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## Call for Papers

### **„Wissen schaffen. Arbeitstagung zur Frage der sozialwissenschaftlichen Theoriebildung in der fallrekonstruktiven Forschung“**

### **“Creating Knowledge—A Theory-Building Workshop in Case-Reconstructive Research in the Social Sciences”**

**November 19 and 20, 2010  
in Goettingen, Germany**

The issue of theory building is a constant accompaniment, requirement, and goal of many knowledge creators and scholars. Persons who conduct empirical research—particularly as a part of dissertation projects—and are intensively involved with methods of data collection and interpretation that follow in the tradition of interpretative social research will sooner or later find themselves confronted with this issue. As this is particularly true of the case reconstructive methods that were introduced to the fields of sociological biographical research by Rosenthal (1995), Alheit (1985; 2005), or Dausien (2005), Hildenbrand’s (1999) family research, or the ethnographic methods introduced by Honer (1993) and Hitzler (2000, as well as Hitzler/Honer 1988), the theoretical generalization of the reconstructed cases’ analytical results poses a particular challenge.

For interpretative social research—with its constituent assumption of a dialectic relationship between a “particular case” and the “general”—this does not imply a generalization based on frequency of occurrence or the criteria of allocation. Rather, the point is to elaborate the general features observed within the individual reconstructed case studies as well as their contrastive comparison.

In the process, completely new theories (such as explanatory models for concrete social phenomena) can develop, existing theories can be modified, previously introduced theories can be made plausible, or theoretical traditions can be expanded upon by means of new social phenomena.

This aforementioned dialectical understanding and the demand for a theoretical generalization of this approach make an important contribution towards bridging what was previously seen as an irreconcilable gap between micro and macro-levels analysis within the social sciences.

These are the themes which the international workshop “Creating Knowledge”—drafted by doctoral candidates at the University of Goettingen—shall address. The group selected figurational sociology and sociology of knowledge as the theoretical foci of the workshop, as these two schools of thought are of great relevance to current debates surrounding case-reconstructive sociological research.

The English-speaking plenary session—key speakers include figurational sociologist Cas Wouters and, representing the sociology of knowledge, Roswitha Breckner—will begin by addressing questions of theory production with a focus on the methodological implications.

In the second part of the workshop on Saturday, junior researchers will address the challenges of theoretical generalization within the framework of case reconstructive research by presenting their individual research projects and discussing these issues with other doctoral candidates. There will be four sessions each with a different focus. In this manner it will be possible to deal with methodological questions based on the example of specific content-related issues. Possible thematic foci include:

- Ethno-political conflicts
- Collective belonging
- Societies of transformation
- Processes of re-ethnization
- Migration, participation, and social involvement
- Methodological questions such as the triangulation of methods

Other topics dealing with the workshop’s methodology are also warmly welcome. The workshop will be conducted in German and English. The sessions will be organized in either of the two languages.

We would like to invite junior researchers from various disciplines to hand in abstracts of a maximum length of one page before June 13, 2010. These will be introduced in presentations of approximately 20 minutes in length. The abstracts may be written in either German or English. Please email your contributions to [a.zimowska@googlemail.com](mailto:a.zimowska@googlemail.com)

You will receive a message concerning your abstract’s acceptance by July 31, 2010 at the latest.