Perspective of the Biographical Experience of the Post-transformation Process in Poland</i>
	Sarah Könecke University of Göttingen, Germany	<i>Social Advancement in Families Persecuted and Stigmatized as So-Called "Asocials"</i>
	Akiko Yamazaki Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Paris 8 University and Hosei University, Tokyo	<i>Class Mobility in France: What Is Changing, What Is Unchanging, and What Is Needed for Change</i>
SESSION B/6  CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN MIGRATION BIOGRAPHIES II	Lucas Cé Sangali University of Göttingen, Germany	<i>Power Transformations and Autobiographical Constructions in the Context of 'Revolutionary' Developments in the Republic of the Sudan</i>
	Jie Liu Shandong Technology and Business University, Yantai, China	<i>Migration Reflexivity: Exploring the Lived Experiences of Chinese International Students in the US</i>
	Daniel Guigui University College Dublin, Ireland	<i>Shared Spaces, Shared Stories: Autobiographical Narratives of Dublin-Based Hosts of Ukrainian Refugees</i>

06.09. 9:00-10:20	NAME, INSTITUTION	TITLE OF PRESENTATION
SESSION A/7  SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION, CLASS AND MOBILITY II	Yoshinori Kasai Keio University, Japan	<i>Half a Century in a 'New' Town: Biographies of Residents and Neighborhood Associations</i>
	Rixta Wundrak Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Germany	<i>The Biographical Shape of Future Societies</i>
	Fruzsina Rozina Tóth Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>Biography and the Constant Change</i>
SESSION B/7  POLITICAL REGIMES AND TRANSFORMATIONS I	Monika Verbalyte University of Flensburg, Germany	<i>Deep Transformations: Emotional Experiences After the Post-communist Change</i>
	Ákos Bartha HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Budapest, Hungary	<i>Biographical Research of the Horthy Era: Some Dilemmas and Opportunities</i>
	Anastasia Papushina Central European University, Vienna, Austria	<i>Great Things Must Be Seen at a Distance? Diaries as Testimonies of Societal Transformation</i>

06.09. 11:00-12:40	NAME, INSTITUTION	TITLE OF PRESENTATION
SESSION A/8  CHALLENGES, DILEMMAS AND TENSIONS IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	Zacharoula Kasserli Hellenic Mediterranean University, Greece	<i>Wearing Two Hats When Conducting Biographical Research: Therapists as Researchers in the Field of Substance Use and Addiction</i>
	Christina König Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany	<i>Paradoxes of Social Work With Extreme Right Young People: Biographical Interviews With Social Workers</i>
	Fanni Svégel Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>Entanglement of the Public and the Private: Life of a Female Scientist</i>
	Stefanie Hoffmann Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg, Germany	<i>Becoming a First-Gen Scientist - Making Changes in Habitus Over the Lifespan Visible Through Biographical Research and Documentary Method</i>
SESSION B/8  POLITICAL REGIMES AND TRANSFORMATIONS II	Gabriela Boangiu Romanian Academy, Craiova, Romania	<i>Social Biographies and Collective Memory - Symbolical Representations of Communist Times in Romania</i>
	Gábor Csikós Semmelweis University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>"The Entire World Has Gone Mad, and I Have Become Deadly Serious!" Social Change From the Perspective of a Paranoid Schizophrenic</i>
	Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland	<i>Why There Was No Feminism in Poland - Biographical Approach in Researching Polish Feminist Movements' History (1980-2004)</i>
	Gyula Tolnai Károli Gáspár University, Budapest, Hungary	<i>The Fate of a Soldier in the Turning Points of the 20th Century</i>

## PRIZES

### Annual SAGE Current Sociology Best Paper Prize 2024

*Gabriele Rosenthal (University of Göttingen, Germany) and Artur Bogner (University of Göttingen, Germany)*



Artur Bogner



Gabriele Rosenthal

The SAGE Current Sociology Best Paper Prize recognizes an outstanding paper published in Current Sociology within the past year, noted for its originality, innovation, significance, and impact in the field. Gabriele Rosenthal and Artur Bogner were awarded in the second edition of the prize (vol. 71) for their article for Current Sociology "Social-constructivist and figural research".

You can find the paper online in this link: <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/publications/isa-journals/current-sociology/current-sociology-best-paper-prize>

To read an interview with the authors access the following link: <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/publications/isa-journals/current-sociology/sociologist-of-the-month/sotm-february-2024>

## CONFERENCES

### Report of the invited session “Same interview, different perspectives: a recapitulation”

#### XX ISA World Congress of Sociology 2023

Mê-Linh Riemann, PhD, Europa-Universität Flensburg

#### Introduction

How can interpretations of one life-story differ? And what can we learn from each other's perspectives?

These are very important questions to tackle, particularly in biographical research: a field that has a long tradition of collaborative forms of analyses (cf. in form of research workshops/ *Forschungswerkstätten*). It is important to continuously reflect about this practice, and see how it evolves in the light of new collective developments and ways of working.

At the XX ISA World Congress of Sociology 2023, which took place both in Melbourne and online, the RC38 *Biography and Society* decided to dedicate one session to the interpretation of one interview. The biographical narrative selected was that of James, a young Nigerian migrant in the Netherlands, who was working as a freelance IT specialist on an online labour platform. This interview took place in 2021 in the context of a larger European research project on unpaid labour and precarity, including in the so-called ‘gig economy’ (“ResPecTMe: Researching precariousness across the paid/unpaid work continuum.” (ERC Advanced Grant)). Although migration was not on the forefront of this study, it became a dominant theme in James' narrative – along with his struggles to sustain himself through platform labour. The three presenters Giorgos Tsiolis (University of Crete, Greece), Priscila Susin (PUCRS, Brazil), and Mê-Linh Riemann (Europa-Universität Flensburg, Germany) – each took a different, yet related approach to analysing this interview, which resulted in rich discussion and exchange of ideas. Kathy Davis (VU Amsterdam, Netherlands), who was originally scheduled to be our fourth presenter, could not participate in the session, but kindly shared her impressions of the narrative afterwards.

In the following, we will firstly present a brief summary of James' life-history. This serves as a basis for recapitulating the key points of our subsequent discussion.

#### The case of James

James was born in Nigeria in 1992 to an upper-middle class family. At an early age, he developed a deep interest in technology. His biographical project of studying computer science was, however met with much resistance at home. His father, who he portrayed as very authoritarian, insisted on a degree in petroleum engineering instead. Despite James' early concerns about an oversupply of graduates in this field, he could not resist the familial pressure and gave into his father's demands. In

hindsight, he believed this was the wrong decision. He never enjoyed the subject, and indeed faced bleak job prospects after graduation.

During his mandatory military service, James decided to re-connect with his earlier interests by studying programming through free online courses. He also started to explore websites, where he could offer his IT skills as a freelancer. These early attempts mostly resulted in disappointment. After two years of – what he referred to as – “*doing nothing*”, James developed the plan to study abroad. Initially, he wanted to study web development but again lacked the support of his father. Instead, they agreed on a masters in management.

James eventually found a private institution in the Netherlands he was interested in. Despite extremely high tuition fees, he decided to enrol and arrived in Maastricht in 2018. Unfortunately, this institution turned out to be fraudulent. Apparently, the organizers of the programme specifically targeted young people from developing countries with elusive promises of gaining access to European labour markets. This was, however, not the case for James' cohort (*'Everybody had to get back to their home countries'*). He described the courses as very superficial, short-lived, and the teachers as disengaged. Furthermore, he realised that – contrary to his initial expectations – the degree was not well-recognized by Dutch employers (*'You graduate empty'*).

After finishing his masters, James struggled to find employment in the Netherlands. Eventually he found a part-time job at a warehouse in Eindhoven. This contract could, however, not be prolonged due to his legal status. James' student visa was about to expire, and he struggled to sustain himself financially. At the time of the interview, he had applied for a working visa and was currently waiting to hear back from the authorities. His chances were very slim, and he lived in fear of deportation.

In this increasingly hopeless situation, James turned to online labour platforms in an attempt to make a living as a freelance IT specialist. He was drawn to these websites, as they appeared more open towards workers without a formal training in computer sciences. Apparently, clients cared more about freelancers' ratings rather than their university degrees. These platforms seemed, furthermore, like a way to remain economically active without a working visa. James put much hope into this online system, as he perceived it as a way to circumvent obstacles he encountered in 'real life' (e.g., forms of discrimination). The reality of online freelancing was, however, very harsh. In his field, there appeared to be an oversupply of labour, as dozens of workers competed for single gigs that often did not pay very well. In an attempt to improve his chances, James dedicated himself to self-study using free materials he found online. He was visibly frustrated about his situation, and did not know how to proceed with his life.

### Different perspectives

The biographical narrative of James shed light on how various macro-developments in different national context can overlap and shape the lifelines of individuals. Each of our discussants developed a unique approach to analysing this



interview by paying special attention to various, yet related, themes. In the following, we will briefly present some of the key points emerging out of our discussion.

Giorgos Tsiolis

Giorgos Tsiolis started his presentation by putting forward the argument that “*the principles of biographical analysis allow us to go beyond the descriptive level*”. When analysing James’ narrative, we should therefore not limit ourselves to questions of ‘how’ but also ‘why’. What are the structural processes that have shaped key developments of his life? And what broader insights about social phenomena can we derive from single case studies?

One important theme in James’ narrative was that of intergenerational confrontations within his family. He retraced many of his frustrations and failures to this influence of his father, who he portrayed as having little to no sympathy for his own academic interests and professional pursuits. Instead of analysing this conflict purely on a relational level, Giorgos adopted a historical perspective on their differing preferences. James’ father, so he argued, seemed to have been influenced by Fordist ideals of advanced capitalism, which strongly limited the number of professions he deemed acceptable for his son (e.g., engineering, law, medicine). In his view, petroleum engineering appeared like a ‘rational’ choice given the country’s natural resources and the high global demand. This somewhat simplistic equation had apparently become somewhat of a collective myth in Nigeria, leading to a severe oversupply of graduates in the field.

In contrast to his father, James embodied what Giorgos referred to as “*the new spirit of capitalism*”. Throughout the interview, he put forward his belief that “*what is rational is determined by the market*” rather than by traditional ideas and expectations. James thereby adopted a neo-liberal mindset, which also shaped the way he spoke about his platform engagement. Despite the many obstacles he encountered as an online freelancer, he portrayed these labour platforms as a space of meritocracy. Giorgos argued that this imagery is indicative of James’ acceptance of competition and a ‘responsibilization’ of risks. In other words, it is the individual’s responsibility to make choices based on the market’s needs. They ought to be rewarded for the ‘right’ decision, and accept punishment for taking the ‘wrong’ turn.

James’ neo-liberal beliefs stood in harsh contrast to his precarious life-situation. His narrative revealed that he had not chosen to become an online freelancer out of free will, but rather a lack of alternatives due to structural forces outside of his control (i.e. mass unemployment in Nigeria, expiring visa in the Netherlands). Furthermore, he carefully crafted an online profile on the platform that omitted important parts of his identity, indicating that he – in fact – did not perceive it as a safe space devoid of discrimination.

In our session, Giorgos raised open questions about why the narrator adopted such a neo-liberal rhetoric when speaking about his life. Is this line of argumentation indicative of his rebellion against his father? And what about James’ strategies of ‘bypassing’, i.e. giving in to his father’s demands whilst trying to learn IT skills in an informal way? Is this a wider pattern in Nigerian society? In conclusion, Giorgos stressed

that biographical case studies can be used to formulate questions about the life-course and derive broader insights of social phenomena. Furthermore, he encouraged biographical researchers to go beyond descriptive levels of analysis and raise questions of 'why'.

Priscila Susin

Priscila Susin was the second speaker of our session. After acknowledging Giorgos Tsiolis' valuable insights, she framed her own presentation as being "*more focused on the case level*". Her objective was hereby: "*To understand how James experienced his professional trajectory and the interrelated biographical contexts and how he framed his professional life story in the interview. Are there contrasts between James' life as possibly experienced in the past and his life as narrated in the present?*"

When analysing James' early years, Priscila noted that family support was not completely absent in the children's lives, as they were given access to financial resources and education. This access was, however, closely tied to their conformity to their father's preferences: a tight condition that Priscila referred to as "*selective family support*".

James expressed much frustration about what he experienced as a prolonged and invasive dependency on his father. Priscila framed the moment James "*gained approval*" for his migration project to the Netherlands as a turning point in his life. Although James did not comment on it specifically, it seemed that in addition to better job opportunities in Europe, he was also seeking some (geographical) distance to his parents: a motive that he could probably not express openly. Selecting a master programme of his father's liking (i.e. management) thereby appeared to be a good compromise to gain autonomy without exacerbating their already strained relationship. Unfortunately, this endeavour turned into a biographical trap after finding out that the university had lured him into the programme under false pretences.

A second topic Priscila paid close attention to was the reproduction of global inequalities on online labour platforms. She was particularly interested in the distribution of privileges among workers from the global north and global south, which was particularly visible in the following narrative sequence:

*"What I did is /ehm/ in the box, in the box that says 'where are you from?' I put Maastricht but never Nigeria because frankly speaking I know that if you say you're from Africa general clients might not really want to give you the job. I don't know why but for me I put Maastricht and it works for me so I fill in I'm in the Netherlands, I'm in the Netherlands so. But if you put /ehm/ Nigeria or a country from Africa chances of getting the job are very, very slim. Very slim. So it's better to just say you're from outside Africa. That's better."*

Each of our presenters had identified this empirical example as particularly interesting, as it sheds light on structures of discrimination as well as new forms of impression management in an online space. Priscila observed, furthermore, how precarious

workers like James enjoy limited to no protection on these websites, as he recounted several incidences of exploitation (e.g., non-payment for completed tasks).

Throughout his narrative, James expressed much frustration about how his life had turned out. Priscila thereby identified three re-occurring “*culprits*” that he held responsible for his misfortune: (a) Africa and Nigeria as places that offer hardly any opportunities for young people wanting to work in technology, (b) Nigerian culture, which he believes enables parents to have excessive control over their adult children's lives, and (c) his father, who he portrayed as especially authoritarian and small-minded.

James' deep anger at his parents stemmed from his belief that if they had approved of his earlier wish to study computer science, his life would have turned out differently. Priscila underlined that this tension is also intertwined with generational differences as exemplified in the following quote:

*“In Nigeria there is this big problem. The problem of, you know, parents dictating the children. Telling the children, what they should do. Because there is this belief that like in Africa there are limited opportunities so they are setting courses which will give you a good life. It's, it's an ideology which has influenced a lot of people, a lot of people's dreams and aspirations. In Nigeria, for instance, if you're not studying engineering, if you're not studying law, if you're not studying medicine... parents are like: 'You're wasting your time!'. You're not going to be getting a good life and stuff like that. And then you know it's an ideology.”*

This quote sheds light on how James' personal problems are seemingly indicative of a patriarchal family structure that is apparently very common in Nigeria. Priscila observed that in addition there are additional expectations placed on sons, who are raised to become future leaders of the family. James' attempt to individualize from his family by moving to the Netherlands forced him to face struggles outside the private sphere. Despite his efforts, he very much struggled to overcome obstacles in the platform economy (e.g. rating pressure, competition) as well as in the ‘real world’ – due to his expiring visa, lack of language skills, dubious academic qualifications and marginalized status as a foreigner.

Mê-Linh Riemann

Mê-Linh Riemann had conducted the interview with James about one and a half year prior to our session. Listening to the previous presenters' interpretation was quite eye-opening, as they had highlighted aspects of the narrative that had not been immediately apparent during the data collection. In the beginning of her time slot, she briefly mentioned some of the particularities of the interview situation and the research context. Mê-Linh had found James on LinkedIn, and his public profile gave the impression that he had a lot of skills, academic qualifications and work experience. In hindsight, she realised that this online self-presentation served as somewhat of a façade to hide his serious financial predicaments and precarious legal sta-

tus. In her presentation, Mê-Linh proceeded in a sequential order illustrating how different chapters of James' life were interconnected.

One theme that emerged very dominantly throughout James' narrative was that of feeling of other-directedness (or Fremdbestimmtheit) and alienation from his studies (*"I was forced to do petroleum engineering"*). James was, furthermore, fearful of becoming part of a 'lost generation'. Prior to starting this university degree, he expressed concerns about the lack of job opportunities in the field. James was, however, denied a voice in the decision-making process, which he was still visibly bitter about.

*"I never felt this chemistry of enjoying what I was doing. I never enjoyed being a gas engineer. And besides I thought that after graduating chances are that I would not even get a good job. And I was right. I was goddamn right."*

After graduation, his chances of finding a stable position in Nigeria were extremely slim. Becoming an online freelancer seemed like a way to gain control over his life. The first labour platform, however, proved to be a confusing, highly competitive and unregulated market space. James found himself in a situation that could be described as anomic (Durkheim, 1897), as he lacked orientation on how to proceed with his life.

While getting a master degree in the Netherlands was intended to be an action scheme of control, it turned into a biographical trap. He mistrusted the organizers of the programme, who he believed specifically targeted vulnerable young people from developing countries for financial gain.

*"It's an institution where they don't actually take in Dutch students. Rather they go to Africa or the third world countries and begin to market to them. (...) You just graduate empty. Everybody that has graduated, no job. Everybody had to go back to their country because the Visa expired. Everybody had to go back to their countries."*

Whilst waiting to hear back from his visa application, platform labour seemed like the only option to remain – at least somewhat – economically active. In the interview, James spoke in-depth about the importance of ratings on these websites as a currency to generate trust (*"Your rating speaks a lot on your behalf. If you have a good rating it gives the client an impression to actually trust you with their money, trust you with their work."*): Although he did not criticise the system per se, it became apparent how unforgiving this digital environment was – particularly for someone like him, who was still in the process of learning IT skills. His platform engagement was overshadowed by the fear of a bad review, which would have a detrimental effect on his future workflow.

What also influenced James' standing on the platform was his response rate – or in other words, how quickly he would reply to potential clients. This technical feature

led to a dissolution of temporary boundaries in everyday life: a problem that is very common among online freelancers (cf. Riemann et al. 2023).

*“You’ll always want to be on the platform 24/7. If you’re sleeping you’re thinking about upwork, when you wake up you go to your computer and that’s the first thing you do.”*

There was something Kafkaesque about James’ current situation, as he was in a state of legal limbo and quickly running out of savings. The prospect of being deported was very threatening, not only because of the lack of job opportunities and structural violence, but also because his relationship with his parents had deteriorated significantly since his departure. In the Netherlands, he lacked a strong social circle. In contrast to, e.g. his warehouse job, online freelancing did not allow him to socialize at work, which exacerbated his sense of loneliness. Telling his life-story to a sympathetic outsider seemed like an empowering act, as he could – at least temporarily – break out of a state of complete isolation.

Kathy Davis

Due to unforeseen circumstances, our fourth speaker Kathy Davis could not attend our session. She kindly shared her impressions of the narrative afterwards, and was particularly interested in how James could sustain his dream of becoming a successful entrepreneur in the midst of extremely difficult circumstances. He thereby shifted between neoliberal argumentation lines (that somewhat idealised market mechanisms) and narrative sequences, which revealed the level of precarity he faced personally.

When being confronted by the interviewer why he had not been very active on the platform lately, James proceeded to explain himself *“in a way you understand”* (line 665). This expression caught Kathy’s attention, as he apparently used saving-face strategies to get his story across.

Conclusion

The ISA session ‘Same interview, different perspectives’ (RC38) allowed us to discuss one biographical narrative in-depth: a format that is quite unusual at international conferences of that size. The speakers as well as the audience were located in different geographic locations and time zones, as some had travelled to Melbourne whilst others participated online. Despite the physical distance, we managed to create an atmosphere that was very similar to that of a traditional research workshop (or “Forschungswerkstatt”). The examples discussed in this article are thereby simply a selection of interesting points raised during our vivid discussion.

In conclusion, we were very pleased with how this session turned out – and highly recommend readers to consider this format when planning the next conference or other academic gathering.

## Report on the session **Biographical Methods in Applied Social Research**

### **XX ISA World Congress of Sociology 2023**

Michaela Koettig (Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences), Priscila Susin (Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul), Débora Rinaldi (Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul)

This session was organised by Michaela Koettig, from the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Germany, and by Priscila Susin and Débora Rinaldi, both from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The session was chaired by Michaela Koettig (online) and Priscila Susin (on-site). In this session we had five presentations: one online, one pre-recorded, and three on-site.

The first to present online was Eren Yetkin, from the Koblenz University of Applied Sciences, in Germany. In his work “Youth Co-Research and Memory Work – about the Biographical Data Flourishing in Participatory Research Settings” he spoke about biographical elements emerging in the process of participatory field research and the challenges in the implementation of participatory concepts in qualitative research.

The second presentation was from Débora Rinaldi, from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, in Brazil, who pre-recorded her work “Public Policy Analysis via Qualitative and Biographical Research. Possibilities, Limitations and Contributions”. She spoke about the possibilities, limitations, and contributions of research that analyzes the effects of public policies from the perspective of qualitative methods, and how open, biographical research can help to improve public policy analysis.

The third presentation was from Priscila Susin and Gabriele Bachi, from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, in Brazil. Their work “Episodic Interviews in the Investigation of Safety Events in the Oil and Gas Industry in Brazil” presented the adaptation and application of Episodic and Biographical Narrative Interviews to understand incidents and accidents in the Oil and Gas Industry from a systemic and interpretative perspective.

The fourth presentation was from Martín Di Marco, from the University of Oslo and the National Scientific and Technical Research Council in Buenos Aires. His work “Femicide, Offenders and Trajectories: Identification of Prevention Points Based on Biographical Narratives of Perpetrators” argued that offenders' stories about their relationships help to identify missed opportunities for intervention in both the prevention of- and responses to intimate partner violence.

The last presentation was from Ornella Larenza from the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland, in Manno. Her work “Coping with No Access to Social Assistance: A Qualitative Longitudinal Study on Single Parents' Life Course in Switzerland” spoke about how the link between no access to social assistance and single parents' vulnerability is mostly overlooked, and how this problem can shape single parents' life course in Switzerland with unintended consequences of social assistance conditionality.

The debate revolved around the usefulness and relevance of the qualitative and biographical research results in the context of interventions in different fields of

social work and sociology, and on how it can shed a light on how public policies are built and applied. The debate also raised questions about the limitations of biographical research for public policy analysis and improvement. It also showed how biographical research and open-ended interviews can have impact over the industry, helping to change management processes and even basic assumptions that lead to unsustainable organizational practices. Finally, the discussion has shown that biographical-analytical research approaches can be successful for interventions in many ways and in diverse social and institutional contexts.

## RESEARCH REPORTS

### **Individual and collective memories of slavery and the slave trade: A contrastive comparison of different communities, generations and group- ings in Ghana and Brazil<sup>1</sup>**

Principal investigators: Prof. Dr. Maria Pohn-Lauggas & Prof. Dr. Gabriele Rosenthal  
(University of Göttingen)

Researchers in Germany: Dr. Eva Bahl, Dr. Artur Bogner, Lucas Cé Sangalli, M.A.

Cooperation partners: Prof. Dr. Steve Tonah (University of Ghana; Legon/Accra); Prof.  
Dr. Hermílio Santos (Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul; Porto Alegre)

Funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG: PO 2422/3-1 & RO 827/23-1)

Duration of the project: 2022–2025

#### Introduction

Gabriele Rosenthal & Maria Pohn-Lauggas

While we reported on our specific questions and, above all, our first field visit to Ghana in the fall of 2022 in the December 2022 newsletter, this report focuses primarily on our empirical findings in Brazil to date and initial reflections on the similarities and differences between the two countries. This includes, above all, the relevance of memorials and school education in both countries. We will publish the comprehensive empirical findings from our second field visit to Ghana in fall 2023 in the next newsletter.

Our empirical interpretive study focuses on making a contrastive comparison of collective and individual memories of slavery in different regions, generations and groupings in Ghana and Brazil. While in Ghana we concentrate on the coastal region and on various regions in northern Ghana, our focus in Brazil is on the Salvador region and on Brazilians with Afro-Brazilian relatives or who present themselves as Afro-Brazilians or Blacks. We are interested in the question of which collective knowledge about the past is passed on in families, local communities and other we-groups. We are also investigating which forms of slavery<sup>2</sup>, slave capture and slave trade (trans-Atlantic and trans-Saharan, as well as intra-African and intra-Brazilian) are addressed by whom, how, and in what contexts. Places of remembrance are examined as sites of contested discourses on the past: what is conveyed in these places, what is not, and who encounters whom in these memory practices? In other

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/650363.html>

<sup>2</sup> We cannot discuss this here, but as far as possible in our analyses we distinguish between the different kinds of slavery (pawn slaves, house slaves, etc.) people talk about. However, this is not always clearly specified.



words, we reconstruct public memories and commemoration practices, as well as the memories and memory practices of specific groupings and families.

For this purpose, we use an approach that combines the sociology of knowledge and figurational sociology in order to reconstruct the interrelationships between different memory practices. The research is methodologically plural, using a combination of methods, such as participant observation, spontaneous or planned group discussions, biographical-narrative interviews, family interviews, expert interviews, ethnographic interviews, discourse and image analyses. This combination varies depending on the research context, research process and field access. Furthermore, we include archival studies and document analysis, by which we mean discourse analysis of different texts, including media texts, such as the websites of memorial sites, local communities or other groupings that refer to the topic of slavery.<sup>3</sup> As empirical findings that have now been confirmed, we can state that Afro-Brazilians and Ghanaians have the following in common:

- remarkably little knowledge about the past enslavement of relatives or ancestors in their family or we-group,
- shame with regard to a family past with enslaved relatives, and
- certain repair strategies that serve to “heal” a burdensome collective past (i.e. partly also family past) or to make it unquestionable.

In both countries, there is obviously a tendency to be proud of having ancestors or relatives who had a powerful position in the past as opposed to a weak position. In Brazil, this pride or positive self-definition among Afro-Brazilians often refers to European ancestors (and thus perhaps implicitly also to ancestors who themselves bought or sold enslaved people). Here, however, we can observe an increasing tendency toward a stronger positive self-definition as Black among members of younger generations, as was also very explicitly expressed in some of our interviews. In Ghana, too, European ancestors are usually associated with pride, but so are also indigenous ancestors who collaborated with slave traders or slave raiders, and people who owned enslaved people. The main difference is that among Afro-Brazilians their collective history before slavery, i.e., knowledge about the history of their African region of origin and the corresponding social, local or ethnic groupings, is often condensed in a very homogenizing way to an “African origin”. In Ghana, on the other hand, much more detailed historical knowledge is handed down, especially at the courts of kings or chiefs, in the context of local we-groups or other groupings.

Another difference, which requires further empirical examination, appears to be that in the coastal region of Bahia the memorials and museums have less significance for the collective memories of Afro-Brazilians than the memorials on the Ghanaian coast have for the cultural memories of the Indigenous population. The memorials in the so-called slave castles (especially in Elmina and Cape Coast), the slave dungeons that can be visited there, and the suffering of the people who died there or were shipped from there, are of central importance in the prevailing cultural memory or – we could also say – prevailing version of a national memory. For exam-

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<sup>3</sup> For the methodological approach, see Becker, J./ Pohn-Lauggas, M./ Santos H. (2023): Rosenthal, G. (2022).

ple, school classes, including classes from northern Ghana, are often taken to visit them. In Ghana, we were able to prove empirically in various regions (especially in the Upper East) that the versions of slavery conveyed in the memorials have a decisive influence on cultural memory throughout the country, and thus increasingly override the versions of communicative memory.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the knowledge about the time of slavery that is still handed down in families and local communities, which here often relates to slavery or slave capture or slave trading within Africa, is increasingly disappearing from the memory of the younger generations. Instead, knowledge about the trans-Atlantic slave trade which is passed on in schools and memorials is replacing the knowledge handed down by members of the older generations. In other words, the content of communicative memory in respect of slavery, i.e. knowledge passed on mainly orally in families and (local) communities, is in danger of being forgotten.

As already mentioned, our research in the coastal region of Bahia shows a greater significance of everyday practices, especially religious practices, in the commemoration of ancestors from “Africa” and their enslavement. As Eva Bahl and Lucas Cé Sangalli explain below, representations of a so-called African culture and religion are very homogenizing. There are usually no references to specific local groupings or regions of origin in Africa, and there is a lack of concrete historical knowledge.

What is similar in both countries is that the inner-South American and inner-African slave trade is discussed much less in the interviews than the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Or to put it another way, despite the very different figurations of Indigenous groupings, Europeans and Afro-Brazilians, there is an overemphasis on the trans-Atlantic slave trade in both countries, and an underemphasis on the indigenous or “internal” slave trade. This can be explained by the need to avoid making an issue of the “internal” conflicts and acts of violence between certain groupings in the past. If it is thematized, especially in Ghana, then preferably in a defused or detoxified form that lends itself to reconciliation without complications. This may be seen as strengthening “national” cohesion or peace, while conflicts between sub-groupings that are not resolved in some way presumably continue to simmer.

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<sup>4</sup> We refer here to our social constructivist modification of the concepts of J. Assmann (2008).

See: Pohn-Lauggas, M. (2020); Rosenthal, G. (2016).

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## **Memories of slavery and the slave trade in the region of Salvador da Bahia (Brazil)**

### **Research Report Brazil 2023**

Eva Bahl (University of Göttingen), Lucas Cé Sangalli (University of Göttingen)

#### Introduction

Between December 2022 and April 2023, we conducted fieldwork in different parts of Brazil with a focus on the intergenerational transmission of individual and collective memories of slavery and the trade in enslaved people. In this report, we will focus on findings from fieldwork conducted with our colleagues Artur Bogner and Gabriele Rosenthal between January and April 2023 in Salvador da Bahia, the region of Recôncavo Baiano (São Félix/Cachoeira and surrounding areas), and on the Dendê Coast. We will discuss our findings which are based mainly on participant observation and interviews with members of different groupings in these regions of the state of Bahia. Furthermore, we carried out historical analyses, and interpreted other kinds of data material, such as website presentations of memorial sites, art exhibitions, and fictional literature. We will begin with some reflections on specific figurations in memory disputes in Brazil, and the role of generational differences and family or community dialogue. This is followed by an explanation of the interrelationship between practices and places of remembrance (like memorial sites as more formal places of remembrance or other places which can be characterized as less public and more informal). The relative absence of formal places of remembrance of slavery (in the sense of memorials dedicated explicitly to this purpose) is a central finding of our research to date. Closely related to this discussion are further findings that primarily concern the tourist marketing of places and practices, as well as the importance of religious practices.

#### The significance of figurations in memory disputes

In contrast to Ghana, which is not characterized by a *white* elite like Brazil, but by Indigenous elites or ethnic groupings, memory disputes in Brazil take place in a context of structural racism. Here, there are conflictual figurations and power inequalities between Black (Afro-diasporic) and *white* Brazilians (often with a European

family history), but also more complex relations. For instance, many of our interviewees had ancestors not only from the African continent, but also from diverse Indigenous groupings that lived in what is present-day Brazil before the arrival of Europeans, and/or from Europe. Figurations involving descendants of enslaved people, enslavers and other groupings in Brazilian society are very different from those in Ghana. Power inequalities between Black and *white* people play a much greater role in Brazil, and, as we also observed in Ghana, the existence of enslaved ancestors can still be experienced as a stigma to this day. These figurations explain the tendency in memory disputes to focus on empowerment, 'Blackness'<sup>5</sup> (*Negritude*) and proud Black history, instead of the traumas of the violent history of enslavement, and the experiences of racialized prejudice and violence that most of our interviewees with African and Indigenous family histories have had.

### Generational differences and family or community dialogue

Many of our Afro-Brazilian interviewees directly linked their own life stories (characterized by exclusion and poverty) and current life situation with the history of enslavement and exploitation. Here, we could observe parallels and differences between different generations. Not least due to the affirmative action policies of President Lula's first governments (2002–2010), younger generations of Black Bahians now have more access to higher education, and position themselves politically in relation to their collective past and their current situation (and the interplay between them). But people living in precarious circumstances – who often belong to the older generations of the parents and grandparents – with lower chances of access to formal education are less likely to position themselves in such a politicized way. Nevertheless, they often emphasize the continuities between their own marginalized situation in Brazilian society and that of their ancestors. This points to an important empirical finding that we intend to investigate during our next field visits: To what extent do life under precarious circumstances and lower chances of access to formal education interrelate with thematization of the experiences of enslavement and servitude of previous genealogical generations? And which social constellations lead to this past being transmitted, or not transmitted, in families and (local) communities?

### The significance of practices and places of (non-)remembrance

A key finding of our research in the coastal region of Bahia is that everyday practices, including everyday religious practices, are more important for remembering the history of slavery than formal places of remembrance such as memorials and museums. This very general statement will be differentiated somewhat by looking at some practices and places in more detail. We will rely on interviews we conducted during participant observation in these places.

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<sup>5</sup> Blackness is a literal translation from Portuguese but does not convey the same meaning as the intellectual and political *Négritude* movement, which was strongly influenced by Aimé Césaire and Leopold Senghor, among others.

While we encountered little memorialization of enslavement in the form of monuments and museums in Bahia, this was overwhelmingly the case in the celebration of African heritage in various forms, such as during Carnival or various traditional Afro-Brazilian celebrations we attended in Salvador da Bahia (e.g. the Iemanjá festival and the washing of Itapuã). Visits to religious sites and houses (*terreiros*) in Salvador and in the São Félix/Cachoeira region, as well as several interviews with practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions, showed us how important religious knowledge and everyday religious practices are for understanding the enslavement past of one's own family, we-group or local community. We will discuss this in more detail below.

The transgenerational and collective transmission of knowledge<sup>6</sup> is visible not only in non-everyday practices (such as the celebrations mentioned above), but also in everyday practices, including everyday religious practices, cooking recipes, the use of various medicinal herbs, songs, dances, body painting, and clothing. At the same time, these practices are also subject to the logic of economic utility when they are advertised as part of the city of Salvador's African identity. As in Ghana, this always led us to ask: Which groupings benefit from these initiatives? Which memorialization serves which interests? And what role does the commercialization of memories play?

During our fieldwork in Bahia (January–April 2023), we visited several *Quilombo* communities, most of which can be traced back to communities that escaped enslavement and colonial control. These play a central role in the transmission of knowledge about the enslavement past of their own collective and its reconstruction. We conceptualize them as places of remembrance where memories can have a specific Gestalt. During an interview at a *Quilombo* on the Dendê Coast, we first asked specific questions about the history of the place, to which the interviewee replied that she knew nothing about it. However, when we asked her to tell us her life story and family history, she was able to trace the foundation of the *Quilombo* where she currently lives to two ancestors, a woman and a man, who settled there and initiated the family and the community. On a manifest level, she claimed to know nothing about slavery. However, she did in fact have the concrete knowledge that her ancestors escaped from enslavement and established a community that remains in existence even today. Here we can see how collective memories of enslavement overlap with processes of remembering one's own history and the history of one's family or local community for members of certain groupings.

In the following sections of this report, we will focus on the more museum-like forms of remembrance and commemoration. African and Afro-Brazilian culture played a major role in the sites we visited. What they have in common is that their focus is on African culture – sometimes somewhat homogenizing, without clear differentiation between different ethnic groupings or historical phases – rather than on social history, in the sense of presenting specific dates, processes and actors. Consequently, they tend to not explicitly thematize the histories of enslavement.

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<sup>6</sup> We use the term “knowledge” in a broad sense which includes not only cognition but also know-how in the sense of habitualized practices.

In Salvador, we visited the Afro-Brazilian Museum (Museu Afro Brasileiro, MAFRO), the House of Carnival (*Casa do Carnaval*), the Baianas Memorial (*Memorial das Baianas*), and institutions that relate to specific African countries, such as the Benin House (*Casa do Benin*). The Museum of Afro-Brazilian Culture (Museu Nacional de Cultura Afro-Brasileira, MUNCAB) only reopened in November 2023, after our departure, after more than three years of closure due to the pandemic and underfunding by the Bolsonaro government. Addressing the history of enslavement is part of the self-description of the museum: “Here you will find works that [...] deal with the issue of trade in enslaved people, black resistance, quilombos and revolts”<sup>7</sup> (translated from Portuguese by the authors). And the digital collection, which is accessible via the website, contains chains and instruments of torture, as well as portraits of so-called wage slaves (*escravos de ganho*), and historical documents from the slave-owning associations (passports, tax assessments, etc.). We plan to visit MUNCAB during our next field visit, which is planned for October 2024.<sup>8</sup>

While the MAFRO exhibitions we saw contained mainly the collections of French photographer and anthropologist Pierre Verger, the Casa do Benin and other “African Houses”, such as the Houses of Ghana (since 2023), Angola, and Nigeria, were created in cooperation with the respective embassies, or on the initiative of the respective African state governments.<sup>9</sup> Regions situated in present-day Benin, Angola, Nigeria and Ghana were among the regions of origin of the people who were brought to Bahia in the context of slavery.<sup>10</sup> It is important to stress that most of the employees at these institutions whom we were able to observe and interview had ancestors they traced back to the African continent.

We were able to visit the Baianas Memorial, a museum in the historic center of Salvador dedicated to the Baianas. These enslaved women were characterized by the fact that they organized themselves in Catholic syncretic sisterhoods, and by the typical activity of selling *acarajé* – bean balls fried in palm oil. These women worked on the streets and had to give part of their wages to their enslavers (*escravos de ganho*). A tour guide told us during one of our visits that these women had greater freedom – as they worked on the streets – and in some cases the opportunity to buy their freedom with their savings. Although this museum is centrally concerned with a

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<sup>7</sup> <https://museuafrobrasileiro.com.br/> [all websites in this report: accessed July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024]

<sup>8</sup> Both authors had the opportunity to visit the current exhibition displayed at MUNCAB, *Um Defeito de Cor* (A Color Defect), at the Museum of Art of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2023. African ancestry, the origins of African Brazilians, their current circumstances in Brazil, and their history of resistance to different forms of violence are commemorated through diverse art media. The book on which the exhibition is based (with the same title) is a classic of Afro-Brazilian literature and tells the story of a woman who was enslaved in Benin and brought to Brazil, but returned to Benin toward the end of her life. We include these literary memory practices in our analyses.

<sup>9</sup> <https://g1.globo.com/ba/bahia/novembronegro/noticia/2023/11/20/salvador-ganha-casa-de-ganca-conheca-outros-espacos-dedicados-a-paises-africanos-na-capital-baiana.ghtml>

<sup>10</sup> See the map from Slave Voyages, for example. Available at: <https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database#maps>

legacy of enslavement, this is not discussed much in the text panels.<sup>11</sup> The most prominent text on the walls of this memorial is by the mayor of the city of Salvador:

“The *baianas* memorial represents an important recognition of the history of one of the main symbols of Salvador's culture and identity, which projects our city in Brazil and around the world – the *baiana de acarajé*” (translated from Portuguese by the authors).

This sentence sums up an impression we often had during our stay in Salvador: there is a politicization of African heritage in connection with the promotion of tourism and political and economic interests. In our view, this does not do justice to the violence experienced by the women represented in this memorial in the context of enslavement. This is reflected, for example, in the focus on the cultural characteristics of these women. There is a presentation of the embroidered trimmings on their skirts, their turbans, lucky charms and talismans (*balangandãs*), and palm oil (*dendê*) as an important ingredient of the *acarajé*. All of this is presented as “African tradition”. It is a strikingly ahistorical and depoliticized presentation that dethematizes historical suffering and the – potentially ongoing – traumatic experiences of the descendants. It is visited by many tourists without really getting to the heart of the matter, which is that this is a tradition that originated with African enslaved women who had to ensure their survival.

With regard to carnival and its Afro-Brazilian traditions, the House of Carnival of Bahia (*Casa do Carnaval da Bahia*) is an important place of remembrance. During our visit, we learned that the carnival has a European-colonial-elitist tradition, but the focus of the museum is a different one. Gringo Cardia, the curator, explicitly emphasizes African resistance on a display at the entrance to the House:

“Enslaved people brought from Africa fought hard to be able to celebrate with dances and percussion on the streets: *afoxé* groups, *blocos* and *batucadas*” (original in English).

The first carnival block (*bloco*) exclusively for Black people, *Ilê Aiyê*, was founded only fifty years ago.<sup>12</sup> This is presented at the museum as the start of a '(re)Africanization' of Bahia's carnival. The *Blocos Afro*, of which there are now many, refer proudly and positively to the African heritage of Afro-Brazilians and their campaign for equal rights. The parades and shows of these *Blocos* often include a proud reference to African countries and cultures. This became clear, for example, when the *Bloco Afro Olodum* (famous due to its performance with Michael Jackson in the song “They don't care about us”) defined its theme for the 2014 carnival: “The Ashanti people – The Golden Throne – Queen Mother Yaa Asentewaa”.<sup>13</sup> As far as

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<sup>11</sup> It should be mentioned that the museums and memorials have predominantly Portuguese text panels and are therefore not necessarily comprehensible for some tourists, e.g. for roots tourists from the USA.

<sup>12</sup> <https://g1.globo.com/ba/bahia/novembronegro/noticia/2023/11/04/se-nao-fosse-o-ile-aiye-bloco-afro-mais-antigo-do-pais-se-prepara-para-celebrar-50-anos-veja-curiosidades-sobre-a-historia-de-resistencia.ghtml>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.bahianoticias.com.br/holofote/noticia/28609-olodum-define-tema-para-o-carnaval-de-2014>

we could reconstruct, this did not address the involvement of the Ashanti in the trafficking of enslaved people. In 2017, Olodum also received the King of the Ashanti (*Asantehene*), Otumfuo Nana Osei Tutu II, in Salvador.<sup>14</sup>

There are places of more implicit remembrance in Salvador, such as the Museum of Modern Art of Bahia (MAM), which is located in a former sugar cane mill, in other words in a historical location which, on the one hand, was shaped by the exploitation of enslaved workers, but which, on the other hand, was also the center of life for many African people (and their descendants). However, this history is hardly discussed at the site, or mentioned on the historical information boards on the grounds. A historical site of slavery has thus been turned into a museum, but this aspect is obscured. During our visit there, we observed that the quarters in which enslaved people used to live (*senzala*) are nowadays a café and snack bar, with no reminder of those who were forced to use these quarters as their home in the past. In an ethnographic interview with a museum employee, it was apparent either that she did not know that she was in the former *senzala*, or that she did not want to talk about this topic, which we raised very specifically.

Thus, a key finding is that slavery is often addressed only implicitly (through its non-thematization), or, for example, in the context of temporary exhibitions.<sup>15</sup> We will only be able to assess whether this has fundamentally changed with the reopening of the MUNCAB after our next field visit. At this point, we wish to emphasize that our observation in the region we investigated, that (often religiously influenced) everyday practices play a more significant role than memorial sites in the transmission of knowledge about African heritage and violent pasts, should not be understood as normative. Memorialization in museums and monuments is a static form of remembrance that is very European in character (and that has been criticized, for example with regard to the ritualized remembering of the victims of the Shoah<sup>16</sup>). According to our findings thus far, in Bahia it is primarily everyday practices, especially everyday religious practices, and the celebration of African or Afro-Brazilian culture, that can be reconstructed as practices of remembrance and commemoration. This is strikingly different from southern Ghana, with its memorials that place the transatlantic trade with enslaved people at the thematic center of their narrative. However, in other regions of Brazil, such as Rio de Janeiro, a stronger 'Western'-style memorialization and formalization of commemoration of the history of slavery can be observed. In Rio de Janeiro, there is a stronger focus on historical sites and places of remembrance. One example is the MUHCAB (Museu da História e da Cultura Afro-Brasileira), which we visited during our stay in Brazil in 2023. The Museum is presented in the exhibition as a

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.bahianoticias.com.br/cultura/noticia/29522-olodum-vai-receber-otumfuo-nana-osei-tutu-ii-rei-dos-ashanti>

<sup>15</sup> For example, the already mentioned exhibition *Um Defeito de Cor* (A Color Defect) at MUNCAB, which is based on the novel of the same name by the author Ana Maria Gonçalves (11/23–03/24) and had previously been on display in Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Bodemann, Y. M. (1996) *Gedächtnistheater: die jüdische Gemeinschaft und ihre deutsche Erfindung*. Hamburg: Rotbuch.



'Museum of the Territory', consisting of 15 historical sites.<sup>17</sup> Central to this is the Valongo Wharf, which was declared a World Heritage Site in 2017.<sup>18</sup>

Tourism: marketing African heritage and selective remembering

In a city characterized by tourism, such as Salvador da Bahia, the following questions arise in relation to our research interests: Which places of remembrance and everyday practices are marketed and how? What is the orientation of memorials and places of remembrance and who are they aimed at? Which groupings profit more than others from certain forms of commemoration?

The historic old town of Salvador da Bahia was declared a World Heritage Site in 1985, and the brief UNESCO description states:

"As the first capital of Brazil, from 1549 to 1763, Salvador de Bahia witnessed the blending of European, African and Amerindian cultures. It was also, from 1558, the first slave market in the New World, with slaves arriving to work on the sugar plantations" (UNESCO, 1985).<sup>19</sup>

Here, the city's 'multicultural' heritage and its past as a central slave market are cited as reasons for this special status, which promises tourist attention and access to economic and symbolic resources. In its campaigns and offers, the tourism industry focuses on the colors, sounds and tastes of Bahia without making it explicit that these are closely linked to the violent displacement – and the subsequent suffering in the enslavement society of Brazil – of the ancestors of many city dwellers.<sup>20</sup> On the contrary, stereotypical representations of Black people are part of the marketing strategy to appeal to tourists. As this has not contributed to improving the living conditions of Black people in Brazil, a branch of Afro-tourism has developed in recent years that aims to establish Salvador as an 'Afro-capital'. As we observed during in a *Guia Negro* ("Black Guide") tour of the city, this places value on visiting and using Black-owned businesses, and also targets Afro-diasporic tourists in order to convey Black history to them.<sup>21</sup> Salvador has become an international point of reference for Afro-tourism, as well as for Afro-futurism. For example, 10 Afro-centered city tours and 30 points of interest are now offered to visitors, which are intended to show the capital from a Black perspective.<sup>22</sup> During the tour that we participated in, there was an important focus on the city's historical connections with slavery and colonialism, as

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.rio.rj.gov.br/web/muhcab/lugares-de-memoria>

<sup>18</sup> "It is in the former harbour area of Rio de Janeiro in which the old stone wharf was built for the landing of enslaved Africans reaching the South American continent from 1811 onwards. An estimated 900,000 Africans arrived in South America via Valongo" (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1548>).

<sup>19</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/309>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.tourism-watch.de/en/article/focus/brasil-postcolonial-bahia/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.salvadorbahia.com/capitalafro/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://g1.globo.com/ba/bahia/novembronegro/noticia/2023/11/07/conheca-roteiros-que-apresentam-pontos-turisticos-de-salvador-sob-a-otica-da-negritude-roteiro-vai-de-caminhos-de-fe-a-rotas-de-lutas.ghtml>

well as on how the living conditions of Black Brazilians in the city could be improved in the future.

Sociohistorical power inequalities are particularly evident at major public events that attract tourists from all over the world, such as carnival and the Iemanjá festival. We were able to observe a spatial separation between tourists who are mostly *whites* in VIP areas (*camarotes*), and local street vendors who are mostly Black Brazilians. The latter, with whom we conducted numerous biographical interviews, endure precarious working conditions, exposed to the weather and the dangers of the street, although their informal economic activities are licensed by the city administration. These sociohistorical power inequalities are also clear to the city dwellers. A young male Afro-Brazilian museum employee in Salvador, when asked whether he thought Salvador should have a museum on the history of slavery, replied: “We don’t need a museum, that would only be for the tourists. Our slavery museum is the crack addicts here on our doorstep” (translated from Portuguese by the authors).

International actors in Salvador play a different role from those in Ghana. While the country-specific cultural centers (the “African Houses” mentioned above) were created on the initiative of the governments of Nigeria, Benin, Ghana and Angola, Salvador is gaining importance for the (predominantly US) diaspora. It is increasingly becoming a destination for roots tourism, which is interested in the well-preserved African traditions of Bahia. The pop singer Beyoncé made a surprise appearance in Salvador in 2023, which was interpreted in newspapers in the capital as a tribute to the city’s Afro-Brazilian heritage, and as an opportunity for local Black entrepreneurs.<sup>23</sup> This international attention has so far clearly focused on urban Salvador and not on its rural surroundings, which have historically been heavily influenced by the sugar plantation economy – and thus massive exploitation of enslaved labor – and are still characterized by the marginalized communities of their descendants.

The role of Afro-Brazilian religions in the transmission of knowledge about enslavement pasts and African heritage

As we were able to observe, Afro-Brazilian religions play an important role in the passing on of traditions within families and local communities, in the reconstruction of diffuse knowledge of displaced ancestors and their origins, or in the ‘invention’ of family traditions, because, with their deities, practices and languages, they can be assigned to particular regions or peoples of origin in Africa (such as Angola, Benin, Ewe, Fon). Here, lines of conflict along religious belonging can be recognized over attitudes toward the past. Both in the city of Salvador and at remote *Quilombos*, we repeatedly encountered references to the role of evangelical churches, which stigmatize and sometimes openly fight Afro-Brazilian religions, and in principle demand a turn toward the future – and thus, at least implicitly, a turn away from past injustice and suffering. One interviewee, who is very active in a group that memorializes slavery in his *Quilombo* community, told us:

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.correio24horas.com.br/minha-bahia/como-a-visita-de-artistas-internacionais-impacta-nos-negocios-e-turismo-negros-em-salvador-1223>

“It's funny because people deny it, many people in the group deny it, but then if people join the Church, they automatically leave the group. [...] People say 'no! no!', but when they become evangelical, the first thing they do is leave the group” (translated from Portuguese by the authors).

The influence of different ethnic groupings, not only from the African continent but also from Brazil and Europe, is particularly evident in religious practices and places. Explicit reference to enslaved or Indigenous ancestors of certain ethnic groupings (e.g. *Tupinambá*) is made at Afro-Brazilian religious sites (*terreiros*). The syncretism of local Indigenous everyday religious practices and those from Africa has affected not only the intergenerational transmission of knowledge within different groupings, but also how they have intermingled and deeply influenced each other.

Commercialization and economization, especially in connection with tourism, is also evident here. We observed in several instances that religious practices from Afro-Brazilian religions were offered as paid services. For example, we were offered the opportunity to contact a divine being, an *Orixá* – via an intermediary – or the 'shell oracle' known as *Ifá*, in which the client's situation is 'read' in a set of cowrie shells. The strong commercialization of Afro-Brazilian religious objects, which can be found in all souvenir stores, is also striking.

During our next field visit, which is planned for the period September to November 2024, we will review our findings to date, pursue further research paths, and focus more closely on the questions raised in this report. This includes the conditions in which family dialogue and dialogue in the local community is possible on the topic of enslavement, as well as commercial and political interests in remembrance and memorialization. Indispensable for this research project are a historical perspective and contextualization to understand current and historical figurations. In view of our findings, the general question arises as to whether a progression from family memories and memories of local groupings to public memorials, and from localized processes to transatlantic discourses and negotiations, can be reconstructed, and what this means for the “future of memory” in Bahia.

### **Institutionalization and transmission of knowledge about slavery in classrooms and schoolbooks in Ghana and Brazil**

Lucas Cé Sangalli (University of Göttingen, Germany), Débora Rinaldi (Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil), Marcela Soares (Federal University of Bahia, Brazil)

As part of our research project, we made a contrastive comparison of presentations of the past in respect of slavery and the slave trade in Ghana and Brazil, based on the analysis of schoolbooks currently used in schools, group discussions with teachers (n=4), and individual interviews with teachers and students (n total=5). The group discussions in Ghana took place in Elmina (southern Ghana) and Navrongo

(northern Ghana); in Brazil, in Porto Alegre (southern Brazil) and Salvador da Bahia (northeastern Brazil).<sup>24</sup> The participants belonged to different ethnicized and racialized groupings, which is relevant in terms of the contrasting involvement of their ancestors in the trade in enslaved persons. The discussions involved teachers with experience in public and private schools, representing significant sociohistorical power inequalities in terms of access to formal education in both countries. We present here the findings of our analysis of textbooks and group discussions thus far. We are currently analyzing four schoolbooks used in elementary school in Brazil and four used in primary and secondary schools in Ghana. It is important to stress that our findings require further empirical evidence.

An important finding from our fieldwork is that when we and our colleagues asked our interviewees in Brazil and Ghana about slavery, their answers mainly focused on the European trans-Atlantic slave trade.<sup>25</sup> Our analysis shows that this knowledge of the massive violence involved in the high number of enslaved persons shipped by Europeans to the Americas<sup>26</sup> significantly interrelates with the institutionalized versions of the past regarding slavery and the trade in enslaved persons that are transmitted in classrooms, often with the use of schoolbooks. In the following sections, we will present a brief overview of our empirical findings thus far.

#### Dethematization of conflicts and focus on nation building in Ghana and Brazil

Thus far, our analysis of schoolbooks shows a tendency to avoid openly addressing topics that could lead to conflict between groupings and we-groups in Brazil and Ghana. This particularly applies to conflicts that could arise because of the different roles played by the ancestors of members of different groupings in processes of enslavement in the past. The dominant goal pursued in the Ghanaian and Brazilian schoolbooks analyzed thus far is to foster a peaceful and diverse 'nation', despite the different collective histories of people in these societies (ethnic histories, experiences of different forms of slavery, unequal power chances, etc.). This presentation of a conflict-free past is contradicted by the experiences lived through in the families (nuclear and extended) and local communities of our interviewees. This applies particularly to interviewees belonging to groupings whose ancestors were targeted by violence and enslavement, or who experience prejudice in the present.

#### Marginalization of perspectives on enslavement in Ghana and Brazil

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<sup>24</sup> Group discussions were conducted as follows: in Elmina by Lucas Cé Sangalli in English; in Navrongo by Artur Bogner and Lucas Cé Sangalli in English; in Porto Alegre by Débora Rinaldi in Portuguese; and in Salvador by Débora Rinaldi and Marcela Soares in Portuguese.

<sup>25</sup> For the case of northern Ghana, see Rosenthal / Bogner (in preparation); for the case of southern Ghana, see Cé Sangalli (in preparation) and Cé Sangalli / Rinaldi / Gomes (in preparation); see also Pohn-Lauggas / Rosenthal (in preparation).

<sup>26</sup> Historical records suggest that more than 12 million people were forcibly shipped from different regions of the African continent during the European trans-Atlantic trade in enslaved persons between c. 1501 and 1866. See: <https://www.slavevoyages.org> [Accessed on June 27, 2024].

Both in Ghana and Brazil, intra-African and intra-American forms of enslavement and servitude tend to be given less space in schoolbooks than the trans-Saharan, and especially the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In the Ghanaian schoolbooks analyzed thus far, the latter is mostly presented as being organized by Europeans: “Ghanaians were deeply involved in ethnic wars, slave raids and kidnapping just to satisfy the unjustifiable demand by the European merchants” (Kuffour 2021: 386). The trans-Saharan trade is presented as “the trade that developed between the Berbers of North Africa and the Negroes of the Western Sudan” (ibid.: 228).<sup>27</sup> Status differences based on slave ancestry within different groupings that currently are part of Ghanaian and Brazilian societies are barely discussed. An interim finding of our analysis of Ghanaian schoolbooks is that there is a positive, and even proud, presentation of empires and kingdoms that expanded through trade and the use of force over other groupings in the territory of what is present-day Ghana (e.g., Ashanti, Gonja). Our analysis shows that there is no similar presentation of the so-called Grunshi groupings, whose ancestors presumably were the most affected by wars of expansion and enslavement raids in what is present-day northern Ghana and southern Burkina Faso (see Mangiameli 2016).<sup>28</sup> Thus far, we have not found any discussion in Ghanaian schoolbooks of the contemporary stigmatization processes that associate the Grunshi with slave ancestry.

In Brazilian schoolbooks, African societies are often portrayed as powerful kingdoms, and experiences lived through by the ancestors of Brazilians with a family history that goes back to the African continent are only marginally addressed, such as capture in raids by neighboring groupings, being traded by the chiefs of their own groupings, or the potent ways in which slave ancestry remains a stigma in contemporary African societies inside and across different ethnic groupings. In Ghanaian schoolbooks, there is a tendency to suggest that those enslaved by local chiefs were criminals, for example. There are only rare references in schoolbooks and in the group discussion in coastal Ghana to how these different status ascriptions still shape power inequalities within and across different groupings in Ghanaian society.

In the Brazilian schoolbooks analyzed thus far, Indigenous groupings (Amerindians) tend to be presented from the perspective of the colonizers (Portuguese, Spanish, French, Dutch). They are often implicitly shown either as potential allies or workers (i.e., slaves) who fostered colonial interests, or as a threat to be countered when they opposed colonial plans. The historical perspectives of the Indigenous groupings (who nowadays are Brazilian citizens) are mostly absent from the schoolbooks when slavery is addressed, to some extent in contrast to Afro-Brazilian groupings. To date, we have not come across schoolbooks in Brazil that discuss what we

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<sup>27</sup> We still need to reconstruct how images of ‘us’ and the ‘others’ used in schoolbooks, such as the racialized use of ‘Negro’, intertwine with the development and transformation of sociohistorical power interdependencies, including those of colonialism. This includes reconstructing how Portuguese and British occupation shaped the educational system and the institutionalization of certain forms of knowledge in present-day Ghana and Brazil.

<sup>28</sup> Grunshi is an exonym that homogenizes several groupings (such as Kassena, Nankana, Sissala) from present-day northern Ghana and southern Burkina Faso, but whose descendants also live in other parts of Ghana. This exonym remains a source of stigma because of its association with slave ancestry in some regions, such as Salaga, where one of the most important slave markets existed.

retrospectively regard as 'slavery' from the perspective of Indigenous groupings. There are also few references to relations of enslavement between such groupings. Similarly, the ways different Indigenous groupings had enough power and influenced changing alliances with different colonial powers is only marginally addressed. Differently from the case of the Indigenous groupings, the participation of Africans and their descendants in Brazilian society is a prominent topic in the schoolbooks. Their participation tends to be presented from the standpoint of how their actions have shaped Brazilian society, with a focus on economic activities and culture heritage, such as influences on the Portuguese language and Brazilian food (see Boulos 2022a: 203, 211).

Although the focus on the European trans-Atlantic slave trade is sociopolitically understandable in Brazil, a society in which *white* Brazilians enjoy more privilege and establishment than Black or Indigenous Brazilians, it hides the complexity of the concrete experiences lived through in families, groupings, and local communities in both countries.<sup>29</sup>

### Contrasting representations of violence and slavery in Ghana and Brazil

In schoolbooks in Ghana, slaves are often pictured in chains and in positions of submission to others, who can be interpreted as *whites*, but also as Arabs or Berbers, as some schoolbooks say (Kuffour 2021: 233). This contrasts with the way local chiefs appear in photographs, often enthroned with their regalia and surrounded by male supporters, including those who can be interpreted as servants or assistants. There is a tendency in the Ghanaian schoolbooks we have examined to associate slavery with images of chains and shackles, and branding (with a hot iron). In other words, representations of slavery and those enslaved in the schoolbooks, especially in Ghana, often involve explicit relations of violence and submission. We will try to find examples of schoolbooks containing different images of slavery, as mentioned in our interviews, for example successful integration in the family of the slave owner. Thus far in our analysis, we have not found any images in Ghanaian schoolbooks representing the perspective of those enslaved by more powerful local groupings.

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<sup>29</sup> Africans and their descendants born in Brazil have been sociohistorically referred to by different terms (e.g., *Mulato*, *Pardo*, *Afrodescendente*, among others) in different regions of the territory by members of more established groupings. The use of these terms by such groupings, who often self-define as *whites* with European ancestry, frequently implies pejorative meanings, which have important sociopolitical consequences even today. Especially after the 1970s, Afro-Brazilian social movements, such as the Unified Black Movement (*Movimento Negro Unificado*), have been actively reclaiming the use of Black as a we-image that represents *Pretos* (Blacks) and *Pardos*. One of the achievements of this collective contestation of sociohistorical power inequalities was the official adoption of these terms by state institutions in Brazil. With this in mind, we use the sociohistorically constructed term 'Black' because it is the emic term used during group discussions and other interactions in Brazil (Portuguese: *Negras*, *Negros* or *Pretas*, *Pretos*). We capitalize it to emphasize its sociohistorical institutionalization in Brazilian society as a marker of racialized prejudice appropriated through processes of contestation of power inequalities led by groupings that regard themselves as Black Brazilians. For similar reasons, we use the term 'Indigenous', aware that it conceals the diverse collective histories of many groupings who lived in this land before the arrival of people from Africa and Europe.

The Brazilian schoolbooks we have analyzed include other contributions made by marginalized groupings to Brazilian history and society besides their compulsory labor. Africans are not thematized exclusively in terms of slavery or as victims of violence. Representations of those enslaved include more than just references to experiences of violence. In some cases, authors include excerpts from texts by members of Indigenous groupings (such as the Tupinambá) to present the perspectives of Indigenous groupings in respect of experiences of violence (Boulos Júnior 2022a: 200). Contributions to Brazilian society by Indigenous and African groupings are discussed, such as Black associations that fought for civil and work rights (*associativismo negro*), and the development of a Black press, important for self-representation (see Boulos Júnior 2022c: 21f.). There are explicit attempts to reconstruct as far as possible the ethnic and regional origin of different Afro-Brazilian groupings, and the different regions inside Brazil in which different ethnic groupings from the African continent were forced to work in various sociohistorical phases (see Boulos Júnior 2022a: Ch. 10). Our empirical findings relating to schoolbooks in Ghana show that the books do not thematize the existence of associations of former enslaved persons or their descendants fighting for sociopolitical rights in present-day Ghana. Similarly, there are no attempts to reconstruct the origin of descendants of slaves living in different regions of contemporary Ghana (such as the Grunshi of Salaga). They are often described by members of more powerful groupings in our interviews as 'not knowing their origins and history'. Thus far in our analysis, we have not found any concrete references to those responsible for the forced removal of people from their families and communities, for example in the northern part of present-day Ghana. This is a significant difference with regard to how slavery and the history of descendants of enslaved persons are presented in schoolbooks in the two countries. In the Brazilian schoolbooks, there is an explicit and comprehensive thematization of those "responsible for the traffic" of enslaved persons (*os responsáveis pelo tráfico*):

"The Atlantic trade lasted more than 300 years and involved Europeans from various nations (Portuguese, English, French, Danish, among others), Africans (chiefs, kings and traders) and, later, merchants from Rio de Janeiro, Bahia and Pernambuco. Many of these merchants, especially from Rio de Janeiro and Salvador, amassed fortunes from the trade" (Boulos Júnior 2022a: 224; translated by the authors from Portuguese).

Thus far, we have not come across any explicit thematization in Ghanaian schoolbooks of the responsibility of local traders and chiefs. The focus is firmly on the responsibility of Europeans for the trade. It is also crucial that while some schoolbooks in Brazil refer to slaves using the language recommended by Brazilian Black movements and historians in the country, such as *enslaved* (*escravizadas*, *escravizados*), Ghanaian schoolbooks tend to use the term *slave*.<sup>30</sup>

Differing relevance of resistance and revolutions led by enslaved groupings

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<sup>30</sup> See: Sul 21, March 30, 2020. "Escravo, não. Escravizado!" (Slave, no. Enslaved!). Available in Portuguese at <https://sul21.com.br/opiniao/2020/03/escravo-nao-escravizado-por-mauricio-da-silva-dorneles-e-nilton-mullet-pereira/> [Accessed on June 30, 2024].

There are important differences in the way 'slavery' and 'slaves' are presented in schoolbooks in the two countries. In Ghana, as the examples below show, the focus tends to be mainly on the sending of enslaved persons to the Americas and Europe: "They also sent some of the people to work in their factories in Europe" (Gyaa-Adiyiah 2021a: 90) and "others were sent to Europe including Portugal, Britain, France, Spain and Netherlands to work on the plantations of the Europeans" (Gyaa-Adiyiah 2021b: 68). There are only a few references to Brazil: "Sugar plantations were the norm from northeastern Brazil through the Caribbean islands, and plantation conditions brought the highest mortality rates" (Kuffour 2021: 376). We have found that Ghanaian schoolbooks lay emphasis on enslavement in the context of plantations, which corresponds to only one sociohistorical phase lived through by those enslaved in Brazil. In the group discussion conducted in Elmina in October 2023, a female teacher claims that in Ghana Brazilians are regarded as being the same as *white* Europeans in the context of slavery: "like the Europeans [...] they see all the Europeans as whites."<sup>31</sup> In northern Ghana, however, the presentation of Brazil and Brazilians is not associated with Brazilians being *whites* but rather 'brothers'. Here, interviewees belonging to groupings in relatively remote villages (such as the Builsa in Sandema) explicitly refer to their enslaved ancestors as being taken to Brazil via castles in southern Ghana. In Brazil, schoolbooks tend to refer to African history more comprehensively (colonialism, decolonization processes). The Ghanaian schoolbooks we have examined rarely mention uprisings by enslaved persons, particularly by those enslaved in African societies. The focus is on the fight against colonial powers. In the book *Concise Notes on African and Ghanaian History*, the "rise and expansion of kingdoms and empires in the Ghanian society" (e.g., Asante), which was interrelated with wars for the capture of local individuals and families, is presented as a "positive effect" of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (ibid.: 385). This contrasts with Brazilian schoolbooks, in which the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) figures prominently, and is discussed as an example of anti-imperial and anti-slavery resistance. Certain resistance movements led by both free and enslaved Africans in Brazil are also a topic in the Brazilian schoolbooks, such as the Malê Revolt (*Revolta dos Malês*) in Salvador da Bahia (1835). In one of the Brazilian schoolbooks, resistance against the oppression of more powerful groupings during the Malê Revolt is explicitly thematized in relation to the need to put differences aside in this sociohistorical context:

"Africans and their descendants, whether enslaved or freed, were exploited at work, despised because of their color and persecuted because of their religion. They had plenty of reasons to put aside differences of origin and religion and fight against their oppressors" (Boulos Júnior 2022b: 191; translated from Portuguese by the authors).

In both Ghanaian and Brazilian schoolbooks there are references to the participation of women in processes of resistance to colonial forces. In Brazilian schoolbooks, there are also explicit references to women who have become symbols of

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<sup>31</sup> The group discussion was conducted by Lucas Cé Sangalli in English.



resistance to slavery, such as the Black Anastácia (Boulos Júnior 2022a: 231).<sup>32</sup> The resistance of Indigenous groupings in Brazil (such as the Guarani, Cariri, Janduí, Canindé, and Icó) against the Portuguese is explicitly thematized and represented in images in schoolbooks (ibid.: 269, 274).

#### Contrasting views on violence regarding slavery and colonialism

Retrospective interpretations regarding the different forms of violence experienced by Africans differ in the two countries. A female Afro-Brazilian teacher in the group discussion conducted in Salvador said that when her students discuss slavery in the classroom, they show a lack of sensitivity and empathy when speaking about slaves. She said that students react more empathically to the colonizers killed during the Haitian Revolution by those enslaved. She has the impression that students in general find it difficult to see things from the point of view of the enslaved persons who were traded, transported under conditions of violence, and physically tortured. We interpret this in connection with the sociohistorical stigmatization of slaves in Brazilian society, which fosters, among other things, the suppression of past experiences of enslaved persons in everyday discourses. By contrast, a female teacher in southern Ghana reports that slavery is regarded by students as an act of cruelty carried out by the “wicked whites”, and that some children are taught by their families to be skeptical of *whites* even in the present. Teachers who took part in the group discussion in northern Ghana laid emphasis on the inhuman treatment of slaves by Europeans, especially the starvation, poor sanitation, torture, and commodification suffered by enslaved Africans in European fortifications and castles in southern Ghana. In Brazil, the violence experienced by Indigenous groupings in the context of processes of enslavement tended to be mentioned only marginally both in the group discussions and in the schoolbooks, in contrast to the violence experienced by Africans.

#### Contrasting presentations of biographical experiences and the collective past of slavery

The contrastive comparison between Brazil and Ghana shows differences in the way students interpret their biographical experiences in relation to collective histories of enslavement. Students and teachers with different biographical experiences, and different family and community histories, have different attitudes toward the collective past of slavery. Among other things, this interrelates with the knowledges transmitted in their families, local we-groups, and groupings, and the experiences

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<sup>32</sup> The uses, appropriations, and reinterpretations of the image of Anastácia are a concrete example of the intergenerational transmission of knowledge among Afro-Brazilian groupings. The image originally depicts an enslaved woman of African descent wearing a punitive iron facemask over her mouth. Younger genealogical generations have depicted her without such stereotypical symbolic references to slavery, and the schoolbooks seem to be trying to keep up with these transformations in representations of enslavement.

See Sarah Juliet Lauro, November 28, 2022. “Anastácia Diptych”. Available at: <https://monumentlab.com/bulletin/anastacia-diptych> [Accessed on June 29, 2024].

they and their ancestors lived through (such as racialized prejudice, or discrimination based on ascribed slave ancestry). Family experiences are only vaguely addressed in the schoolbooks in Brazil analyzed thus far:

“[...] slave families had their own practices, visions and values. Moreover, they reacted to their masters' impositions, took initiatives and tried to live their own way” (Boulos Júnior 2022a: 211; translated from Portuguese by the authors).

In the group discussion in Salvador, a teacher said that students belonging to Indigenous Brazilian and Afro-Brazilian groupings challenge certain versions of the past presented in the schoolbooks during classes for representing a European perspective on history. The experiences of those enslaved in communities in what is present-day northern Ghana tended to be dethematized by participants in the group discussion in southern Ghana, including one female teacher from the northern region. The focus was mainly on European participation in the slave trade. By contrast, some teachers in the group discussion in northern Ghana criticized the focus of schoolbooks on the dynamics of the trade in coastal Ghana. This reflects a general difference between southern and northern Ghanaian memory cultures. For some people, this marginalizes the experiences of local families and communities whom they regard as being most affected by raids in the past (e.g., the different Grunshi groupings, such as the Kassena). One Kassena teacher in northern Ghana, who used older schoolbooks in the past, which differ from the current ones approved by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, sees a change in the authors of the books, which has affected their contents. He says that in the past schoolbooks were written by foreigners, and that they discussed more openly other forms of enslavement and servitude in African societies. We see this as a hypothesis to be followed up in the future, especially in its interdependence with processes of anti-colonial resistance and nation building in Ghana. Moreover, some teachers in the group discussion in northern Ghana claimed that the focus on coastal Ghana is a deficit in the school curriculum because, and here we must do further research, most schoolbooks are authored by southern Ghanaians. Some of them said they counter this tendency to focus on dynamics of more powerful groupings from southern Ghana by including oral history in their classes. In some schoolbooks in Brazil, there are explicit references to attempts to remove personal names from those enslaved by the Portuguese. An example used in the schoolbooks is the way new names were given by the Portuguese to those enslaved in Africa. The relation between the Portuguese actions, the origin of the ancestors, and the collective memory of slavery is explicitly thematized, with a gendered focus: “This name, given in baptism, was supposed to help erase from the African's memory all his past: his family, his friends, his language and his place of origin” (Boulos Júnior 2022a: 228).

Marginalization and stigmatization in contemporary Ghanaian and Brazilian societies in the context of the collective history of slavery

Our fieldwork in both countries shows that slave ancestry can still be constructed as a source of stigma and marginalization. In Brazil, some teachers who participated in the group discussion in Salvador believe that the standard curriculum

hinders students from interpreting sociohistorical power inequalities in relation to the collective history of slavery. However, this affects members of different groupings in different ways. Some participants report that Black students are able to interpret their present situation in relation to the history of enslavement because of their family history, or because of constructions of belonging to a community built around shared experiences of being Black in Brazilian society. By contrast, *white* students seem to refuse to regard their own individual and family histories as being interdependent with sociohistorical power inequalities related to slavery, be it as descendants of *white* enslavers and colonizers, or as migrants supported by the Brazilian state to 'whiten' the population after the legal abolition of slavery (1888). The attitude of potential descendants of enslavers in classrooms in Brazil, as mentioned by some participants in the group discussion in Salvador, differs from those reported by teachers in southern Ghana, in which African descendants of slave merchants are often aware of their ancestry. According to some teachers in the group discussion in Elmina and other interviewees in our sample, this ancestry is explicit in their European last names, in which they manifest pride. They claim that some students even regard European surnames as a sign of superiority in relation to other Ghanaians. In southern Ghana, some teachers reported that children are especially puzzled by the participation of local chiefs in the trade in enslaved humans with the Europeans in exchange for things like mirrors (as presented in some schoolbooks in Ghana). This differs from the experiences reported by teachers in northern Ghana. There, they tend to refer to sociohistorical inequalities in the region, such as hunger and poverty, and how it still affects local families and experiences in the classroom. They refer, for example, to situations in which they realized during classes that children were living in circumstances not unlike slavery (in view of the way they were treated by members of their extended family). The teachers comment on the sociohistorically marginalized position of northern Ghana in relation to southern and central Ghana, describing the aspirations of their students to migrate to the countries that colonized Ghana, and that benefited the most economically from the trade in enslaved persons. This is a serious matter for these teachers because of the number of young male students who drop out of school to migrate. To a certain extent, the naïve and passive presentation of Indigenous groupings in schoolbooks, especially in Ghana, implicitly produces a notion of European superiority in relation to local societies. We can go even further and suggest that the way local histories are presented in relation to European history fosters aspirations to live in Europe. In this context, it is also relevant to mention that the schoolbooks we have analyzed and the educational systems are dominated by Portuguese in Brazil and English in Ghana to the detriment of local languages in both countries.

### Conclusion and further research

Some of these findings require further empirical evidence. We will look for other schoolbooks that differ from the types we have analyzed here. Furthermore, we plan to include a comparison with schoolbooks used in the past, in order to reconstruct how the thematization of slavery and the slave trade has changed. We intend to examine how far this influences the knowledge and the collective memories of

groupings in both countries. This will help us to understand how political and public everyday discourses in these societies interrelate with the thematization of certain topics in the schoolbooks. It will also give insights into how discourses and images in the schoolbooks influence members of local communities and we-groups. In our interviews with members of different groupings, we have already been able to observe how schoolbooks have shaped collective memories in different communities or groupings (see Rosenthal / Bogner in preparation; Rosenthal / Pohn-Lauggas in this newsletter).

#### Schoolbooks

Boulos Júnior, Alfredo (2022a): *História, sociedade & cidadania*. 7º ano. São Paulo: FTD.

Boulos Júnior, Alfredo (2022b): *História, sociedade & cidadania*. 8º ano. São Paulo: FTD.

Boulos Júnior, Alfredo (2022c): *História, sociedade & cidadania*. 9º ano. São Paulo: FTD.

Gyaa-Adiyiah, Mercy (2021a): *History of Ghana, Basic Schools 2. Golden Series*. Accra: New Golden Publications.

Gyaa-Adiyiah, Mercy (2021b): *History of Ghana, Basic Schools 5. Golden Series*. Accra: New Golden Publications.

Kuffour, Prince Adjei (2021[2011]): *Concise Notes on African and Ghanaian History*. K4 Series. For Senior High Schools Form 1, 2 & 3. Accra: K4 Series Investment Ventures.

#### Literature

Cé Sangalli (in preparation): 'Elminian' families: Contrastive experiences of participation in the trade in enslaved persons and its intergenerational transmission [tentative title]. In: Pohn-Lauggas, M. / Rosenthal, G. (eds.).

Cé Sangalli / Rinaldi / Soares (in preparation): The transmission of knowledge about slavery and the trade in enslaved persons in classrooms and schoolbooks in Ghana and Brazil [tentative title]. In: Pohn-Lauggas, M. / Rosenthal, G. (eds.).

Mangiameli, Gaetano (2016): L'invenzione precoloniale dei Gurunsi. Le razzie schiaviste e la genesi di un etnonimo in Africa occidentale. *L'Uomo Società Tradizione Sviluppo* (1): 57–76.

Pohn-Lauggas, M. / Rosenthal, G. (eds.) (in preparation): *Individual and collective memories of slavery and the slave trade in Ghana and Brazil*. Göttingen: Göttingen University Press.

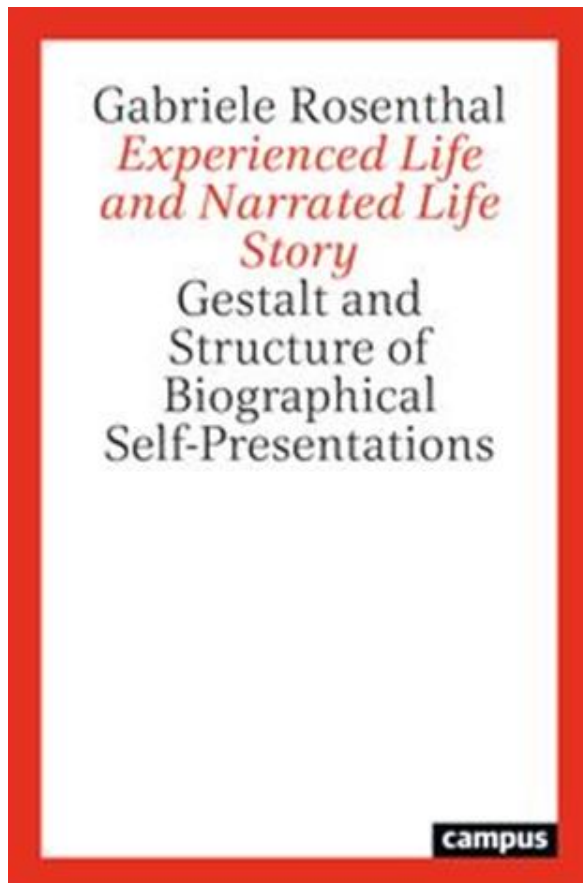
Rosenthal / Bogner (in preparation): Groupings of outsiders: members of the so-called Grunshi in the Upper East Region. In: Pohn-Lauggas, M. / Rosenthal, G. (eds.).

## NEW BOOKS AND ARTICLES

### **Experienced Life and Narrated Life Story. Gestalt and Structure of Biographical Self-Presentations**

**Gabriele Rosenthal**

Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus. Taschenbuch: 36,00 EUR / E-Book: 32,99 EUR



How do people narrate events in their life story and in the history of their family or families when making a self-presentation? How are narratives and experiences in the present related to experiences and narratives in the past? This book answers these questions with a theoretical and empirical study of the interconnections between remembering, experiencing, and presenting what was experienced, at different points of the life course and of the associated collective histories. It also discusses rules for conducting interviews that support processes of remembering, and for carrying out an analysis that does justice to this dialectic. The author exploits ideas from phenomenology and Gestalt theory in this book, which has become a classic. Since its first publication in 1995, she has increasingly taken inspiration from the figurational sociology of Norbert Elias. Accordingly, this English edition contains a new introduction and a new chapter on this later expansion of her approach to sociological biographical research.

## Erlebte und erzählte Lebensgeschichte. Gestalt und Struktur biographischer Selbstbeschreibungen (Aktualisierte und erweiterte Auflage)

**Gabriele Rosenthal**

Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 2024. Taschenbuch: 36,00 EUR / E-Book: 32,99 EUR



Wie stellen Menschen die Ereignisse in ihrer Lebensgeschichte und der Geschichte ihrer Familie(n) dar, wenn sie davon erzählen? Wie stehen das Erzählen und das Erleben in der Gegenwart im Zusammenhang mit dem Erleben und dem Erzählen in der Vergangenheit? Dieses Buch beantwortet diese Fragen mit einer theoretisch-empirischen Untersuchung der gegenseitigen Wechselwirkungen von Erinnern, Erleben und der Präsentation des Erlebten zu verschiedenen Zeitpunkten eines Lebensverlaufs und der damit zusammenhängenden Verläufe der Kollektivgeschichten. Die Autorin greift in dieser mittlerweile klassischen Studie vor allem Ansätze der Phänomenologie sowie der Gestalttheorie auf – und in der Zeit seit der 1. Auflage (1995) zunehmend auch der Figurationssoziologie nach Norbert Elias. Die Neuauflage enthält daher eine neue Einleitung und ein zusätzliches Kapitel zu dieser späteren Erweiterung ihres Ansatzes einer soziologischen Biographieforschung.

## **Macht und Gewalt**

**Gabriele Rosenthal; Arne Worm**

In der Reihe: ‚Kleinen Reihe Soziologie‘ (Hrsg.: Petra Deger/Stefan Müller). Frankfurt am Main: Wochenschau-Verlag.



In diesem Band über soziologische Perspektiven auf Macht und Gewalt wird sowohl auf theoretischer als auch auf empirischer Grundlage diskutiert, inwiefern Macht ein relationales Konzept ist und keinen statischen Gegenstand oder die Eigenschaft einer Person oder einer Gruppe bezeichnet. Ebenso ist Gewalt ein sozialer Prozess, der aus sozialen Beziehungen hervorgeht sowie auch auf diese einwirkt. In der Diskussion von soziologischen Konzepten wird dabei immer auf konkrete Beispiele aus dem Schulalltag oder auf die Forschungen der Autor\*innen über kollektive Gewalt und gewaltsame Konflikte verwiesen.



## Migration, Biographie und Geschlechterverhältnisse. Zur Dialektik von Generations- und Familienorientierungen

*Ursula Apitzsch*

In: Benzel, S.; King, V.; Koller, H.C.; Meurs, P. & Weiß, H. (Hrsg.) (2023): Adoleszenz und Generationendynamik im Kontext von Migration und Flucht. Springer VS, S. 21-40.



## Surrogacy as commodified transnational care work

*Ursula Apitzsch*

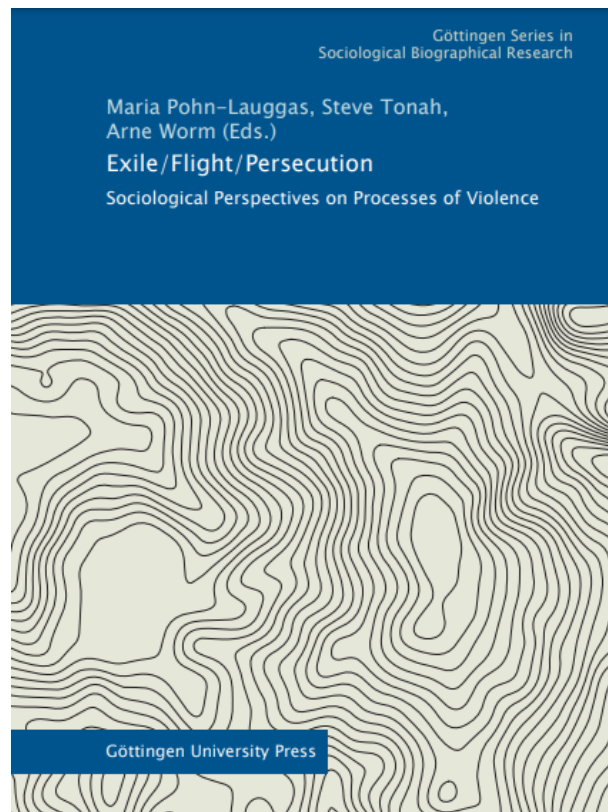
In: Atzeni, Maurizio; Azzellini, Dario; Mezzadri, Alessandra; Moore, Phoebe; Apitzsch, Ursula (Eds.). 2023. Handbook of Research on the Global Political Economy of Work. Cheltenham, UK / Northampton, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 392-400.



## Exile and Prison as a Loss of Biographical Knowledge about the Present: Antonio Gramsci as Reader of Dante's Inferno

*Ursula Apitzsch*

In: Pohn-Lauggas, Maria; Tonah, Stev; Worm, Arne (Eds.). Exile – Flight – Persecution. Sociological Perspectives on Processes of Violence, in der Reihe: Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research, Göttingen 2024, pp.59–75



## Doubly underestimated: Antifeminism and the engagement of far-right women – Considerations of supposed contradictions

*Rebecca Blum; Julia Haas; Michaela Köttig*

In: Caputi, Mary; Moynagh, Patricia (eds.): Research Handbook Feminist Political Thought. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, page 117-140, 2024.



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- Reports or some notes about conferences you have attended
- General reports about activities in the field of biographical research in your institution, university, country, continent
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