

Abstract of the Dissertation:

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Brief Outline:

1. Introduction: Journeying Through the Times	11
2. Methods Chapter: An Examination of the Biographical Narrative Interview and Narrative Analysis	19
2.1 Selection of the Data Collection Method Biographical Narrative Interview	20
2.2 Methodological Engagement and Self-positioning	22
2.3 Process and Structure of Narrative Interviews	29
2.4 Schütze's Narrative Analysis Evaluation Method	33
2.5 Sample, Selection of Main Cases and Evaluation Process	45
2.6 Résumé of the Author's Own Methodological Positionings and the Development of the Dual Theoretical Model	50
3. Sensitizing Concept: Biographical Research in the Field of Education According to Winfried Marotzki	53
3.1 Processes of Transformation as Educational Processes?	53
3.2 New Dimensioning of Marotzki	57
3.3 Critique and Reformulations of Marotzki's Biographical Research in the Field of Education	59
3.4 Critique of Biographical Research in the Field of Education	67
3.5 Supplementing Narrative Analysis with Dimensions from Biographical Research in the Field of Education	69
4. Background Information on Institutional Care and the Societal Context	71
4.1 Help and Punishment as Central Motivational Strands in Institutional Care	72
4.2 Legal Continuities in Institutional Care in the Early Federal Republic of Germany ...	75
4.3 The Social Situation and Living Conditions of Minors from the 1950s to the 1970s .	77
4.4 Debate and Research Regarding the Abuses in Institutional Care During the Early Federal Republic of Germany	78
5. Brief Biographical Profiles	83
5.1 Brief Biographical Profile of Ingrid G.	84
5.2 Brief Biographical Profile of Kurt R.	87
5.3 Brief Biographical Profile of Gerd K.	90
5.4 Brief Biographical Profile of Horst F.	93
5.5 Brief Biographical Profile of Jens N.	94
5.6 Brief Biographical Profile of Georg I.	98
5.7 Brief Biographical Profile of Frauke V.	103

5.8	Brief Biographical Profile of Ulrich R.	107
5.9	Brief Biographical Profile of Hans-Werner Z.	110
5.10	Brief Biographical Profile of Yvonne L.	113
5.11	Brief Biographical Profile of Andrea E.	117
5.12	Brief Biographical Profile of Volker F.	121
5.13	Brief Biographical Profile of Claus R.	124
6.	Individual Case Analysis	129
6.1	Reasons for the Presentation Format of the Individual Case Analysis	129
6.2	Individual Case Analysis of Ingrid G.	131
6.3	Individual Case Analysis of Gerd K.	174
6.4	Individual Case Analysis of Frauke V.	232
6.5	Individual Case Analysis of Ulrich R.	298
7.	Theoretical Model	373
7.1	Theoretical Model Based on Interviewees' Presentation Interests	373
7.2	Theoretical Model Based on Process Structures	395
7.3	Résumé of Results of the Dual Theoretical Model	416
8.	Further Theoretical Reflection: Recapitulation of a Theory-guided Research Process	421
8.1	Engagement with Resilience Research	423
8.2	Correspondences with Attachment Research	427
8.3	Importance of Significant Others	433
8.4	Engagement with the Theory of Recognition	436
8.5	Identity Constructions as Educational Processes?	440
8.6	Life as a Process of Development?	445
8.7	Biographical Work	449
9.	Review and Outlook	455
10.	Guidance Along the Way: Acknowledgements	459
11.	Bibliography	461
12.	List of Figures	481
13.	List of Tables	483
14.	Attachment	485
14.1	Transcription Key	485

Abstract:

The dissertation „Despite of Difficult Starting Conditions. Biographical Dealing with Breaks From Childhood and Youth of Children Who Have Been in Institutional Care“ constitutes a research work analysing from educational and sociological perspectives biographies of individuals who have been in institutional care during their childhood and / or youth.

The following essential research questions will be treated:

- o Which manners and interaction strategies are the biographers using during the phase of adversities?
- o Which biographical gaps and breaks are challenging the biographers to look back on their childhood and youth?
- o Which subsequent actions are they taking to treat, assess and reflect adversities?
- o Are there typical ways of biographical work to deal with adversities from childhood and youth?
- o How are the biographers dealing with adversities from childhood and youth during the interview setting?
- o Are there typical forms to present their biography?

The dissertation is based on a sample of biographical narrative interviews with fourteen individuals whose years of institutional care can be located during the years from the 1940s to the 1970s. A contextualizing introduction to the conditions of institutional care during the sample period will be given. Data collection and evaluation will be done using the biographical narrative interview technique developed by Fritz Schütze and narrative analysis from qualitative social research.

Usage of data collection and evaluation methods will be described in detail, the analysis of argumentative text passages and the assumption of the homology thesis will be critically examined. The author positions herself by distancing from constructivist assumptions that the interviewees' social realities cannot be reconstructed and maintains the assumption that life history insights and experiences can be reconstructed to a certain extent. At the same time criticism of the constructivist approach will be responded to by looking at the interviewees' constructions and perspectives in more detail. To do this, the analysis will be more focussed on the production process and framework conditions of the interviews as well as the interviewees' argumentation lines and perspectives. This procedural method enhances and modernizes the classical narrative analysis.

The methodological dispute leads the analysis towards a dual process impacting the research questions:

- o On the one hand, the interviewees' dealings with adversities and breaks from childhood and youth in the course of their biographical development will be reconstructed. A detailed analysis of four selected main cases will be carried out resulting in biographical descriptions reconstructing their life stories to a certain extent. Next to the process structures according to Fritz Schütze dimensioning of biographical research in the field of education according to Winfried Marotzki will be factored in to test a more resource-oriented reading.
- o On the other hand, the interviewees' constructions will be looked at by analysing how the interviewees are presenting their dealings with breaks and adversities. Next to the four main cases other cases from the sample will be added to the analysis to work out the interviewees' presentation interests.

The dual approach to analysis yields a dual theoretical model:

- o Two action patterns of dealing with breaks from childhood and youth will be developed by contrastively comparing process structures of the four main cases: "Keeping up a positive self in the face of adversities" and "Arduous composition of a positive self-image".
- o Four types will be identified from the analysis of presentation interests by including the sample: "Biography of suffering", "Resistance as a life motto", "Escape from non-autonomy", "Biography of success".

Following the dual theoretical model the research results will be placed within the educational, sociological and psychological discourse by establishing references to attachment theory, resilience research, significant others, recognition theories and identity theories. Concluding the term ,meaningful, future-oriented biographical work 'will be introduced.