



Call for Papers: “Political Narratives / Narratives of the Political”

Special Issue of *Narrative Culture*, Guest Editor: Stefan Groth

The notion of political narrative has, over the last couple of decades, gained increased attention both in public debates and academia (cf. Shenhav 2005). Political pundits draw from the concepts of “homo narrans” (Lehmann 2009; Niles 2010) and of narrative structure as universal (Gottschall 2013) to point to the centrality of “stories” in politics. Narratives, it is argued, are both crucial and effective in mediating political stance, in selling policy programs or in positioning forceful “metanarratives” (Lyotard 1984) of liberalism, conservatism or socialism. Less the content or logics of political arguments, but catching stories and being “on message” (Silverstein 2011) are understood to enable political success. While studies have analyzed the use of political narratives in politics as well as their conceptualization in theory, only little has been done on them in everyday contexts: how are political narratives, produced in policy processes, taken up, interpreted, modified and reproduced in everyday stories and as part of popular narratives? And how are political processes and structures framed in everyday narratives in the public sphere? The proposed special issue seeks to contribute to these questions by asking for submissions on (a) the reception of political narratives in everyday contexts and (b) conceptualizations of political spheres in everyday narratives of the political.

So far, in scholarly debates political narratives are used as an analytic category (Gadinger, Jarzebski, and Yildiz 2014), discussed with regard to their relevance to political theory (Hofmann, Renner, and Teich 2014) or proposed as normative recommendations to construct, e. g., a “European narrative” to foster a European identity (Beck and Grande 2007). More recently, studies have looked at how narratives are used by political actors (Bacon 2012; Shenhav 2006), in relation to linguistic-anthropological aspects (Lempert and Silverstein 2012; Silverstein 2011) or how narrations in media – movies, TV series, books – take politics as their theme (Gadinger et al. 2016). In folklore studies, the political entanglements of folklore (and with it, of narratives) have been highlighted vis-à-vis their role in nation building processes (Dundes 1985; Wilson 1973; Wilson 1976; Oinas 1978), their legitimizing function for political processes (Wilson 1975) or their meaning for the formation of the discipline (Ó Giolláin 2014). Specifically, the role of jokes and tales (Laineste 2008; Shehata 1992; Oring 2004) and the relations between folklore and political representation (e. g. Moody-Turner 2013) have been highlighted.

While the relations between narratives and political processes have thus been scrutinized regarding the use of narrative both in contemporary politics and from a historic perspective, only little has been contributed to the study of the role of politics in everyday narratives (recent exceptions being Bernal 2017; Hercbergs 2016; Noy 2015), and especially in relation to the concept of political narrative. Against the backdrop of such questions and considerations, the special issue of “Narrative Culture” asks for contributions considering any of the following topics:



- Reception, interpretation, modification and reproduction of political narratives not by professional political actors and in policy arenas, but in everyday contexts
- References to and making sense of politics, including the production and circulation of political narratives, in popular narratives
- Conceptualizations of the political sphere in narratives
- Relations between traditional narratives and contemporary political narratives in everyday contexts

Schedule

Authors are invited to submit an abstract of no more than 500 words to stefan.groth@uzh.ch before **June 11th, 2017**. The deadline for authors of accepted abstracts to submit their full paper (5,000–7,500 words) for consideration is **November 30th, 2017**. Publication after peer-review is scheduled for 2018. Only original articles that are not simultaneously under consideration by another journal will be considered. Submissions should not have been previously published in any language.

About *Narrative Culture*

Narrative Culture is a journal that conceptualizes narration as a broad and pervasive human practice, warranting a holistic perspective that grasps the place of narrative comparatively across time and space. The journal invites contributions that document, discuss and theorize narrative culture, and offers a platform that integrates approaches spread across various disciplines. The field of narrative culture thus outlined is defined by a large variety of forms of popular narratives, including not only oral and written texts, but also narratives in images, three-dimensional art, customs, rituals, drama, dance, music, and so forth. *Narrative Culture* is peer-reviewed and international as well as interdisciplinary in orientation.

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