

Call for Papers:

Grappling with the Global

The Challenge of Boundaries in History and Sociology

9th Annual Seminar of the *Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology* (BGHS),
13–15 July 2017, Bielefeld University, Germany

Over the past 25 years, scholars in history, sociology, and related fields have emphasised the need to overcome the analytical category of the nation-state by replacing it with various notions of ‘the global’. Facing the pitfalls of Western-centrism and nationalism, recent research has attempted to analyse entangled relationships on a (trans-)local, (trans-)regional, and even global scale. New research areas, such as transnational and global history and sociology, histories of globalisation and world society, and sociology of the Global South bear witness to this ongoing trend.

At the same time, ‘the global’ has gained increasing significance in the context of political and public debates. History and sociology are thus not merely facing an intellectual paradigm shift, but also the need to examine ‘the global’ on an empirical basis. Academic research could therefore provide meaningful contributions, addressing global issues and crises. These include the re-emergence of nationalism, anti-globalism, and socio-economic problems resulting from globalisation.

Although very much en vogue as an object of enquiry and an analytical framework, ‘the global’ tends to be difficult to pinpoint in the context of practical research. How can it be operationalised within a narrowly defined research project such as a doctoral dissertation? Where does ‘the global’ begin – both in spatial and temporal terms? What are its theoretical and methodological implications? What are its conceptual, empirical, and analytical limitations? Where can we draw the line between the aspiration to conduct research within a global framework and the very real impact of national boundaries? Moreover, how can we accommodate historiographical and sociological traditions which do not support the global research paradigm?

The 9th BGHS Annual Seminar, *Grappling with the Global*, will offer an interdisciplinary forum for junior researchers to present their approaches to the conceptual, methodological, and empirical challenges of ‘the global’. At the same time, we wish to provide participants the opportunity to exchange ideas and research techniques with colleagues from within as well as outside their own disciplinary backgrounds.

Possible **topics for contributions** to the 9th BGHS Annual Seminar include, but are not limited to:

Cultural entanglements and local specificities

- religious, ethnic, and other forms of belonging
- networks of communication, knowledge, and power
- migration and displacement

Dimensions of and responses to globalised inequalities

- poverty
- gender and queer relations
- (new) social movements and insurgencies
- environmental questions

Clashes and conflicts

- war and violence in their local and global dimensions
- imperialism, (post-)colonialism, nationalism
- fundamentalist movements

‘Speaking about’ the global and globalisation

- public discourses and forms of critique
- political endeavours and projects
- debates revolving around multiculturalism

Theoretical and methodological considerations

- overcoming methodological nationalism
- issues of digitalisation

The conference is intended for junior researchers at any career stage and invites proposals for papers and other contributions that touch upon one or more of these issues within the (transdisciplinary) frameworks of history and the social sciences. Abstracts (max. 250 words), along with a short biographical note, should be submitted to the conference organisers at annualseminar@uni-bielefeld.de.

The deadline for proposals is **29 January 2017**.

After the Annual Seminar, we plan to publish an edited volume including a selection of papers presented at the event in *InterDisciplines* – our open-access, peer-reviewed e-journal. Further information will be provided at a later point.

Please note that the BGHS offers financial support to graduate students whose contributions are selected for the Annual Seminar programme. This support includes accommodation and at least a portion of the travel expenses. Due to limited resources, please indicate in your application whether you would like to be considered for a travel grant, and send us an estimate of your expected travel expenses. Please also check with your home institution for other funding opportunities. Speakers will be responsible for their own daily expenses. Applicants will be notified by **1 March 2017** as to whether their abstract has been accepted.

Furthermore, please note that the conference will be held in English.

This call for papers and further information regarding the BGHS Annual Seminar are available at: www.uni-bielefeld.de/bghs/Programm/Ansem/2017.html