

Call for Papers

Memory as a Dialogue?

History for Young People

9-11 September 2020

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Historical narratives are foundational for most collective identities. The way any group relates to its history has implications for its political and social imaginaries and what is politically feasible. Given that importance, the political or social elite of a group tends to invest significant resources into the kind of historical narratives that are being cultivated. These narratives often suggest an appropriate behaviour that qualifies a person as a member of the respective group, be that a nation, a region or an ethnicity. One important target of those historical narratives are young people at an age when their historical interest takes shape and when it is still seems possible to influence their historical outlook.

This workshop wishes to bring together scholars working on the production of historical narratives, particularly as these manifest in cultural artefacts such as literature and film, and those working on the reception of these narratives among young people. Perspectives can be both historical as well as focused on the present. The workshop will be constructed around a set of dialogues between these two perspectives in order to explore the extent to which one can identify similar patterns of interpretation or narrative echoes. These dialogues will be focussed on a specific country case, a region, or other groups such as migrant communities, social classes or social movements. The geographical area covered is Europe, and as an overarching theme of the workshop, we are particularly interested in developing a comparative perspective between different countries. We strongly encourage submissions that address different parts of Europe, stretching from Russia to Portugal, and Finland to Greece.

A number of themes are central to the workshop

Collective Memory: The gap between production and reception

Great progress has been achieved to refine our understanding of how historical narratives are being produced. At the same time, there is a growing literature on understanding the historical narratives that people hold. However, it seems that these two streams of research are developing side-by-side. Through dialogues over specific cases, we want to explore the logics of remembering and thereby the relations between historical narratives that target youth and historical narratives held by young people.

Youth as actor and symbol

Young people's political involvement has gained in visibility across the globe in recent years, as youth has become the face of a vast set of protest movements. As political and social agents, young people are the natural force for change in any society, and each successive generation emerges with new historical interpretations and expectations. Given their perpetual replenishment, young people are a particularly attractive symbol to target with historical narratives. We want to explore how historical narratives of young people relate to wider political and social processes and what kind of mnemonic logics young people are exposed to.

Interdisciplinary

The joint pursuit of a shared research question between the social sciences and humanities is often desired, but it tends to be of a rhetorical nature. During this workshop, we want to provide the space to engage in an in-depth dialogue between these two perspectives, focussing on a shared research issue, but also discussing methodological challenges.

Comparison

Going beyond a country-case logic, the workshop also addresses concerns of potential methodological nationalism through a comparative and transnational perspective. Comparatively analysing Europe's different geographical areas has often been demanded but it is rarely put into practice. Much of Europe has shared certain historical experiences, although these have come to mean rather different things across that region. Through a comparative approach we want to assess similarities across the region and the diffusion that may have occurred in an effort to prevent thinking of countries as "sealed containers" cut off from wider transnational processes.

Please apply with a paper abstract (max. 500 words) and a short CV by **15 April 2020** via email to nina.friess@zois-berlin.de and felix.krawatzek@zois-berlin.de. Individual paper proposals are possible, as are joint papers by those working in cultural studies and the social sciences.

The programme will be finalised in early May 2020. Please note that the workshop is paper-based and first drafts of papers are to be circulated no later than three weeks before the workshop. We intend to publish selected papers. Funds for travel to Berlin and accommodation are available.

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