

Doing Global Sociology Methodology and Theory after the Postcolonial Critique

Workshop at the Historical Observatory,
University of Göttingen

May 18-21, 2022



 GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT
GÖTTINGEN

 UNIVERSITÄT
LEIPZIG

 **DFG** Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft
German Research Foundation

 **MZS**
 mpimmg

Wednesday, May 18

15.00-15.30

Welcome

Welcome address
Steven Vertovec (Göttingen)

Opening remarks
Marian Burchardt & Johannes Becker

15.30-16.00

Coffee break

16.00-17.30

**Keynote: Allowing rural difference to
make a difference: The Brazilian Marcha
das Margaridas**

Renata Motta (Berlin)

17.30

Reception

Thursday, May 19

9.30-11.00

Key texts in Global Sociology 1

Marian Burchardt & Johannes Becker

11.00-11.30

Coffee break

11.30-13.00

Thematic Session 1: Translation

Clara Ruvituso & Hilal Alkan

13.00-14.00

Lunch Break

14.00-15.30

**Keynote: Interpretative research in the
Global South: Do we need different
methods?**

Gabriele Rosenthal (Göttingen)

15.30-16.00

Coffee Break

16.00-17.30

Thematic Session 2: Comparison

Soledad Balerdi & Daniel Bultmann

17.30-19.00

Break

19.00

Dinner (Restaurant)

Friday, May 20

9.30-11.00

Key texts in Global Sociology 2

Marian Burchardt & Johannes Becker

11.00-11.30

Coffee break

11.30-13.00

Keynote: Accommodating soft universalism within global sociology(ies)

Sari Hanafi (Beirut)

13.00-14.00

Lunch break

14.00-18.30

Excursion to the Museum Friedland Transit Camp

18.30

BBQ

Saturday, May 21

9.30-11.00

Thematic Session 3: Positionality

Yara Sa'di Ibraheem & Eva Bahl

11.00-11.30

Coffee break

11.30-13.00

Keynote: In search of an object: Producing knowledge on the Global South

Elísio Macamo (Basel)

13.00-14.00

Lunch break

14.00-15.30

Thematic Session 4: Contested knowledge

Joschka Philipps, Hannah Schilling & Martín Hernan Di Marco

15.30-16.00

Coffee break

16.00-17.30

Concluding discussion

17.30-19.00

Break

19.00

Dinner (Restaurant)

Abstracts

Accommodating soft universalism within global sociology(ies)

Sari Hanafi

I know that many (post- or de-)colonial scholars hate any use of the concept of universalism, mainly because of its problematic history. For me, however, there can be no science, nor a global understanding of our world, without admitting the universality of certain concepts (e.g., social class, democracy, and citizenship) and values (e.g., human rights and gender equality). But, if we want, at the same time, to be universalist and contextualist, how do we reconcile the local and the universal? How do we construct global sociology(ies)? I propose the term soft universalism which deals with thick concepts (in sense of Simon Kirchin). A thick concept can be softly universalist if it is: a) the outcome of a quasi-cross-cultural consensus; b) not a teleological concept, but a historical experience that gets its normativity as a result of a collective historical learning process; c) conceived as an *imaginary* with general wide flexibility, rather than a *model* to be exported; d) its evaluation is a matter of pragmatics and subject to the cognitive process that goes beyond its semantics.

Allowing rural difference to make a difference: The Brazilian Marcha das Margaridas

Renata Motta

Feminist scholarship has either focused on solidarity across differences along categories of inequality established in intersectional approaches (i.e. race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality) – what in this volume is called intersectional feminist analytics - or as a praxis of linking struggles across different national contexts, such as in transnational feminist networks (TFNs) – transnational feminist praxes. A problem arises when situated understandings of transnational feminism or intersectionality are expected to inform an analysis of feminist solidarity. We suggest that rurality is a category of colonial difference that has emerged in solidarity-building in Latin American struggles against the coloniality of power and the coloniality of gender. Far from an established category in intersectionality analysis, rurality might inform other struggles in a global context of increasing violence in areas of commodities extraction, such as in mining regions and agrarian frontiers. We make our argument through a study of the Marcha das Margaridas, a mass mobilization led by feminist organizations within rural trade unions in Brazil. We analyzed how the political subject of the Marcha, at the start centered on rural working women, has developed over two decades to allow women living and working in different socio-spatialities to identify with the Marcha. The political subject

“women from the field, the forest and the waters” shows how the rural difference becomes a main site of identification while not lending itself to essentialization. Rather, the rural difference gives space for solidarity-building, not only through the linking of different geographies, but, above all, by recognizing difference within the intersections of gender, class, and socio-spatiality.

In search of an object: Producing knowledge on the Global South

Elísio Macamo

The presentation addresses epistemological and methodological questions in the production of knowledge about the non-Western world. It interrogates the conditions of possibility of knowledge by suggesting the idea according to which the object is not necessarily an empirical entity or phenomenon, but rather the "theory of knowledge" in the context of which knowledge about the Global South is constituted. The claim is that methodological decisions in the context of qualitative or, for that matter, quantitative research, are determined not by what the Global South really is, but instead by what we think is worth knowing.

Interpretative research in the Global South: Do we need different methods?

Gabriele Rosenthal

In my paper I will discuss the need for social research which is skilled and competent in terms of methods (understood here primarily as research practice) when doing investigations in the Global South. If we use interpretative, qualitative methods which follow the principles of openness, reconstruction and an abductive approach, we do not need different methods for research in the Global South. In my paper, I will argue that this is one of the big advantages of rigorous interpretative or reconstructive social research, which also implies reflecting on the researcher's position in the 'social' field and the positions of our field assistants. It also implies flexibility in our research design, meaning which methods we use, in which sequence, and in which context.

Important Addresses

Venue:

Historical Observatory (Historische Sternwarte)
Geismar Landstraße 11
37083 Göttingen

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