

## Editorial

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The relation between structures and events is of essential importance in both history and sociology. As fundamental concepts in both disciplines, they have influenced the scientific discourse between structuralist and interactionist theories as well as between structural and event history. While approaches of course differ in emphasizing different aspects of the relation of structures and events, focusing on social practices, cultures of commemoration or historical memories, as well as path dependencies and critical junctures, their communality seems to lie in the fact that structures and events can only be properly theorized and understood if the reciprocal nature of their relationship is taken into account. This issue of InterDisciplines thus deals with the topic of the complex and diverse entanglements between structures and events, ranging from the micro-level, where »local« events like the deliberate or accidental violation of behavioral norms can contribute to the perpetuation or disruption of normative structures, to the macro-level, where »global« events can disrupt or (re-)shape large-scale social, cultural, economic and political structures. In light of the topic's importance in both history and sociology disciplines, the selection of authors therefore includes contributions from both disciplines.

The articles in this issue are based on selected papers from the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar of the BGHS, which took place from June 29 to July 1, 2015 at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF) at Bielefeld University. The Annual Seminar has provided a platform since 2009 for junior and senior researchers from different countries and disciplinary backgrounds to discuss their research. Each year, the topic of the conference is selected by the PhD students from the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology and the conference is organized by a team of PhD students. The 2015 conference, upon which this special

issue is based, brought together a broad spectrum of work on the relationships between structures and events, with topics ranging from the abortion controversy in Poland to the development of capitalism in Nigeria. In five panels, 24 young researchers from 13 different countries presented and discussed their research. Keynote speeches were given by William Sewell from Chicago on »The temporalities of social life: Thoughts for the anthropocene«, and by Tobias Werron from Bonn on «Simultaneity as a historical-sociological problem«. In addition, Mathias Kepplinger (Mainz) gave a public lecture on »Events as topic of public communication«, which presented interesting insights on the role of the mass media on the construction and effects of events.

The six contributions in this issue of InterDisciplines represent but a few of the many fascinating insights provided during the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar. They cast light on the relationship between structures and events from various disciplinary and theoretical points of view and raise new questions, which may in turn become the subject of further research.

**Ramy Youssef** provides a comprehensive introduction to some common issues in theorizing on structures and events from a primarily sociological point of view. The predominance of the distinction between structure and agency in common sociological approaches, as he points out, has led to various conceptual obstacles for the understanding of events. Instead of assuming events to be objects or facilitators of actions, agency and structures themselves have to be understood as eventfully constituted. Events, however, are constituted by communication. Synthesizing various sociological and historical conceptualizations of events, the author suggests focusing on the communicative constitution of events for a thorough understanding of the interplay between structures, agency and events.

The interplay between structures and events depends not only on *when* events happen, but on *where* they happen. This becomes clear in **Ferdinand Nyberg**'s contribution, which provides intriguing considerations on the role of *space* as a mediator between structures and events. Analyzing the example of a drug raid in the United States in the late 1980's, it shows how a spatially situated event shapes, reproduces and mobilizes common sense in the discourse on drugs as a problem locatable

in social space. The perceived proximity or distance of an event like a drug raid plays a crucial role in the perception of a social problem as either »inside« or »outside« one's own lifeworld. The »place« of events may thereby not only convey a sense of the immediacy of a social issue but may also influence the assessment of possible policy options.

A problem on a global scale became apparent during the financial crisis in 2008, certainly one of the most salient events of the past ten years. It raised the question of how global structures of capitalism are embedded in their own particular temporalities and how politics deals with these structures. The authors Fernand Braudel and Michel Foucault may provide some answers to this question, as **Ceyhun Gürkan** convincingly argues. Comparing the two authors, his contribution highlights similarities as well as differences in conceptualizing the interplay of structures and events in the works of Braudel and Foucault. Although Braudel focuses on capitalism and Foucault on the history and practices of (neo-)liberal governmentality, the two approaches share some common traits in assessing structures and events, thus enabling a conceptual integration.

Analyzing the interwoven relation of structures and events in a historical case, **Mátyás Erdélyi** aims in his article to develop an understanding of the rhythm, sequence, and pace of educational change of the social transformation of the secondary education in Hungary in the period between 1867 and 1938. The article provides a perspective on the change in the educational system as the result of the interplay between the global structure of Hungarian secondary education, on the one hand, and »crucial« events (e.g., wars, policy changes, etc.) and »local« events, on the other. Focusing on the emergence and systematization of different types of secondary schools and their corresponding social functions, Erdélyi thus highlights the importance of singular events for the emergence of broader societal structures and concludes by arguing for the inclusion of the micro-, meso- and macro-levels in historical analyses.

The interplay between event and structure can also be observed in the narratives of cities' self-representations. Using case studies from recent media discourses, **Elena Dingersen**'s work sheds light on the modes of narrative reproduction of the self-images of Dresden and St. Petersburg.

In doing so, Dingersen brings in the question of temporal order in the narratives of both cities, as well as the correlation of the event/structure constellation with the regularities of the cities' development. The article provides a summary of forms of event/structure interplay that can be applied to the narrative constructions of Dresden and St. Petersburg. It further suggests that this research perspective can be extended to the analysis of other social structures of belonging and identification both in and beyond cities.

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