

Centre for  
Death & Society  
(CDAS)



UNIVERSITY OF  
**BATH**

# **Centre for Death & Society**

## **December 2021 Newsletter**

[Director's Note](#)

[CDAS News](#)

[CDAS Community News](#)

[Call for Papers](#)

[Contact Us](#)

## Director's Note

---

Some excellent CDAS news to share with everyone.

CDAS Ph.D. students Sam Hooker and George Gumisiriza graduated with their MRES degrees from the University of Bath last Wednesday. It was a fantastic ceremony and the first in-person graduation event the University has held for over a year. Sam and George joined CDAS last year as part of the Southwest Doctoral Training Programme and after competing year and the MRES are now up and running with their Ph.D. research.

Everyone in CDAS is always busy with different kinds of research and teaching and public engagement, but it is also important to take time and recognise these educational milestones.

CDAS has some amazing events coming up in 2022 so please take a look at what we're offering in the New Year. 2021 was a year filled with numerous challenges but CDAS is definitely looking forward to 2022 and what it brings. We're especially pleased to announce the call for papers for the CDAS Conference, where we are seeking papers that both reflect the theme of Institutions but also are creative in their delivery. After nearly two years of sitting behind computer screens we realise that an online conference needs to provide opportunity for what we lose by not meeting in person: discussion, chat, networking and ideas. We hope that the call that the Conference Organising Team have created reflects this and we welcome all ideas about how your work can be shared in a more discursive and creative way. Please see the call in this newsletter and ask us any questions about topic or delivery method via [cdas@bath.ac.uk](mailto:cdas@bath.ac.uk). The more creative, the better!



Everyone have a fantastic Holiday Season. Thanks as always for all your support for the centre throughout the last year. We look forward to bright times ahead.

### Recent Publications

- Fang, C., & Carr, S. (2021). *'They're Going to Die at Some Point, but We're all Going to Die' – A Qualitative Exploration of Bereavement in Later Life*. *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00302228211053058>

This article reports on a qualitative study to investigate what bereavement means to older people. Drawing upon 80 in-depth interviews collected from eight British and Australian retirement communities, this study revealed that facing bereavement while ageing includes experiences of losing both others and the wholeness of the self.

### Other News

#### *CDAS Conference*

The CDAS team is delighted to announce the CDAS Conference 2022: Institutions and Death.

Running over two days, the 9 & 10 June 2022, this will be an online conference exploring institutions and institutional responses to death. The ways in which institutions themselves shape and inform understandings of death, loss and grief and the inequalities and disenfranchisement that can arise as a result.

The call for contributions is now open – please find full details attached at the [end of the newsletter](#). We are hoping to deliver an interesting and varied programme and are very open to original and diverse ideas for activities. Please make all submissions via [this online form](#) by Monday 31st January 2022.

We look forward to hearing your ideas and sharing more plans with you soon.

Best wishes,

The CDAS Team

*Introducing Alastair Comery!*



Hello, my name is Alastair Comery and I am an ESRC funded PhD student at the University of Bath based in CDAS. My research aims to marry sociological and musicological paradigms to explore the embodied experience of music in people's experiences of loss outside of professionally mediated interventions. To capture the dynamic role of music in bereaved people's ongoing lives, I will focus on their interactions with music both during the dying process of their loved one and post loss. Drawing on the theory of 'Musicking', I will explore how individuals both actively and passively draw on music to (re)shape themselves in facing loss and how a 'music literacy' may help better support individual's experiences of loss.

Prior to starting my PhD I completed my undergraduate studies in classical music and found during this period that I was increasingly drawn to the topic of loss and its artistic representations. After suffering personal losses, I began to explore this literature more fervently but increasingly found my experiences little represented in the largely therapeutic and psychologised discourses regarding music and bereavement. As such, I undertook an MRes in Sociology at the University of Bath to begin to situate my study within its broader sociological contexts. Drawing upon that year of learning I have devised this project which I hope will be both insightful and rewarding casting light on music as a social accessible discourse deeply embedded into our everyday lives.

I would like to thank those of you whom I have already met for such a welcoming and invigorating start to my PhD life and I look forward to meeting many more of you in the coming years.

***Direct Cremation: the post-pandemic future of funerals? - recent study on cremation funeral choices***

**Date:** 9th February 2021

**Time:** 19:00 (GMT)

In this online research seminar Dr Kate Woodthorpe and Dr Hannah Rumble will discuss the qualitative findings from their recent study on cremation choices and grief, specifically focusing on the reasons why people choose direct cremation, before opening up the seminar for a wider discussion about the future of funerals post-pandemic.

The findings that will be considered are detailed in their recent publication: Woodthorpe et al (2021) ['My Memories of the Time We Had Together Are More Important': direct cremation and the privatisation of UK funerals](#), in the journal Sociology.

[Register here.](#)

***In Conversation: Professor Phil Olson with Sam Hooker***

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021

Time: 18:00 (GMT)

In this In Conversation Phil and Sam will talk about the home death and home funeral movements in the US and UK and their efficacy. Join us for what should be a fascinating chat about relationships between families, professionals and practitioners, social movements, and power.

### Phil Olson Biography

Professor Phil Olson is a technology ethicist and Associate Professor of STS at Virginia Tech, US. His work focuses on technologies of the body (especially the dead body), and on gender, labor, knowledge, and expertise. He has taught and published on a variety of topics, including funerary disposition technologies, US death care culture, civilian drones, philosophical ethics and epistemology, feminist pedagogy, and queer studies. Born into a four-generations-old funeral family, Phil has worked and lived with the dead and their caretakers all his life.

[Register here.](#)

### ***Death Studies Podcast***

The 3rd episode of the Death Studies Podcast created by CDAS alumni Renske Classje Visser and CDAS Visiting Research Fellow Bethan Michael-Fox is now available! This month they talked to [Deb Rawlings](#)- academic/researcher with an interest in the Death Doula role- and Emma Clare- Health Psychology PhD researcher, Director of [End of Life Doula UK](#), and activist- about their work as death doulas and much more!

Listen wherever you get your podcasts from and do let us know at the Death Studies podcast what you think!

<https://www.thedeathstudiespodcast.com/>

***International funding opportunity for Chairs:***



If you're a senior academic outside of the UK and you'd like to work with CDAS based at the University of Bath for a short or extended period of time, there are two calls currently open that would be great opportunities to become a Visiting Professor with us:

**University of Bath:** Global Chairs: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/call-for-bath-global-chair-nominations/>

**British Academy:** Global Professorships:  
<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/funding/global-professorships/>

There are different levels of commitment involved with the two schemes but both provide a chance for a change of scenery living in one of the cities to visit in the UK, the chance to talk with new audiences, and the time to work on your research and develop international collaboration. We're very open to conversations from prospective applicants, so please get in touch via the usual channels if of interest.

### ***Funding news: ESRC SWDTP Postdoctoral Fellowships***

For the attention of newly awarded PhD students in the UK, our local funding partnership the SWDTP has launched its funding competition for post docs. Come and work with CDAS for the next phase of your career! We're very open to conversations about your ideas and supporting proposals to work with us. Just send us an email to get the conversation started.

**Deadline for expressions of interest (EOI) to Bath | 1 February 2022 | 16:00hrs (UK)**

**Deadline for applications to SWDTP | 23 March 2022 | 16:00hrs (UK)**

The ESRC funded South West Doctoral Training Partnership (SWDTP) is advertising up to [seven postdoctoral fellowships](#) starting on 1 October 2022, based at either Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth or UWE Bristol.

The call is open to applicants who have completed their PhD or Professional Doctorate at a research organisation that is part of a Doctoral Training Partnership (not necessarily the SWDTP) and who are within 12 months of completing it. Applicants do not have to have been ESRC funded. Fellowships are aimed at providing a development opportunity for those in the immediate postdoctoral stage of their career, to consolidate their PhD through developing publications, their networks, and their research and professional skills.

Proposals are welcome from both single disciplines and combinations of disciplines, but the fellowship activities must be based at least 50% within the social sciences.

[Find out more information about eligibility and how to apply](#)

---

## CDAS COMMUNITY NEWS

### Recent Publications

#### *Cruse Bereavement Support*

Cruse Bereavement Support and The ExtraCare Charitable Trust have launched their joint report following a 5 year partnership on improving grief literacy with ExtraCare residents.

The project had a sole aim of improving bereavement support for ExtraCare residents, and has opened up conversations about bereavement, death and dying and how Bereavement Supporter volunteers have provided a vital source of peer support to residents during the Covid-19 pandemic. The project was funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

The report can be read in full, along with an executive summary, and is available to download on their website here:

- <https://www.cruse.org.uk/about/our-work/bereavement-supporter-project/>

### Other News

#### *Multiple PhD Opportunities- University of Hull*

#### *Living with Death – Learning from COVID*

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented waves of premature deaths. Dying has been taking place under circumstances far from 'normal'. Modes of remembrance associated with a 'good death' have been impeded by public health measures. Restrictions and limitations on funeral arrangements are associated with many emergent – but largely un-researched – socio-economic consequences including for mental health and well-being for health, social care and death professionals, bereaved relatives, friends and co-workers. The 'Living with Death – Learning from COVID' multi-disciplinary research cluster will investigate, identify, understand and suggest mitigations for the unintended medium-longer term consequences of socially distanced death to alleviate grief.



There are a range of PhD opportunities in this project, click [here](#) for more information.

On Monday December 13 there is an information session about these PhD opportunities for which you can register [here](#).

### ***CAPAS – the Center for Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Studies***

CAPAS at Heidelberg University is holding a public lecture series and live-streaming it on the Internet. Program and streaming links can be found here: [https://www.capas.uni-heidelberg.de/lecture\\_series\\_2021-22.html](https://www.capas.uni-heidelberg.de/lecture_series_2021-22.html)

### ***Before I Go Solutions® Certified and Licensed End of Life Plan Facilitators Programme***

Applications from every country are invited for the next intake of our reputed End of Life Plan Facilitators Programme, the only training in the UK that trains, equips and supports you to become a Facilitator, and help others to get their end of life plan done.

New research led by Cardiff University's Marie Curie Palliative Care Research Centre shows that 90% of people think end of life planning is essential, but only 14% actually had done anything formal about it. Hence the need for this very valuable service.

It will be primarily of interest to health professionals, counsellors, coaches, educators, celebrants or others interested in helping people to prepare well for a good end of life, no matter how it happens, and to take this planning beyond the conversation stage to getting decisions taken and written down.

Divided into 4 parts, you begin with creating your own end of life plan. Part 2 covers the practicals of doing death differently, part 3, the practicing of facilitating in this arena, both 1:1 and in groups, and offline and online. Part 4 is about the promoting of your service in a culture where the topic is still somewhat taboo.

By the end of the course, graduates will be able to successfully support others in creating their own plans. Ongoing mentoring and support resources are then available.

For more information, see <https://beforeigosolutions.com/end-of-life-facilitator-programme/>

### ***Living with Death – Learning from COVID***





The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented waves of premature deaths. Dying has been taking place under circumstances far from 'normal'. Modes of remembrance associated with a 'good death' have been impeded by public health measures. Restrictions and limitations on funeral arrangements are associated with many emergent – but largely un-researched – socio-economic consequences including for mental health and well-being for health, social care and death professionals, bereaved relatives, friends, and co-workers.

The 'Living with Death – Learning from COVID' multi-disciplinary research cluster will investigate, identify, understand, and suggest mitigations for the unintended medium-longer term consequences of socially distanced death to alleviate grief.

Below are the 5 fully funded PhD scholarships (COVID death related) currently available to apply to.

- <https://www.hull.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research/phd/funded/digital-dimensions-of-covid-19-death-across-communities>
- <https://www.hull.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research/phd/funded/dealing-with-socially-distanced-death-on-the-frontline>
- <https://www.hull.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research/phd/funded/place-death-and-inequalities>
- <https://www.hull.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research/phd/funded/language-in-corona-times>
- <https://www.hull.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research/phd/funded/memorialising-pandemics>

***Men, loss and bereavement- Call for chapters for an edited collection:***

**Working title:** Men and loss

**Editors:**

1. Kerry Jones, Lecturer in End-of-Life Care, The Open University
2. Martin Robb, Senior Lecturer in Health and Social Care, The Open University

**Deadline for abstracts:** 29th January 2022.

You are invited to submit a 300-word abstract for a chapter (5,000 words) in a forthcoming edited collection provisionally titled: 'Men and loss.' We welcome contributions from all disciplines within and beyond academia for example, in professional practice as well as men's personal experience of bereavement.

This interdisciplinary collection seeks to examine a range of men's experiences of loss as mediated by social and cultural representations and norms. With a focus on theoretical, empirical and practitioner perspectives, the collection will examine some of the difficulties

and challenges of representing men's bereavement and how men are challenged by societal and cultural expectations of expression of grief.

## **Context**

Death, dying and bereavement are unavoidable events in life and can be challenging experiences that prompt a whole range of social processes and practices. In contemporary western cultures, socially constructed masculine ideals continue to dictate that men must be stoic following a loss, with grief manifesting in anger or despair. (Martin & Doka, 2000). Since expression of grief is highly gendered, it is also profoundly 'policed' and men who do not grieve in ways that embody socially assigned masculine traits can feel judged, alienated and disenfranchised (Doka, 2000). It can be deemed especially detrimental especially if men have fewer support networks than women and an experience of loss can be especially challenging without such support. Formal support has tended to focus on attracting women in the form of support groups and therapeutically.

Due in part to the persistence of these gendered expectations, little research has been undertaken which explores men's grief or indeed, examines some of the ways men navigate through loss and grief and how they mediate their identities after a loss. It is hoped that this edited collection will contribute to improving understanding of men's experiences of loss, and to improving services and support for men following bereavement. While the locus of much writing about loss and bereavement has hitherto been within the field of Death Studies, we intend that this collection will be interdisciplinary and invited contributions from all relevant academic and professional backgrounds and perspectives.

## **Possible questions and topics may include but are not limited to:**

- A cultural and social understanding of men's experience of loss
- Models of grief and how they contribute/ don't contribute to understanding men's experiences of loss
- Disenfranchised grief and stigma
- Grief activism
- Grief in prison
- Young men and grief
- Grief in later life
- Men's experience of loss following
- Death of a spouse/ partner
- Suicide
- Death of a friend
- Death of a child
- Perinatal loss
- Supporting men

- Formal therapy
- Informal support
- Support through sport
- Online support

At this stage, we are exploring possibilities for publication of the book and have initial interest from a number of publishers. A full proposal will be submitted once chapter abstracts have been received and approved. Authors will be contacted by March 31st to confirm whether their chapter has been approved and will be kept and informed and updated throughout the process.

Please send any queries to [Kerry.jones@open.ac.uk](mailto:Kerry.jones@open.ac.uk)

***Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care: National Framework for Local Action': what has the impact been?***

**We welcome your feedback.**

We are writing to invite you to complete a survey about the impact of the 'Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care: National Framework for Local Action'. Death, dying, and bereavement are part of everyone's lives, be that personal or professional. It is extremely important that we learn how the Ambitions Framework has influenced palliative and end of life care for individuals, families, teams, organisations, and the wider system.

The Open University, led by Dr Erica Borgstrom, is exploring how the Ambitions Framework has been used since it was first published in 2015. The work is financially supported by NHS England and Improvement. The project will be used to inform future policy and practice initiatives to support continuous improvement in palliative and end of life care for years to come.

This survey is intended for those who have an interest in palliative and end of life care, be that commissioners, providers of care and support in the statutory or voluntary sector in England. The survey is designed so you can tell us how you have used the Ambitions Framework in your work.

We would be extremely grateful if you could take the time to complete the voluntary survey. It should take you approximately 15 minutes and you can enter your email address for a chance to win a £25 gift voucher. You are able to download and save a copy of your completed questionnaire for up to 15 minutes after completion using the 'Finish Survey' page.

The final day for responding to the survey is **7th January 2022**

**Link for survey:** <https://openuniversity.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/ambitions-framework-case-studies>

*This study has received a favourable opinion from the Open University HREC (HREC/4162/Borgstrom). If you have any questions or difficulties in completing the survey, please get in touch via email: [erica.borgstrom@open.ac.uk](mailto:erica.borgstrom@open.ac.uk). If you have any concerns about the conduct of the survey, please contact [Lesley.hoggart@open.ac.uk](mailto:Lesley.hoggart@open.ac.uk).*

*We look forward to receiving your responses and thank you in advance for taking the time to provide us with your feedback.*

### ***Suicide Bereavement UK (SBUK)***

#### **Did you know?**

- The largest suicide bereavement survey internationally, was conducted in the UK.
- 7,158 people completed 71 questions about their experiences and perceived needs after their loss.
- 33% of respondents had been bereaved by more than one suicide; 38% had considered taking their own life after their loss; and 8% had made a suicide attempt (McDonnell et al 2020).
- 65% wanted support in the first week (McDonnell et al 2020).

#### **The reality**

- The majority of people never receive any support!
- Evidence tells us that for every suicide 135 people are affected. With many significantly at risk of dying by suicide.
- Caring for those bereaved or affected by suicide is a government and NHS priority.
- However, professionals who come into contact with those bereaved by suicide are often anxious and uncertain how to respond and care for this vulnerable high-risk group, due to lack of training.
- This results in many of those bereaved by suicide, feeling helpless and hopeless, which we know are key risk factors for suicide.

Suicide Bereavement UK (SBUK) can help you address this national unmet need/



SBUK deliver PABBS evidence-based, evaluated, CPD accredited suicide bereavement training, which was informed by a 3 year study conducted at the University of Manchester which was funded by NIHR.

For the FIRST TIME SBUK are taking INDIVIDUAL BOOKINGS for PABBS face to face suicide bereavement training in the following regions:

- Cardiff
- Edinburgh
- Manchester
- Exeter
- London

For more information and to register: <https://suicidebereavementuk.com/pabbs-training/>

---

## **CALLS FOR PAPERS**


***Social Aspects of Death, Dying and Bereavement Study Group Virtual Symposium - Death and Sociology, Thu 2nd Dec 2021***

The academic study of death, dying and bereavement has become typically associated with disciplines beyond sociology, such as medicine, psychology and psychiatry. Consequently, knowledge about death, dying and bereavement has often focused more on individuals, symptoms or treatments, and less on a holistic lived experience, the social contexts in which life is lived, and the context(s) in which loss occurs. Yet there is much to be gained from developing a more contextual understanding of DDB. For example, the prevailing assumption that grief is a negative emotion to be addressed can overlook the potential value of this emotion and how death can also mean liberation, economic change and (possibly welcomed) relational shifts. What is more, over the past year with Covid-19 we have been reminded of the limitations of individualistic discourses on death and witnessed the value and meaning of shared experiences of funeral rites and bereavement.

In celebration of the study group entering its third decade, in this year's annual symposium we aim to revisit the group's origins with a focus on what sociology can uniquely offer the study of death, dying and bereavement.

Further details about the group and event can be found [here](#).

***Wissenskulturen des Todes – Knowledge Systems of Death***



There is a CfP out for a conference that is to be held in March next year at TU Berlin. The conference will be in German, if you are interested, please find the full CfP (written in German) at the [end of the newsletter](#).

## Contact Us

---

Visit the CDAS [website](#) for more information.

**Email:** [cdas@bath.ac.uk](mailto:cdas@bath.ac.uk)

**Web:** [www.bath.ac.uk/cdas](http://www.bath.ac.uk/cdas)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/centrefordeath](http://www.facebook.com/centrefordeath)

**Twitter:** [@cendeathsociety](https://twitter.com/cendeathsociety)

*To unsubscribe, please email [cdas@bath.ac.uk](mailto:cdas@bath.ac.uk)*

**Dates:** 9 and 10 June 2022

**Location:** University of Bath, UK ONLINE

Institutions and institutional responses to death vary radically and are quite often riddled with inequality and disenfranchisement. As a result, the end of life, dying and bereavement in institutional settings deserve further exploration and critique, along with the ways in which institutions themselves shape and inform understandings of the death, loss and grief.

But what exactly *are* institutions, institutional responses and institutional(ised) deaths? How are institutions and institutionalised deaths (re)presented? And how do institutional spaces come to form and define the experience of loss? The 2022 CDAS Conference seeks to address some of these questions and more, taking a broad outlook on what we mean by the term institution(s), both formal and informal, organised or anti-, structural or spatial. As an interdisciplinary conference we welcome presenters and participants from all academic backgrounds, and we particularly encourage students and early career researchers to share their work with our highly engaged audience.

The 2022 CDAS Conference will be online, and we are mindful that after spending much of the last two years in front of computer screens many of the CDAS community would value the opportunity to chat more freely with one another. While we cannot facilitate that in person this time round, we are instead actively seeking contributions that are empirical, theoretical, abstract, artistic or dialogic to create the most interactive and engaging online conference that we can. We want to organise a conference that encourages a plethora of opportunities to discuss, debate, imagine, innovate and learn.

To this end, along with a topic that fits the thematic call we are asking that you think creatively about the type of format in which you would like to present your research, and to select your chosen format when you submit your abstract. Please write your abstract with your chosen format in mind. You will be asked to select a format when you submit your abstract.

Formats include:

- Panels: A group of short presentations followed by a long(er) discussion. We suggest no more than four papers per panel with each paper a length of 5-10 minutes max with time for an extended discussion between panellists and attendees. For this, you could host a panel or be one of the presenters.
- Debates: Short presentations by debaters followed by a long(er) discussion between debaters and attendees. For this we suggest you identify two presenters and a facilitator to manage the debate and discussion.



- Reading group: Where you ask attendees to read a particular book, article or series of works in advance and come prepared to discuss, analyse and unpick. An opportunity to debate the works of your favourite death studies writer perhaps?
- Film group: As above, but with film.
- Workshops and masterclasses: A group of people working on a particular task. This could be an opportunity to learn about research in an interactive way where attendees participate; or it could be a creative workshop, for example poetry, storytelling and fictional writing, or photography; or it could be a masterclass where you discuss, share and learn about a particular skill, for example communicating your research to the media or volunteering within institutional settings such as hospitals or prisons. Please give some details of how the workshop or masterclass will be structured/what it will include in your abstract. Support will be available should you want assistance in designing your online workshop or masterclass.
- Talking Circles: Where you share research, experiences, ideas and perspectives in a respectful, ordered and facilitated way. You can learn more about talking circles [here](#). Focuses might include, for example, experiences of loss in the workplace or experiencing (sacred) deathscapes.
- Conference papers: A traditional presentation of research with opportunity for question and answers. Even though we are inviting alternative formats for this year, we're still open to this more conventional approach as an important opportunity for you to present your research to an interested audience and receive their feedback on your work.
- Sandpits: Brainstorming sessions focused on a particular research area with a view to producing an action plan and next steps. This is a great way to bring people together around a social problem or a research project.
- Other: surprise us!

We're open to other suggestions for formats and activities within the conference, so if you have an idea you'd like to discuss with us informally in advance of submitting an abstract then get in touch at [cdas@bath.ac.uk](mailto:cdas@bath.ac.uk).

Looking for inspiration? Possible topics could include:

- Health systems, health settings
- Migration, statelessness, globalisation and nationality
- Socio-legal processes of death investigation

- Assisted dying; debates about life, death and personhood
- Social movements and activism (eg. AIDS, ACT-UP, Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ)
- Institutional structures and systems (eg. patriarchy and structural racism)
- Criminal justice: prisons, the Carceral state at the end-of-life and when bereaved, state ordered executions and capital punishment
- Deathscapes, institutional(ised) spaces at the end of life and post-death
- Museums, heritage and dark tourism
- Processes and practices of institutionalisation
- Death technologies of control, discipline, and preservation
- Commemoration and memorialisation, the construction and institutionalisation of death narratives and scripts
- Institutional appropriation and commodification of death culture
- Human Rights Law and genocide
- Families as institutions, the conceptualisation of historical and contemporary death in family life
- Political protests and dead political leaders, acts of remembrance
- Institutional responses to COVID-19
- Feminist critiques of institutions and death
- The politics of post-mortem evidence in policy making and with policy makers
- Urban planning, urbanisation
- Media (re)presentations of death, dying and bereavement

Please submit applications via the [online form](#) by 31 January 2022.

## **WISSENSKULTUREN DES TODES**

Zur Aktualität der Thanatosoziologie

Tagung des Arbeitskreises »Thanatologie« der DGS-Sektion »Wissenssoziologie«

Die Thanatosoziologie widmet sich dem Verstehen und Erklären des gesellschaftlichen Umgangs mit dem Lebensende. Durch ihre Verortung an der Schnittstelle unterschiedlicher sozialwissenschaftlicher Subdisziplinen erfasst sie somit auch die übergeordneten Wissenskulturen des Todes. Im Zuge entsprechender Analysearbeit kristallisiert sich heraus, dass der Umgang mit Sterben, Tod und Trauer zu den elementaren Formen des gesellschaftlichen Lebens gehört – und dass dieser Umgang überwiegend aus sozial tradierten, sich permanent im Wandel befindlichen Wissensbeständen hervorgeht.

Die Tagung »Wissenskulturen des Todes. Zur Aktualität der Thanatosoziologie« soll Impulse zur (Neu-)Bewertung und (Neu-)Ausrichtung der deutschsprachigen Thanatosoziologie liefern. Sie wird organisiert vom 2020 institutionalisierten Arbeitskreis »Thanatologie«. Konkret werden drei wissenschaftliche Zielsetzungen verfolgt:

(1) Die Evaluation der diskursiven Dynamiken innerhalb der Thanatosoziologie. Dabei soll der Fokus auf die vergangenen Entwicklungen und den State of the Art gegenwärtiger (auch internationaler) sozialwissenschaftlicher Forschungen zum Lebensende gelegt werden. Welche Debatten wirken prägend? Inwiefern werden sie in Forschungspraxis übertragen? Welche neueren Erkenntnisse sind geeignet, Impulse zur Weiterentwicklung der Disziplin zu vermitteln?

(2) Die Offenlegung der Relevanzen und Herausforderungen der Thanatosoziologie. Für die vergangenen Jahre lassen sich Umbrüche und nähere Ausdifferenzierungen innerhalb der Thanatosoziologie verzeichnen. Noch vor weniger als einer Dekade wurden Krieg und Genozide, Sterbearmut, aktive Sterbehilfe und die Privatisierung und Professionalisierung der Sterbe- und Todesarbeit als gesellschaftsrelevante Arbeitsfelder benannt. Mittlerweile wird diese Reihe an Problemfeldern durch Studien zur Digitalisierung, zur Sepulkralkultur und zu institutionellen Herausforderungen fortgeführt. Welche gesellschaftsrelevanten Forschungsfelder tun sich hier auf? Welche methodischen Herausforderungen gehen damit einher?

(3) Die Frage nach der theoretischen Relevanz der thanatosoziologischen Forschung. Hier ist das produktive Verhältnis der Thanatosoziologie zur Allgemeinen Soziologie sowie zu anderen Sparten wie der Medizin-, Kultur-, Körper-, Religions- und der bereits erwähnten Wissenssoziologie auszuloten. Die Thanatosoziologie adaptiert nicht lediglich Konzepte aus vorhandenen Theorieangeboten und wendet diese auf ihre Untersuchungsgegenstände an. Vielmehr generiert sie einen Mehrwert sowohl für andere Subdisziplinen wie auch für die soziologische Theoriebildung. Welche konkreten Formen der Inspiration und wechselseitigen Vitalisierung lassen sich an dieser Schnittstelle abbilden?

Eingeladen sind Vortragsvorschläge, die in diesem Sinne thanatosozilogische Debatten und ihre Aktualität ausmessen, empirische Forschung(sfragen) thematisieren, sich neuen Feldern und methodischen Herausforderungen widmen und/oder die Brücke zu sozialwissenschaftlichen Theorieansätzen schlagen. Eine Veröffentlichung der Tagungsergebnisse ist geplant. Vorgesehen ist eine Präsenztagung an der Technischen Universität Berlin. Reise- und Unterbringungskosten können leider nicht getragen werden. Sollten die Umstände eine Änderung des Formats erzwingen, wird dies rechtzeitig bekannt geben.

Abstracts im Umfang von circa 2.500 Zeichen können bis zum 15. Januar 2022 an folgende Adresse gesendet werden: [tod-gesellschaft@uni-passau.de](mailto:tod-gesellschaft@uni-passau.de). Es wird eine zeitnahe Rückmeldung gegeben. Weitere Informationen zum Arbeitskreis Thanatologie finden sich unter: [www.thanatologie.eu](http://www.thanatologie.eu)

