

## SEMINAR 6: Sociology of Emotions: Happiness and Nostalgia

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### Course Description:

Nostalgia has been defined quite differently throughout history. Once it was seen as a mental disorder, now its positive impact on human well-being is discussed vividly. Different disciplines have dealt with nostalgia so far and very often cultural critiques framed nostalgia as leading to conservatism and restorative attitudes. The seminar is going to deal with nostalgia from a sociology-of-emotions point of view. It thus takes up a specific aspect out of the huge amount of work being done by different disciplines on emotions and passion so far.

Emotions have been (re-)discovered by sociology in the last 40 years. Within sociology of emotions two main lines of thought can be distinguished: one line making the social development of emotions a topic of discussion, and another one investigating the social effects of emotions. In regard to nostalgia both lines of thought are applicable. Having a look into the social circumstances which form the background for nostalgia and also looking at the consequences of (widespread) nostalgic remembrances in a society for this society can be a task for sociology.

After a short introduction to sociology of emotions in general we will deal with different aspects of nostalgia (e.g. personal and historical nostalgia, restorative and reflective nostalgia, retro-trends in fashion and design). Furthermore, the usage of nostalgia in populist rhetoric, which seemingly promises an increase of happiness and wellbeing by a return to the past will be analyzed in regard to the underlying different other emotional messages (e.g. of hatred and anger).

### Outcomes: Students will:

- become familiar with sociology of emotions approach in general and key positions in critical theory
- gain insight into the interdisciplinary character of research on emotions
- learn and critically assess different concepts and possibilities in (empirical) research on nostalgia
- reflect on the differences between philosophical, anthropological, artistic and moral approaches to happiness
- develop a critical outlook on the difference between nostalgia as an emotion and the usage of nostalgic messages in populist rhetoric
- learn about the conceptual history of happiness and the impact of class, race and gender on conceptions of happiness
- inquire into the relation between happiness and political agency

Date	Topic	Readings
5 July 2021	Introduction: Sociology of emotions	<b>Bericat Eduardo</b> , The sociology of emotions: four decades of progress, in: Current Sociology, 2016, Vol.64(3), pp.491-513.

6 July 2021	The social character of happiness and other emotions	<p><b>Barbalet Jack M.</b>, Action and confidence, in: Barbalet Jack M., <i>Emotion, Social Theory and Social Structure. A Macrosociological Approach</i>, Cambridge/New York/Melbourne 1998, 82-102.</p> <p><b>Ahmed Sara</b>, Sociable happiness, in: <i>Emotion, Space and Society</i>, 2008, Vol.1(1), pp.10-13.</p>
7 July 2021	Interdisciplinary Research on Nostalgia	<p><b>Becker Tobias</b>, The Meanings of Nostalgia: Genealogy and Critique, in: <i>History &amp; Theory</i>. 2018/57(2), 234-250.</p> <p><b>Wildschut Tim, Sedikides Constantine, Arndt Jamie, Routledge Clay</b>, Nostalgia: Content, Triggers, Functions, in: <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, 2006, 91 (5): 975–993.</p>
8 July 2021	Historical and personal nostalgia and the retro-trend	<p><b>Reifová Irena</b>, The pleasure of continuity: Re-reading post-socialist nostalgia, in: <i>International Journal of Cultural Studies</i>, 11/2018, Vol.21(6), pp.587-602.</p> <p><b>Schiermer Bjørn</b>, Late-modern hipsters: New tendencies in popular culture, in: <i>Acta Sociologica</i>, 05/2014, Vol.57(2), pp.167-181.</p>
9 July 2021	Populist usage of nostalgia?	<p><b>Kenny Michael</b>, Back to the populist future? Understanding nostalgia in contemporary ideological discourse, in: <i>Journal of Political Ideologies</i>, Vol.22(3), pp.256-273.</p>