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NETZWERK ALTERN
ALTERN UND DEMOGRAFISCHER WANDEL ALS HERAUSFORDERUNG UND CHANCE

Marie Jahoda Winter School of Sociology

Doing Age - The Practices of Age and Ageing

November 1-3, 2018

Against the backdrop of demographic ageing, ageing research itself is transforming. While widely used concepts such as models of disengagement and active ageing have been heavily criticized for their “crypto-normativity” (Kolland & Amann, 2014), more recent approaches within a ‘cultural gerontology’ put emphasis on the subjective experience, identity construction and consumption in later life. Theoretically, such studies might approach later life from a practice-theoretical perspective, defining ‘age’ not as something that we are, but that we do. In analogy to ‘doing gender’ (West & Zimmermann, 1987; Butler, 1991), the concept of ‘doing age’ (Laz, 1998; Schroeter, 2012) perceives age neither as a biological state nor as an individual trait, a social role or a discursive formation, but as a continual flow of socio-material practices. Other than human behaviour, social practices are concerned embedded, decentralised, incorporated, sub-conscious and routinized qualities of “temporally and spatially dispersed nexus[es] of doings and sayings” (Schatzki, 1996: 89). Empirically, practice-theoretical approaches to later life have been concerned with the routinized practices of ageing in everyday life, doing health and tele-medicine, ethnographic studies in institutions as well as the materialities of age and ageing.

In 2018, Marie Jahoda Winter School of Sociology invites young scholars working on topics surrounding age and ageing from a practice-theoretical perspective. The aim of the winter school is to establish an environment for intellectually open and exchange of research projects and theoretical frameworks used to empirically investigate the socio-material practices of growing old. The winter school offers seminars and lectures with researchers and experts in the field of ageing studies: Prof. Clary Krekula (Karlstadt Universität), Prof. Julia Twigg (University of Kent) and Dr. Rosie Day (University of Birmingham).

Applicants

The Marie Jahoda Winter School is open to 15 young scholars, advanced master students, PhD-candidates and early stage researchers from humanities and social sciences. The participating PhD students are required to present their research (PhD) projects. Applicants shall submit a description of their research/dissertation project (max. 1 page) and a CV in one document by June 30 2018 to: mariejahoda.summerschool@univie.ac.at.

Applicants shall assign their work to one of the streams. The applicants will be informed of the faculty’s decision by August 30 2018. Accepted presentations/papers need to be submitted by October 10, 2018. The organisers reserve the right to assign applications to a stream if necessary. The attendance of the winter school is free of charge. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the applicants. If low budget accommodation is needed, please contact the organizers.

Organizers

Vera Gallistl, MA (vera.maria.gallistl@univie.ac.at); Anna Wanka, PhD (anna.wanka@univie.ac.at); Prof. Dr. Franz Kolland (franz.kolland@univie.ac.at)



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The Marie Jahoda Winter School of Sociology will be organized in three streams:

Stream 1: Materialities of Age and Ageing

Despite the paradigm shift that social constructionist concepts enable in gerontological thinking, they reveal their blind spot when it comes to the materiality of ageing and thus to fleshy-sensual experiences, human and non-human ontologies and agencies. Addressing these materialities of ageing brings up its own critique on definitions of ageing bodies and material environments. This framing does not presume that age and ageing are solely products of human-to-human interaction, but rather suggests that humans, non-humans, and discourses become essential parts of the ageing processes.

In this stream we welcome papers that address questions of how age and ageing are co-produced in and through materialities, for example in regards to bodies, clothing, technologies and other artefacts.

Stream 2: Doing Age-Difference

In the course of everyday-life people constantly identify and dissociate themselves with others – may it be through their choice of clothing, furniture, leisure activities, art or food. With Pierre Bourdieu (1987) we can talk about practices of distinction that become the basis for social judgement. From a gerontological perspective, these practices of distinction can be based on representations of different ages (Krekula, 2009) but might also be associated with other socio-cultural distinctions. Social practices do not only constitute categories like age, gender, or class, but “do” them intersectionally and these multiple categorisations are contingent, as they can in practice be used, ignored, and made irrelevant (Fenstermaker & West, 1995; Hirschauer, 2014). Exploring the doings of age-differences then means to reflect on differentiation practices based on age (Krekula et al. 2017), but also their relation to other social categorizations, such as gender, class or ethnicity.

In this stream we welcome papers that deal with the production and destruction of social inequalities, the making and unmaking of distinctions and intersectionality in later life. This might include social categorizations based on age, but also on intersectionalities, e.g. between age and gender, class or ethnicity.

Stream 3: Ageing in and through Spaces

Social practices are always bound in time and space (Schatzki, 1991), and spaces are constituted through social practices in a process of spatialisation (Reckwitz, 2012). Approaching age as a doing, hence, implies to understand it as inherently spatial. Ageing is thus not happening in environments, but it takes place - space becomes integrated into the practices that do age. Each environment co-produces a different kind of ageing and each kind of ageing co-produces a different kind of environment (Wanka, 2017).

In this stream we welcome papers that are concerned with the doing of age in different material, affective and socio-cultural environments, ranging from nursing homes to neighbourhoods, but also such that address the material, social and affective arrangement of living spaces in later life.