



CALL FOR PAPERS

The Threatened Self

Forms of subjectification between control and self-will 1915-2015

Graduate Conference 2015

21 to 23 April 2015

Georg-August-University of Göttingen, Conference Centre by the Historical Observatory. Organised by the Hans Böckler Foundation in cooperation with the Göttingen Graduate School of Social Sciences (GGG)

“Whose lives are already considered not lives, or only partially living, or already dead and gone, prior to any explicit destruction or abandonment?”

(Butler, Judith 2012: Can one lead a good life in a bad life?)

Conceptions of security and threat have altered in the 20th and 21st century through the experiences of world wars, targeted persecution and annihilation of marginalised people just as they have through coercion and exploitation as concomitant circumstances related to an intensified globalisation. This applies to both the world of work and the private sphere.

Current academic debates emphasise that following the 9/11 turning point rhetoric has become ever more intense, whereby *threats* like wars and international terrorism should be identified and negotiated on a global level. This talk of new threats is accompanied in practice by a new sort of frequently biopolitical controls and security policy measures, both in the movement of people and goods and in (digital) communication and population policy. On the one hand reference is made to how in discursive threat scenarios the potential danger is represented by a culturalised and ethnicised *something different*. On the other hand the materialising effects of these debates are becoming increasingly the focus of research, e.g. through analyses of US or European migration policies or by naming the increasing data retention as a new form of state access to its population. The impact of these policies has been not only described in an increasingly medialised public by those affected, people who have frequently been confronted before with violence, coercion and threat, but also criticised repeatedly by non-state actors and thus made visible in counter-debates.

Firstly, the conference asks for analyses of structural conditions and discursive manifestations of threats; secondly, the aim is to consider how people in the past and present came into contact with various threat scenarios. Thus looking from the individual perspective and also from the collective perspective of these actors, the question is what strategies have been and are favoured, devised and implemented to confront real and imaginary threat scenarios and the conceptions of security propagated by politicians and the media.

The starting point is to be a broad understanding of threat and the ways they impact on the self, to create space for interdisciplinary discussions. Contributions can address the following questions, other related topics are also highly welcome:

- What approaches does the perspective of the ‘threatened self’ offer with regard to the consideration of de-individualisation, dehumanisation and murder in world wars, concentration camp systems and mass extermination?
- What perceptions of, and in the handling of, threats can be reconstructed historically as well as contemporary and internationally in societies? What (historic) shift is to be observed for threat scenarios?
- What importance do experiences and the ways of handing down threat and fear have for constituting threat scenarios and societies’ conceptions of security?
- How do people cope with threat, what do they perceive as a threat and what consequences does the experience of (staged) fear and insecurity, threat to the realities of life and the self have for continuing to live? How are experiences of threat, imprisonment or extreme conditions of dependency processed?
- How do hegemonial security debates arise and what part do concepts of ‘the alien’ and ‘the different’ play? Furthermore what role do different conceptions of identity play in the construction of a threat to the self?
- How are fear and the feeling of threat perceived, learnt and negotiated within marginalised groups? How does this relate to the perceptions relevant in society?
- What scope for self-willed individual or also collective action is there in the conflict between resistance and adaptation, and what feasible alternatives are there? To what extent do people manage to create free space (e.g. heterotopic space) – even in extreme situations?

Addressees of the conference:

All doctoral candidates and other (young) scientists presenting a current research project and wishing to extend their expertise in their subject and methodology in discussion with other conference-goers are invited. Empirical phenomena as well as (meta-)theoretical reflections and/or artistic confrontations with threat, fear and security can be included in the conference design.

Programme and organisation:

Dana Dülcke, Andreas Kahrs, Julia Kleinschmidt, Olaf Tietje, Jakob Warnecke, Juliane Wenke (Hans Böckler Foundation doctoral candidates)

Study Sponsorship Department of the Hans Böckler Foundation, Doctoral Studies Unit II

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Data and deadlines:

If you are interested, please send your abstract (max. 500 words) as a PDF or in another standard text processing program (rtf*, doc*, odt*) in German or English, brief information on yourself and your research profile plus contact details by **not later than 26 September 2014** to WT@boeckler.de. The conference languages are English and German. Likewise please send queries to the e-mail address quoted or telephone the Hans Böckler Foundation (Dr. Susanne Schedel, Tel.: +49 (0) 211/7778-301).

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