

World. Knowledge. Design

42nd Congress of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde (dgv)*

Hamburg | October 7-10, 2019

Global dynamics and fundamental processes of transformation are changing European societies. There are diverse influencing forces at work which contribute to this process, partly following their own logic, partly in an interdependent and interwoven manner: migration, poverty and social inequality, the decline of the nation-state along with the rise of new nationalisms, technological development, the capitalist economy with its permanent pressure for innovation, climate change, declining biodiversity. European Ethnology / Empirical Cultural Studies / Cultural Anthropology / Folklore Studies, with their historical and contemporary approaches and specific research perspectives, can provide special expertise for studying these dynamics.

The term “world” makes different scales between the local and the global accessible and viable for research along the relations of “small life worlds” to larger entities, to Europe, to other continents and the entire world – as a globally interwoven habitat of humankind. The different manners in which a “world” is created in academic-disciplinary contexts as well as in media and popular culture, as a geographically and territorially differentiated unit, as a symbolically created world of meaning, and as an everyday lifeworld, and the manners in which it is modelled by simulation, creativity, and play, are important points of reference and reflection. Yet, the term world also comprises problematic dimensions in regard to the history of science and society in the construction of self and other, not least in the context of ethnological-ethnographic traditions of knowledge and collection.

In an interconnected world, different ways in which the world is known clash in these dynamics. Knowledge is not primarily understood in a cognitive mode but also explicitly includes affective, habitual, and aesthetic forms. The diversity of these forms contributes to the specific acquisition of knowledge about the world, which enables its perception and guides its design. World views condense into symbolic, material, and practical forms of knowledge which, in turn, can be mediated, appropriated, and further developed in manifold ways. Knowledge materializes into objects, discourses, practices, social orders, and ethical views as well as in institutions, conventions, norms, regulations, terms and conditions, and laws. These materializations always become particularly apparent and thus accessible for empirical research where they collide, either in a creative or in a

confrontational manner, where they are exchanged, modified, and further developed between generations and groups, or when kept in archives, museums, and libraries.

The design of the world based on knowledge and skill is a fundamental human ability to which the discipline refers to as an object of research – for instance in critical dealings with concepts of creativity – and also as a demand on one's own production of knowledge (for instance in an "anthropology of the near future"). Humankind's ability to conceptualize and design significantly depends on the systems of symbols and media which we have at our disposal. The scope of what can be thought has been set anew with each media technology and is currently being comprehensively reformed due to digitalization. Imaginations and imaginatives are significant drivers of innovation. In current capitalist economies, however, they are also systematic necessities, connected with (creative) destructions of the traditional and increasingly discussed under new paradigms such as sustainability and resilience.

The 42nd congress of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde (dgv), titled "World. Knowledge. Design", calls for contributions which add to a better understanding of the dynamics and problems of European societies in their global interconnections – also in historical perspectivals of the topic area. Furthermore, contributions may critically analyze the different disciplinary orders of knowledge – especially since in many cases, it is approaches from the natural and technical, legal or economic sciences which dominate these problem areas.

Knowing the world

How the world is known is embedded into social and cultural orders. The cultural can here itself be understood and analyzed as a specific, historically evolved form of knowledge, for instance in regard to which feelings are appropriate in which situations or what kind of interaction with nature is practiced. Significances, values, and hierarchies of bodies of knowledge come into conflict, are negotiated in discourse, and materialize as orders of knowledge. Different forms of knowledge – cognitive-theoretical, affective, or bodily-practical ones – are set in relation to each other in this process. Ethics and moral orders are significant guidelines along which world relationships are evaluated, negotiated, rearranged, or also justified. Furthermore, the perceptions of the world are significantly entangled with the knowledge about it. They are led in cognitive, sensitive, and affective manners and are complemented beyond the horizons of everyday experience by the imaginary and the imaginative.

Designing the world

Processes of and approaches to design are a further central perspective in the discipline which take center stage in the light of current discussions about the Anthropocene, that is, the age of a world significantly shaped by humankind (and increasingly regarded as endangered in terms of livelihoods). Aside from questions regarding the malleability of developments in science and technology, it is

particularly politics and the economy with their processes of planning and development, with their specific perspectives on creativity and design, which become relevant fields of research. In this, the discipline itself in its history has done research on fields of action of societal formation in manifold ways and has been collecting sound experience in regard to design oriented approaches; these, in turn, are today in part 're-thought' in design anthropology and design agencies on the collaborative generation of inter- and transdisciplinary research questions. The aestheticization of all areas of life is to be seen as a further tendency of contemporary societies in the sense of a formation of the senses.

Forms and formats

As has been the case in the past, the Hamburg congress is also to be held in the form of plenary and section presentations as well as panels. Plenary contributions are selected from the submitted abstracts respectively called for directly. Sections are compiled from the selected individual contributions based on consistency in topic. Panels are given the same two-hour scope as sections. The head of a panel conceptualizes the topic and suggests this to the dgv as an abstract; the contributors are nominated with a brief abstract of each contribution (maximum of four to five individual contributions). The responsibility for the specific design of the panel (structure, order, format of the contributions) rests with the individual organizers.

Panels and lectures may be suggested which can also be given as presentations in dialogue, for instance in the sense of *Ignite!* or *Pecha Kucha*. This should be outlined accordingly in the proposal. Furthermore, suggestions for visual and auditory formats such as films, soundscapes, etc., are desirable. These should, wherever possible, be included in a future documentation of the congress in the shape of written accompanying texts and corresponding links.

The student panel offers a forum for research training projects respectively research-based teaching as it is anchored in the curriculum of many higher education settings or in project seminars led by students. These may diverge from the topic of the congress. MA and BA theses respectively student research which take up the topic of the congress can be presented as poster presentations. In these, the presentation of one's own research results and empirical findings is particularly desirable. In consultation with the dgv's student representatives, students are also invited to develop their own formats for reporting on the congress, for instance via audiovisual or social media.

The dgv also wishes to explicitly invite both freelance cultural scientists and those who work in institutions outside of university contexts to respond to this call for papers.

We also invite suggestions for pre-conference workshops on topics connected with research practice, such as research data management, research ethics, or also working with software programs for qualitative data analysis.

Organizational matters

When submitting your abstract, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- In addition to a brief content summary, the abstracts must include details on the research question and the empirical basis respectively inform on the context from which the work originates, where applicable with details on already available publications, the state of one's own research respectively initial results.
- It goes without saying that research presented must be new and unpublished. Readiness to publish the contribution after the congress is implied.
- Contributions may be made and published in German or English.
- Please provide your current contact details; for panel suggestions both of the responsible organizers as well as of all contributors! Please notify us of any changes.
- The abstracts must not exceed 2,500 characters (including spaces) for individual presentations and 5,000 for panels.
- Submissions can only be made via the designated form on the dgv website:
http://www.d-g-v.org/sites/default/files/bewerbungsformular_dgv-kongress_2019_1.pdf
(Should this form not download automatically, please save and then reopen it!)
- Please send the completed form as an e-mail attachment to: **geschaeftsstelle@d-g-v.de**
- Deadline for submissions is **August 15, 2018**.

In order to facilitate the selection process and make it more transparent, all submitters are asked to adhere to these guidelines. The board and the main committee will select contributions at their joint session with representatives of the local host in the fall of 2018 and decide on the program.