

Memories of (Post)Socialist Childhood and Schooling

Editors

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Call for Chapter Proposals

"Memory is not history. Memory is lived process of making sense of time and the experience of it." (Keightley, 2010, p. 56)

This book aims to bring together those who had first-hand experiences with and accounts of (post)socialist schooling and childhood as cultural insiders to engage in remembering and (re)narrating their experiences. We understand —memory not as history but as “a lived process of making sense of time and the experience of it” to explore “relations between public and private life, agency and power, and the past, present and future” (Keightley, 2010, p. 55-56). The focus is on the exploration of how childhood and schooling were constituted and experienced in (post)socialist contexts and (re)narrated at the present. Childhood as a socio-historical construct provides an analytical incision into the social issues and concerns regarding historical socialism, cultural/ideological changes, and subject formation. As Gonick & Gannon (2014, p.6) argue, “rather than truth of particular lives, ... we are interested in using memory stories to examine the ways in which individuals are made social, how we are discursively, affectively, materially constituted in particular moments that are inherently unstable” and to open up ways to explore “how things come to matter in the ways they do” (Davies et al., 2013).

By reflecting on their own and others' experiences of (post)socialist schooling and childhood through the narration of lived experiences, memories, and artifacts of schooling as experienced in different geographical locations, contributors will critically re-examine the assumed monolithic (and authoritarian) nature of the (post)socialist education systems, while revealing contradictions and complexities inherent in (post)socialist education and open up to new insights. We are interested in exploring the following questions:

- What were the materialities and spaces of socialist childhood(s) and schooling?
 - * How did uniforms, school structures (buildings, hierarchies, policies, timetables, rules, roles), other school objects structured the daily practices, experiences, emotions, and sensations of children?
- How was childhood and schooling constituted and experienced in (post)socialist contexts? How were children made social and political?
 - * How were pedagogies of space, time, and ideology experienced in children's everyday lives (including schools, specialized/elite schools, camps, collective farms, after-school activities, etc.)?
 - * What childhoods were produced in familial, teaching, and other caring relations (including teachers, nurses, doctors, welfare agencies, etc.)?
 - * How was childhood constructed in relation to other generations and geographies?
 - * How were differences - language, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, race, (dis)ability, and other - were constructed and experienced?
- How do these memories contribute to and/or challenge the existing accounts and interpretations of socialist childhood and schooling? What do these memories tell us as researchers about how we have mastered (and been mastered by) particular theories and understandings of (post)Soviet/socialist transition, education, and childhood?

We hope that the book will create an interdisciplinary space for further collaboration, dialogue, and critical conversations to embark on projects of collective biography, autoethnography, autobiography, or oral history. We call for a range of research paradigms to interrogate childhoods and schooling that work within and against dominant discourses and constructions of childhoods. Following research traditions that challenge the canons of positivism and empiricism, we also call for research that aims to remove the distance between the researcher and the researched (Davies & Gannon, 2006; Ellis, 2004) and erase the boundaries between the personal and the political (Holman Jones, 2008).

We are seeking contributions from scholars working with the following research methodologies - (1) autoethnographies (or ethnographic biographies), (2) collective biographies and (3) oral histories.

Autoethnographic accounts

Autoethnography removes the distance between the researcher and the researched (Ellis, 2004) and erases the boundaries between the personal and the political (Holman Jones, 2008). Drawing on personal memories, interviews, and visual data (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2010), the researchers will construct ethnographic accounts of their experiences of (post)socialist schooling. Autoethnographic exploration affords an embedded theory-building that explains experiences with the help of contextually relevant categories and concepts.

Collective biography

The collective biography research project brings participants together to *collectively* explore their memories in relation to (post)socialist schooling and childhood through the shared process of telling, listening, and writing. Positioned in post- paradigms (post-structuralism, post-modernism, post-colonialism), collective biography is a form of critical narrative research that generates memories not typically acknowledged as an objective truth (Davies & Gannon, 2006). Following collective biography reflection/writing processes, the participants share their memories and collectively explore varied meanings that can be identified in the narratives, the dominant discourses of schooling that are present and what is constructed as “normal” and “natural” in the narratives, as well as the subject positions available for the subject in the stories in relation to child and/or other children, teachers, and institutions. Writing collective biography allows the participants to explore affective attachments and assemblages that shape our understandings of the (post)socialist childhood and education.

Oral histories

Drawing on qualitative interviews and emphasizing participants’ perspectives, oral history is one of the forms of memory-making. It focuses on the broader cultural meanings of oral narratives. In sociology of education, oral histories can be used to link individual (micro-level) experiences to historical, cultural, and structural (macro-level) phenomena.

Please submit one-page abstracts by September 1, 2015.

Full manuscripts should be submitted by February 1, 2016.

For more information or to express your interest to participate in this book project, please contact Iveta Silova (isilova@gmail.com), Zsuzsa Millei (zsuzsa.millei@uta.fi), Olena Aydarova (aydarova@msu.edu).



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