Main Research

Interpretative social research, focussed on:  Methodology and methods of qualitative research, contextual children research, reconstructive counseling research, psychosocial health research, psychosocial traumatology, professional acting, narrative counseling and therapy

Research methods: Biography research, ethnographic conversation analysis, expert interviews, ethnography

Current Projects

Participation in Child Protection. Capacity building, education and awareness raising for stakeholders

Project Modality: EU Research project

Projektleitung: Heidrun Schulze, mit: Davina Höblich, Tanja Grendel, Rita Isabel Ribeiro Richter Nunes

Run Time: 2018-2020

Brief Description: The ultimate aim of this project is to foreground the views, experiences and voices of children in child protection training for those working with children. This is with a view to enhancing and supporting integrated and multi-disciplinary child-centred approaches to child victims of violence, raising children's understanding of reporting mechanisms and support structures, and enhancing children's treatment in, and involvement with, services and systems. This will be achieved through designing child-informed training to enhance understanding and application of child rights based responses to child victims, from the perspective of children themselves. The project aims are three-fold: (1) To increase understanding among children of local reporting mechanisms, supports structures and ways of engaging in these to their benefit. (2) To enhance capacity among those who come into contact with children about safeguarding and reporting procedures; needs of particular groups; signposting. (3) To enhance rights-based supports, services and treatment for child victims as a consequence of better understanding of their needs and views through awareness raising and training. The following topics are reflected in Europe: children and young people who experience political violence (UK); children with experience of the juvenile justice system/detention (BEL, UK, IR); children who have spent time in care (IR, ROM); child migrants/refugees (GER, AUS, BEL); Travellers, Roma (UK, ROM); children who have experienced domestic violence (GER); children who have experienced domestic violence, child migrants/refugees, LGBT children (GER).

Movie theaters as learning venues – education through film with adolescent refugees [Lernort Kino – Filmbildung mit geflüchteten Jugendlichen]

Project Modality: Research project

Project Management: Tanja Grendel, Heidrun Schulze

Run Time: 2016-2017

Cooperations Partners: Kulturamt der Stadt Wiesbaden, FSK/Murnau Filmtheater (Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung), MIK Netzwerkarbeit im Berufsschulzentrum Wiesbaden e.V., Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft
Brief Description: As part of the project, group discussions were held with adolescent refugees following film screenings organized by the "Lernort Kino" initiative (conducted by the MIK Netzwerkarbeit at the Berufsschulzentrum Wiesbaden e.V. in collaboration with the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation and the Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft (Voluntary Self-Regulation of the Movie Industry organization). The goal was to talk to the young people about the films shown, allowing the young people themselves to determine the topics of discussion. Transcripts of the group discussions were then scientifically analyzed by students of the Department of Social Work at RhineMain University of Applied Sciences. This allowed a number of life-world issues affecting the adolescents to be identified, among them experiences of everyday racism as well as academic aspirations and subjectively perceived educational opportunities in Germany. The aim of the project was to gain an insight into films as gateways and cinematic forms of processing information as well as topics relevant to the life-world of adolescent refugees. Overall, it became clear that films offer successful, low-threshold access to adolescent refugees. When asked, the adolescents stated that they found the discussions following the film screenings enriching with regard to the content of the discussion and as a language acquisition resource. From a scientific point of view as well, the medium of film has proven to be a useful means of accessing issues affecting adolescents. The focal points of the film-related discussion chosen by the adolescents themselves reveal issues that are relevant to their life-world. In addition, the film offers the adolescents the opportunity either to talk abstractly about certain topics or to independently establish a connection between the film and their own experiences. At the beginning of the project, films were selected intentionally to encourage the adolescents to talk about certain topics, such as gender roles. As it turned out, the adolescents had other priorities. This development helped confirm the advantage of the medium of film as a conversational stimulus. Thanks to an open attitude and interview format, it was possible to incorporate those topics the adolescents felt were relevant.

For more details see http://heidrun-schulze.de/lernort-kino_e.html

MamMut – participation builds courage. Together against violence
[MamMut – Mitmachen macht Mut. Gemeinsam gegen Gewalt]

Project Modality: Practice-research project
Run Time: 2015-2017
Cooperation Partner: GIZ Peru/Ecuador/Deutschland

Brief Description: »Mammut – participation builds courage. Together against violence« [»MamMut – Mitmachen macht Mut. Gemeinsam gegen Gewalt«] is an interactive educational program for six- to twelve-year-olds with the goal of preventing violence against women, girls, and boys. It has its roots in Latin America, where it was first implemented in Ecuador in 2012 under the Spanish title »Ruta Participativa«. On a children's rights-oriented and thus acceptance-borne and dialog-oriented basis, the university-trained, qualified learning guides supported the boys and girls in questioning their own gender-specific roles and talking about various forms of violence and its consequences. Due to the prevailing inequalities between adults and children in terms of power structures, girls and boys are often not perceived as self-sufficient actors. Only those who perceive themselves as accepted can accept others as equals. Therefore, the educational program focuses on promoting respectful and appreciative dealings with others. A total of 8,200 children in Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru have participated in MamMut to date and learned to say »No!« to violence. Now girls and boys in Germany will also be given the chance to learn more about (gender- and generation-specific) violence and to process their previous experiences in this regard. Based on the collaboration between the GIZ and the RheinMain University of Applied Sciences, MamMut was first successfully implemented at elementary schools in the Wiesbaden/Mainz area in 2015 by a group of university students. Now the project is going national in order to reach as many boys and girls as possible.

Publications

Downloads & Links (available online)
Project flyer (2015)
YouTube video about the project (2015)

Project brochure (2015)

Handout: MamMut Project Germany (2015)

Children's comments about the day's experiences as part of the project (2015)

Brief report on the implementation of the project in Germany (2016)

Brief report by the RheinMain University of Applied Sciences on the project (2016)

Brief report by Hessen schafft Wissen on the project (2017)

Journal article about the project (2016)

Partnership meeting (2016)

Project weekend (2016)

Expert meeting (2016)

Workshop (2015)

Presentation of experiences with the project in Latin America (2015)

Presentation on gender-based violence against women (2016)

Fact sheet on violence against women in Germany vs. Andean countries (2016)

Info sheet on the project (2012)


Handout: Violence against women in Latin America (2013)

Teaching-research projects & presentations


19.07.2016: Discrimination in Children's everyday life: Reconstructing narrative accounts of children's experiences. Presentation of a qualitative research project and research results to the issues: Discrimination because of age, being a girl or a boy. Presentation at the Summer School 2016 RheinMain University & New York University at RheinMain University in Wiesbaden (Prof. Dr. Heidrun Schulze)

2016: Formen von Gewalterfahrungen von Kindern/Jugendlichen an den Orten ihrer Lebenswelt. Narrativ-episodische Interviews mit Kinder und Jugendlichen in institutionellen Kontexten des Kinder- und Jugendbereiches [Forms of experienced violence by children/adolescents in places of their lifeworld. Narrative-episodic interviews with children and adolescents in institutional contexts of child and youth welfare]. Teaching-research project at RheinMain University, Department of Social Work (Management: Prof. Dr. Heidrun Schulze)

2015-2016: Diskriminierungserfahrungen von Kindern und Jugendlichen in ihrer Lebenswelt im Bereich Gender und Adultismus. Narrativ-episodische Interviews mit Kindern und Jugendlichen (6-17 Jahre) zu den Themen »Weil ich ein Mädchen/ein Junge bin«, »Weil ich ein Kind (ein/e Jugendliche/r) bin« [Children's and adolescents' experiences of discrimination in their environments in the areas of gender and adultism. Narrative-episodic interviews with children and adolescents (6-17 years) on the topics »Because I am a girl/boy«, »Because I am a child (an adolescent)«]. Teaching-research project at RheinMain University (Management: Prof. Dr. Heidrun Schulze)

2015-2016: Quantitative evaluation of the prevention project MamMut – Gemeinsam gegen Gewalt. Ein Projekt gegen Gewalt gegen Frauen, Mädchen und Jungen im Kontext Häuslicher Gewalt [Quantitative evaluation of the MamMut – Together Against Violence prevention project. A project against violence against women, girls, and boys in the context of domestic violence]. Teaching-research project in the context of surveys for participating children at RheinMain University (Management: Prof. Dr. Tanja Grendel, tanja.grendel@hs-rm.de)

For more details see http://heidrun-schulze.de/mammut_e.html
Trauma integrating intervention types for children in women’s shelters

**Project Modality:** Practice-research project  
**Run Time:** Since 2013  
**Cooperation Partner:** Frauenhaus AWO, Wiesbaden  
**Brief Description:** Development and implementation of trauma integrating intervention types addressed to children in women’s shelters

Children and juveniles in the counseling process: An approach on participation, involvement and qualification (BeKinBera)

**Project Modality:** Research project of the support program »Forschung für die Praxis« [»Research for practice«]  
**Project Website:** www.bekinbera.de  
**Run Time:** 2013-2014  
**Brief Description:** A microanalysis of counseling processes conducted between adults and children/juveniles to improve psychosocial work with children who have become victims of violence. The approach of this research project primarily focuses on action, i.e. how professionals take into consideration children’s knowledge and abilities (agency) in their daily conversation. How do they deal with expressions, terms, words, language, perspectives and constructions children/juveniles have made about their own lives. Another focus of the project is on communicative strategies employed by actors within their dialogue. Moreover, we aim at deconstructing the construction of »childhood« and the »we-know-all-attitude« of adults/professionals, revealing how children/juveniles are constructed as pedagogical »objects«, and disclosing how children/juveniles are acting, re-acting and talking in these situations.

**Innovative Method combination:** (1) Methods focusing on conversational and interactional analysis as traditionally used in reconstructive, socio-scientific counseling research. The methods are aiming at reconstructing context-specific requirements associated with particular actions and disclosing interactional structures and preconditions that increase children's chances to take part in communicative processes. (2) The North-American/Canadian counseling approach (established by Michael White and David Epston – theory known as Narrative Therapy) focusing on the development of Personal Agency and the formation of knowledge about the self, which is gained in the form of dialogs. In particular, we employ the Narrative Counseling Approach that, based on White and Epston’s theory, is aiming at revealing the hidden potentials of agency – in particular with traumatic experiences.

**Publications (alphabetical order)**


**Violence and prevention: Perspectives of children and how they perceive the assistance and help offered in pedagogic arrangements**

**Project Modality:** Teaching-research project

**Run Time:** 2013-2014

**Brief Description:** The Perspectives of Children concept tries to define the relationships between a child as the acting subject (including infantile activities and processes used by children to create meanings) and its surrounding and underlying societal conditions. Here, subjectivity is seen as a process of concrete acts, as a way to cope with and manage the social environment. In general, this approach assumes that subjectivity is created whenever individuals are participating in societal processes. Consequently, we have to analyze how children, traumatized by and/or burdened with violent experiences, are trying to manage their everyday life using individual actions within collective situations. Also, it is important to analyze how the views and interpretations of children are incorporated by and within responsible organizations. This teaching-research project views the child as an active individual, as a subject that experiences the world and acts within it – thus co-creating it. By analyzing relevant situations and circumstances the project aims at finding and evaluating children’s and juveniles’ personal ambitions/intentions by use of which they attempt to overcome their traumatizing experiences.
Developing new types of intervention for practitioners in contexts of domestic violence and affected children

**Project Modality:** Teaching-research project  
**Run Time:** 2012-2013  
**Brief Description:** This teaching-research project aims at identifying how and by use of which strategies children (that are grown up in violent milieus) are trying to overcome or deal with their experiences. Once we have identified the things children and juveniles regard as useful or rather problematic (always with regard to gender-specific perspectives), we can develop helpful approaches and processes children can then use to reflect and re-create their past. First and foremost, this teaching-research project is to identify and find suitable ways children and juveniles can employ to express themselves properly. Here, we proceed in close collaboration with these children and juveniles and incorporate professional know-how. On the one hand, the focus of this project is to develop life competencies which, in the end, form valuable academic results which can then be used with children/juveniles who experience violence within their immediate social milieu. On the other hand, this teaching-research project is to create fundamental theoretical groundwork to be used in social work and thus to improve professionalism of practitioners dealing with domestic violence and child protection. Central aspects of this project are the paradigm of new childhood research, the methodologies of context-based research of children and – in view of socio-politic children policies – a subject-oriented approach. In particular, children are seen here as individuals who act in specific societal situations/circumstances thereby taking possession of and giving meaning to these situations, i.e. their world.

**Publications**


Interactive exhibition for children and juveniles on violence prevention »ECHT FAIR!«

**Project Modality:** Teaching-research project  
**Run Time:** 2012-2013  
**Brief Description:** Accompanying research on the »ECHT FAIR!« exhibition held from 25.02.-01.03.2013 in the Rheingau-Taunus area. In cooperation with the Rheingau-Taunus Working Group on Domestic Violence, the Westhessen police presidency, the Network against Violence, and the Intervention Centre BIG.

**Research approach:** Participatory evaluation, group discussions with pupils and students at two assorted schools in the Rheingau-Taunus area

**Earlier Projects**

Advancing the difference-sensitive narrative counseling approach in the field of social work by combining German concepts of narrative reflexive counseling with Anglo-Saxon »narrative therapy« and »narrative counseling« concepts

**Project Modality:** Research projects (in USA and Canada)  
**Run Time:** February – August 2011  
**Brief Description:** Research in the field of counseling concepts, research in the field of counseling practice regarding the aspects trauma, social inequality, interculturality and intersectionality. Development of an advanced training for »New Counseling Concepts in Social Work« for psycho-social fields of action. The research aims at entering into and revealing a discourse which, in the
German-speaking world, has largely been neglected so far (this also includes relevant counseling approaches). The objective is to critically assess »Narrative Approaches«, which evolved from Social Constructionism – and which find their concrete implementation in »Narrative Counseling« concepts -- and relevant intersections with narrative interview techniques which, in Germany, evolved from reconstructive hermeneutic biographical research. It is focusing on adapting biographic narrative interviewing techniques to psychosocial counseling practices. These different approaches are, simultaneously, based on both different and similar theoretical traditions (Interpretative Paradigm, Linguistics, Discourse Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, Narrative Psychology). Here, the research is primarily aimed at elaborating specific attitudes and/or characteristics which are typical for counseling processes (interaction), and which deal with diversity (gender, race, class, sexual orientation).

Violence in the relations of gender and generations in close social relationships – reconstruction of the concerned persons' experience and reconstruction of professional partakers' logic of action

**Project Modality:** Teaching-research project

**Run Time:** Winter term 2010 – summer term 2011

**Brief Description:** The following central questions have been examined: (1) How do the persons affected by violence experience the cooperation praxis established by institution appointments, professional interpretations and actions, offers made and boundaries drawn? (2) How do subjective perception and world of experience that have been coined by experiences of difference (gender, life story, milieu, structural framing) relate to each other? (3) Which logics of action on the part of professionals involved in the cooperation affect the cooperation process in which way?

**Research-methodological design and research process:** The reconstruction of different perspectives is accomplished within the intersubjective and interactive paradigm of qualitative research. The »expert interview«, the »biographical-narrative interview« as well as the »episodic interview« have been applied as methodological approaches. Particularly in interviews with children and adolescents, additional pictorial-symbolical methods from children's and adolescents' therapy as well as family therapy have sensitively been used. Interviewees were qualified employees in the working field of domestic violence and family violence against children, young women in shelters, children and adolescents in women's refuges.

Development of concepts for the protection of children in violent family milieus

**Project Modality.** Teaching-research project

**Run Time:** Winter term 2010 – summer term 2011

**Brief Description:** This teaching/research project is based on the question how boys and girls that grow up in a family milieu with different forms of violence may be supported and strengthened by professional authorities and successful encounters. The research aim is to gain access to the respective subjective perspectives of the boys and girls opposed to theoretical statements (by professionals) or to the product of a question-answer-situation (children and adolescents) that did not center on the relevance and subjective experiences of children and adolescents in interviews or personal encounters. With the help of an adequately and sensitively shaped interview situation a comprehending access to the current needs of the boys and girls shall be established and reconstructed by means of methods of qualitative social research such as microscopic speech analysis. The evaluation of interviews is shaped by the question: How does counseling and prevention work that is focused on children and adolescents need to be constituted? A second aim of the project is to develop a »cooperative supportive model for children and adolescents in violent milieus« as »final product« that is based on the knowledge gained by the interviews and international research. This model will then allow for children and adolescents to be regarded as individual subjects who are involved in participation.

**Research methodological design:** (1) Qualitative open and guided expert interviews with professionals; evaluation: content analysis, hermeneutic speech analysis (Deppermann, Oevermann, Rosenthal, Schütze). (2) Episodic interviews with children by means of pictorial-symbolic forms of access. (3) Interviews centered on certain topics with adolescents.
Research/Sabbatical semester in the summer term of 2011: Research in the field of counseling concepts, research in the field of counseling praxis regarding the aspects trauma, social inequality, interculturality and intersectionality in cooperation with representatives from the praxis. Development of an advanced training for »New Counseling Concepts in Social Work« for psycho-social fields of action.

Trauma and professionalism in social work

Project Modality: Teaching-research project

Run Time: 2007-2009

Brief Description: The aim is the reconstruction of patterns of professional acting in Social Work with traumatized persons in regard to a further development of current trauma theories by systematically incorporating social, cultural and political contexts. These serious deficiencies in education and research that have existed until now shall be addressed with this project in order to promote an increase of professionalism of Social Work in this field. The dedicated aim of this project is to further promote the clinical competence in Social Work in order to establish a disciplinary and professional status in health care.

Research-methodological design and research process: Conduction of narrative-oriented expert interviews (social workers who work with traumatized adults and children), complete transcription of interviews, comparison and hermeneutic-reconstructive analysis of interviews. This is a research project to improve professional knowledge and skills.

Publications (alphabetical order)


Schulze, Heidrun, Loch, Ulrike & Gahleitner, Silke Birgitta (Eds.) (2012). Soziale Arbeit mit traumatisierten Menschen – Plädoyer für eine Psychosoziale Traumatologie [Social work with