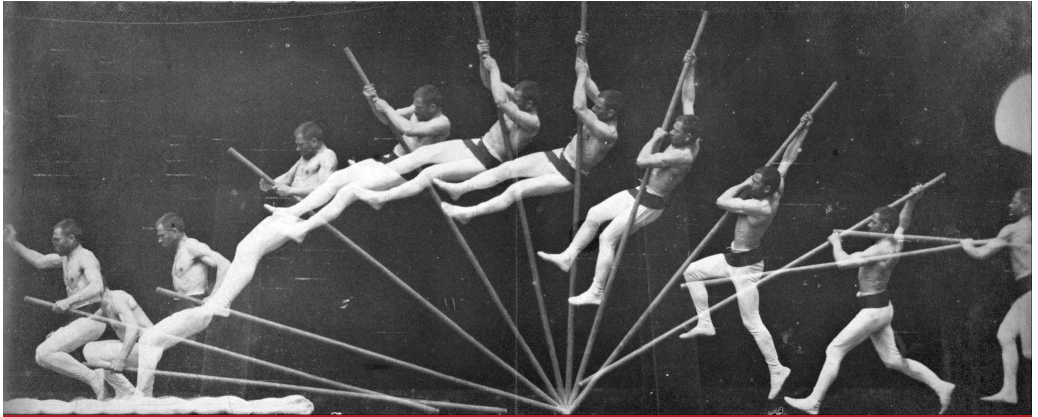




**University of  
Zurich** <sup>UZH</sup>

**University Research Priority Program (URPP) Asia and Europe**



# Snapshots of Change

**Assessing Social Transformations  
in Qualitative Research**

**Workshop**

**University of Zurich, October 23–24, 2015**

# Outline

The study of “change” is a central research topic in social science that has become all the more visible today in contexts in which collective claims for social and political change fill the news, as was the case during the recent uprisings in the Arab World and the crisis in Europe. Consequently, many theoretical works have offered general frameworks for change, while historical, sociological and anthropological research has been attempting the same on a more restricted scale. In order to gain terminological purchase on these processes of transformation, notions such as development, transition and rupture, as well as reconfiguration and continuity through change have gained much prominence. However, how can we concretely assess social change when we conduct qualitative research which is based on case studies, and has a limited scope of inquiry both in terms of time and space? This question concerns especially researchers who use ethnographic methods of investigation and who are consequently bound to analyse ‘snapshots’ of the studied societies while relying mainly on testimonies or on secondary literature to grasp possible transformations.

The debate surrounding the pertinence of such methods is not new. It dates back at least to the disputes led by the functionalists on the relevance of diachronic research in anthropology. The question of how to set time-frames exists also among historians for whom periodization is an object of constant struggle and has evolved, for instance, around the question of how to connect different temporal and spatial scales and how to identify points of rupture in history. The complexity of human societies makes it difficult to know which elements to consider as relevant. Very often the multiple dynamics that are observable at any one time give an incoherent picture, where no clear direction is discernible.

In this workshop we will be particularly interested in the three following dimensions:

1. What kind of data enables us to assess social change in qualitative research?
2. How should we approach the ways actors conceptualize change? What are the benefits of imposing an epistemological break with these conceptualizations and what do we gain or lose by studying them as an object of inquiry in their own right, to be described in their socially and historically situated settings?
3. How do we position our research in relation to different temporalities and scales of change: short- and long-term approaches, individual and collective temporalities, local and global? How do we connect these different scales?

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On the basis of concrete empirical examples, we will thus focus on the available means that enable us to overcome obstacles encountered when studying change through qualitative research. The presentations will be supported by concrete examples showing the method employed, the scope of relevance of the assessed change, as well as the lines of causality which are drawn consequently.

# Program

Day 1: Friday, 23 October 2015

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**9:30–09:45 Dorothea Lüddeckens (University of Zurich)**

Welcoming participants

**9:45–10:15 Aymon Kreil & Yasmine Berriane (University of Zurich)**

Introduction

**10:15–10:30 Coffee break**

**10:30–12:00 Panel 1 – The Teleological Trap**

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**Chair: Thiruni Kelegama (University of Zurich)**

**Discussant: Pablo Ariel Blitstein (University of Heidelberg)**

**Ulrich Brandenburg (University of Zurich)**

Rising East, Fearful West: The Russo-Japanese War (1904/05) and the Notion of Change

**Giedre Sabaseviciute (Czech Academy of Sciences)**

Connecting the Collective and the Individual in a Historical Research: Sayyid Qutb and the 1952 Revolution in Egypt

**12:00–13:30 Lunch break**

**13:30–15:00 Panel 2 – Exploring a Non-Linear Past**  
**Chair: Melek Saral (University of Zurich)**  
**Discussant: Philipp Casula (University of Zurich)**

**Irene Bono (University of Torino)**

Discrete Paths to the Nation: Thinking Political Change through a Biographical Approach

**Sophie Feyder (University of Leiden)**

Mobilising a Photographic Collection for Historical Research

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**15:00–15:30 Coffee break**

**15:30–17:00 Panel 3 – Actors of Change**  
**Chair: Yasmine Berriane (University of Zurich)**  
**Discussant: Benedikt Korf (University of Zurich)**

**Christoph H. Schwarz (University of Marburg)**

Becoming Someone to Listen to? Youth and Intergenerational Relations in the Focus of Research on Social Change

**Youssef El Chazli (University of Lausanne)**

Another Post on the Wall: Understanding Change through the Analysis of Digital Threads and Traces

**17:30–19:30 Poster-Apéro**

Poster presentations by Rasmus Brandt, Sarah Farag, Fynn Holm, Thomas Hüllelein, Madlen Kobi, Anna Elisabeth Kuijpers, Christoph Mittmann, Zeynep Sariaslan, Anusooya Sivaganesan, Barbara Zeugin

## Day 2: Saturday, 24 October 2015

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### 09:30–11:00 Panel 4 – War, Trauma, Memory, and Embodiment

**Chair:** Dorothea Lüddeckens (University of Zurich)

**Discussant:** Bettina Dennerlein (University of Zurich)

**Rivka Eisner (University of Zurich)**

Changing Times: Remembering War in Vietnam

**Maria Frederika Malmström (Nordic Africa Institute / New York University)**

Material Aspects of Public Affect: Social Transformations in Qualitative Research

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11:00–11:15 Coffee break

### 11:15–12:45 Panel 5 – Scales of Transformation

**Chair:** Aymon Kreil (University of Zurich)

**Discussant:** Annuska Derks (University of Zurich)

**Meriam Cheikh (Free University of Brussels)**

From Prostitution to the Moral Economy of Intimacy in Morocco (Tangier): An Uncertain New Sexual Order?

**Anne-Christine Trémon (University of Lausanne)**

“Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down” (*tianfan difu*): Changes in Scale, Conceptions of Change, and Changing Relations between an Emigrant Village and its Diaspora, Shenzhen (China)

12:45–14:00 Lunch break

**14:00–15:30 Panel 6 – The Temporalities of Institutions**

**Chair: David Chiavacci (University of Zurich)**

**Discussant: Benjamin Geer (University of Basel)**

**Daniele Cantini (Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg)**

Addressing Social Change through the Institutional Lens: The University in the Middle East

**David Pichonnaz (University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland / University of Lausanne)**

Explaining Police Reformers' Commitment for Change: A Dispositional Analysis

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**15:30–16:00 Coffee break**

**16:00–17:30 Final discussion**

# General Information

<b>Location</b>	University of Zurich URPP Asia and Europe Room WIE F-07 Wiesenstrasse 7/9 CH-8008 Zurich
<b>Convenors</b>	Dr. Yasmine Berriane, Dr. Aymon Kreil, Thiruni Kelegama, Prof. Dr. Dorothea Lüddeckens, Dr. Melek Saral
<b>Contact</b>	Dr. Yasmine Berriane (yasmine.berriane@uzh.ch) Dr. Aymon Kreil (aymon.kreil@uzh.ch)
<b>Registration</b>	Registration required by October 20, 2015: yasmine.berriane@uzh.ch or aymon.kreil@uzh.ch
<b>Internet</b>	<a href="http://www.asienundeuropa.uzh.ch/events/conferences/snapshots.html">www.asienundeuropa.uzh.ch/events/conferences/snapshots.html</a>

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