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# Life-political reflection on liberation, alienation and governance

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**Abstract**

The article reviewed life-politics as an arena of the entwinement of individual liberation and 'soft' social governance. The basic argument was that biographical studies, often positively seen as a tool of empowerment, can also serve alienating social forces. In the article this aspect was discussed in relation to the transformation of the social space in the current society, in which cultural liberation of individuals from all social restraints has been celebrated as an ideal of neoliberalism. In the interpretation of the transformed social situation in cultural terms, its positive side has often been emphasised. But it was taken into consideration here that critical observers have noted how soft means of civil governance are increasingly used for 'liquid' control of everyday activities of self-responsible and more and more self-conscious people. The contemporary society's

double-sidedness was made understandable through the Foucaultian term governmentality.

It was argued further in the article that handling of life-political issues requires the development of activation strategies for the needs of the civil governance of the society. The problem taken into consideration was in how these strategies work. It was focused on how individuals learn to be self-reflective and competitive among their peers in their creative efforts. A statement, related to this aspect, was that through creative interpretation of one's own life, it is possible to find out new ways to improve one's subjective self-consciousness. It was then debated that this strategy is double-sided in the sense that it may either contribute to the common good or give new tools for the servants of alienating governance which leads to an unequal share of welfare. This problematic was analysed here by exemplifying how it is connected to liberation and alienation through life-political strategies of civil governance in the post-cultural society.

Cultural citizenship was introduced in terms of culturalism, through containment of individualism, through active participation in creative work and through continuous learning capacities included in the life-narration. It was discussed in the article how these 'positive' and inclusive terms can produce alienation in the service of liberation. It was considered that competitiveness and egocentric heroism are strategies for liberating creatively productive individuals from their 'old' social bonds but also for binding them softly to the transformed social space by means of governmentality. The conclusion was that inclusion of the members of self-reflexive societies and discrimination of those who are included in our social space as 'others' can now happen through more cultural ways than earlier – unless the transformation of sociality includes noting the political consequences and possibilities opened up by this new situation.

## 1. Introduction: The liberated and governed self in the age of individualism

The current social space changes continuously to allow the activities of people to be more and more flexible. Fluidity of the social structure is a precondition for virtual interactions in a global context. This situation makes cosmopolitan interdependencies of individuals possible, but it also demands a new transformation of sociality. When local face-to-face meetings are replaced with actual online contacts, the relationship between privacy and publicity of human affairs also changes. Intimate life-sphere issues are increasingly being discussed publicly and informal social strategies are utilised in the public discourses. The new social space, or 'the new volcanic landscape of societies' (Beck 2011: 20), is thick and thin in the same time, and therefore social relations within it are risky and vulnerable. The concept of culture must face renewal because the global order of cosmopolitan citizens demands cultures to be individualised instead of fitting the earlier definitions of fixed cultural structures. Contents of social citizenship must be realised differently than in the age of methodological nationalism with its fixed borders.

According to Ulrich Beck (2011: 19-20), global interconnectedness is the keyword in understanding how the 'new social landscape' influences the inclusion of the 'global other'. The stranger among us cannot be excluded any more. This also means that questions concerning who 'we' are, and even who I am, are actually situated in a different context than was the case earlier on. Openness and flexibility of the social structure means that everyday actions of liberated individuals, who are 'governed by freedom' (Rose 2006), have to be remapped both at micro- and macro- levels to understand the deep influences of this social transformation.

Social change described in preceding paragraph is discussed in this article by exemplifying this change through a life-political research perspective. The basic aspect is the increased need to bring intimate life spheres of individuals to publicity and handle them through soft expert strategies. The role of autobiographies and biographical studies is taken in focus as a part of the qualitative, discoursive and cultural turn of social sciences. Subjectivity, activity and creativity of people have been key terms of liberal empowerment. The usefulness of these 'innocent' terms is analysed here as they relate to the alienating power of soft social governance.

Creativity, innovation and productivity – liberal society favours all of these cultural properties in its active citizenry. Liberalism is a multi-sided concept and means different things to different people. Generally, however, it is associated with the freedom of individuals to follow their own religious, political and economic preferences in their daily affairs (Held 2006: 59). Thus, liberals aim to liberate individuals from fixed, compulsory social bonds and given constraints. Free people can choose the best arrangements for practicing entrepreneurial strategies for their self-realisation (Rose 2006: 142). Active citizens show their profitable capacities through their participation and contributions to the increasing social capital. Earlier excluded groups become active by opposing the prevailing system of governance. Initially, they endeavour to occupy a place in the margins of society. They do this by making new initiatives to change the power structure. Accepting these initiatives opens up new ways of becoming a part of the general society. This improves the condition of democracy. Inclusive strategies aim to make the civil society richer and extend the domain of civil rights, but they also include socially 'taming' elements. Included members tend to adopt affirmative attitudes towards using their inclusion

to reform the society.

Individual freedom is mixed with social power in voluntary actions at the arena of society. Nikolas Rose's (2006: 95) remark about power being someone's subjective capacity to act freely refers to Michel Foucault's (1980) concept of productive power. In the Weberian approach, however, it is seen that this capacity serves in increasing instrumental rationality, as expert knowledge is often used as a tool of social domination. According to Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello (2009), freedom is a characteristic part of capitalism. Now the innovative spirit of capitalism demands more autonomy of the intellectual workers who develop their skills higher in the positive involvement into productive affairs. N. Rose (2006) points out that social power acts through practices that constitute the subjects as free and flexible agents. Thus, the society needs the free will of the individuals as a positive resource to make social power productive. Everybody, then, is asked to work actively to contribute to the common good with his or her own skills. An ideal citizen in a contemporary democracy is active, able to learn and work creatively, and willing to increase competencies to utilise the richness of the society.

It is argued that neoliberalism demands a new model of governance and management. This means the civic order and cultivated regulations through which the activated individuals learn the rules of soft, deliberative governmental practices. People fill their everyday lives with learning expert-designed activation strategies to become upstanding citizens. Liquid modernity, in terms of Zygmunt Bauman (2000: 34) means individualisation as a prescribed fate of the 'free' individuals. This is in accordance with the liberal interpretation on individualism as a personal choice for society's active members with an aim towards self-fulfilment. The crucial question, however, is what this self-fulfilment means and how it is realised. Z. Bauman (2003) argues that when sociality becomes subordinated to the aims of individualisation in the frames of liquid society, all personal relations, intimate issues, and love affairs also become liquid. Continuously changing interaction strategies are blurred if not purified by mutual guarantees of soft control. Pure relations, as analysed by Anthony Giddens (1992: 138), are based on mutual intimacy without any external supports. These transactions are, ideally, guarantees of reciprocal trust. The continuation of the relationship must be constantly tested in the affairs of pure love. Power is linked

with mutual dependency; the less powerful partner is more depended and needs more guarantees of the relationship's continuation.

Remarkably, according to Z. Bauman (2006) and those who subscribe to his interpretation (see Přibáň 2007), the uncertainties and suspicions of the conditions of this liquid life lead to liquid fear. Individual freedom leads to social uncertainty, and uncertainty about common bonds leads to a fear of wasted human relationships. In these situations, the continuation of the partnership is seen as unprofitable. The validity of interactivity is shown in various tests, which guarantee that power and dependency are balanced in daily life. When this calculated balance becomes the most important element of a free partnership, its meaningful substance tends to fly away and liberated partners become alienated by their egocentric individualisation.

An individualised society needs continuous examples of further development of creativity. These serve as a proof of continuous progress. The society supports its members in learning new things and adopting new skills. Specific experiences are seen worth of innovative interpretations which make people's productive capacities useful. The positive idea of empowerment is the ability to support anybody to act creatively in everyday life. People are helped to become capable of creating a meaningful culture. Cultural properties, in turn, enable voluntary meaningful actions of free subjects in processes which make social life better.

Biographical data is a good tool for purposes of progressing individualization. Through it, life-political and bio-political issues are brought into publicity, which in turn may support practices of soft or liquid social governance. Active citizenship is a key concept in the construction of reflexive roles of life political agents. Individuals are everyday heroes of their own biographies. They are creators of meanings through which their social existence is made sensible. (Roberts 2002: 6; Ahponen 2005: 22-24).

## 2. Social order, personal life expression and competition on competencies

The conventional social order views the liberation of the self as a progressive challenge. Social welfare, when seen as a personal achievement, results from success in the competition of productive efforts. In this case, egoist interests are worth of consolidating, and common bonds become means for successful individuals to be best among their group. Z. Bauman (2007: 35) posits a question worth asking: What

will happen to solidarity if/when solid bonds between individuals and society melt away? This means that social connections change so much that they become liquid, social ties so much that they weaken or become thinner, and sociality becomes merely a thing of occasional utility. Personal autonomy, individual creativity, self-creation and active self-fulfilment then become only means to succeed in the conditions of competitive capitalism.

Success of the individuals is the positive side of individualization. Its demand, however, is collectively shared in the competitive conditions of liquid and reflexive modernity. To participate in this competition, people have to continuously express and perform their individual capacities and social skills, and then reorder, measure and calculate them again through liquid means in the exchange arenas of partnership. Cultural qualifications are valued like the currency of cash; their criteria become akin to exchange values. They are measured according to the social cohesion of their current popularity at the cultural value market, not according to laws of stable accumulation of cultural capital. Culture is then a useful property, being anything that gives meaning to life, brings creativity to the everyday life and contains symbolic value categories. When researching culture, the main task is to find out how people understand their own meaningful practices through their lived experiences. Researchers evaluate meanings by collecting and comparing episodic experiences told by people.

New safety mechanisms are needed so that individualised members of society can survive together in their continuously changing, and therefore flexible, challenging but also ambivalent and precarious life-situations. The more strangers there are living together, the more important it is to have trustworthy markers of the 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer 1979). Senses of alienation, marginalisation and social frustration are shared in these communities of strangers. Accumulation of alienating life-experiences tells how 'wasted' togetherness is made possible through individual encounters (Bauman 2007: 91-93) and how this illness should be cured.

Making interpretations of the everyday lives of ordinary people is increasingly popular. People are willing to share their life-stories and publicise various fragments of their everyday order of things and private spheres of life. Personal documents, as well as research on opinions, attitudes, preferences and consumers' choices in the

multiple arenas of social media are used for this sharing in various ways. Opinions polls, too, are increasingly utilised, not only polls about consumption choices but also polls about political elections and indicators of happiness. The demand of experts on everyday life is increasing. Tasks of these social experts include finding new options for consumers' choices, consulting people on their personal development and body design. They also offer support for finding the best possible ways of working effectively, avoiding damaging situations and curing illnesses.

Increasing publication of everyday information and utilisation of everyday expertise, however, also makes 'soft' control mechanisms possible. Governmental social management demands specific strategies in our individualised society. Liberalised life establishes conditions for autonomous domain of 'free' subjects but positions self-conducted individuals so that they can behave as objectives for administrative systems (Dean 2006: 99, 199). This sort of liberation also leads to a demand for a continuous reformation of social legislation to fit in with social uncertainty. In this situation, when moral conceptions are also liquid, there is an increased demand for procedural ethics (Bauman 1993). Flexible ethical rules are necessary but nevertheless ambivalent guarantees, which are needed to give balance to the hybrid individuals' everyday orders of life. The identities of those individuals are constructed from pieces. They are uncertain of who they are and where they are because they move in the liminality of the social situations happening between liberties and constrains. They have to check their current place in their community from time to time by telling themselves as well as to others how they are, how they feel and how they handle their life-situations.

### 3. Demand for biographical studies in the age of individualisation

Expression, understanding and interpretation of one's own life – these principles are the starting point for any studies of any phenomena from the perspective of subjectivity. Capable subjects for this are the creative individuals, who acquire new capacities and cultural skills which are performed in self-expressive ways. Reflexive interpretation of biographical data and especially autobiographical data is increasingly popular; not only in the public media but also in the domain of qualitative social research. This interpretative turn has been a part of a qualitative

renovation of the methodological frames of cultural and social sciences. Discussion on this renovation is largely centred on an emphasis on constructivism (e.g. Crotty 1998, Schwandt 1994), narrative identity construction (e.g. McAdams et al., 2002), discursive methods and needs for critical discourse analysis (e.g. Fairclough 2003). In time-diagnostic analyses on reflexive modernisation, life-political issues are emphasised so as to make the social context of individualisation understandable (e.g. Beck et al., 1994; Bauman 2000; Beck 2009). It is often said that the cultural turn demands new civic awareness and new political capacities from the cosmopolitan citizens of the globalising world (Delanty 2000, Stevenson 2003). Geopolitical borders may still mark the nation-states, but socio-cultural boundaries which cross transnational divisions are sustained and reformed through symbolic means. In a positive exercise of authority, integration strategies are connected to control mechanisms by means of soft governance. This demands the involvement of all people, both men and women, both young and old, both native and immigrant citizens. Unsuccessful integration strategies lead to alienation of unlucky inhabitants of various communities in unequal conditions. Fear of defeat may lead to resistance towards unfair authority, even through violent means. Totally discriminated people are powerless, and if they cannot rule their own life-conditions, they cannot either construct possibilities for positive historical narratives to become successful active citizens.

Concepts of liberation, governance and alienation are taken into focus here to consider why biographical studies fit so well with the strategic discursive turn in the social sciences. This turn can be interpreted as connected to the popularity of culturalism, being a part of the current political wave of neo-liberalism.[1] Civic members are useful for a society which needs active citizens to work as self-reflective partners in the accumulation of cultural capital, which in turn is in accordance with the social and economic capital. Symbolic expression of performative skills in the late-modern condition can serve the profitable aims of the ruling class, as they show that anybody can succeed well enough through his or her creative capacities. Stories of less successful lives, in turn, are needed for putting the member categories in

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[1] This does not mean a debate for the return to objectivism or positivism in social sciences. The argument is that an interest in discussing politics of socially constructed reality is more important for the current methodological development than the defense of the orthodoxy of scientific realism.

order. This way, comparisons make it possible to see how one's fate is culturally connected to the social class-structure in conditions where wage-work and consumption pattern are not the only measures that a society has for classifying its members. According to P. Bourdieu (1979), criteria of cultural capital are based on taste, habitus and distinctive capacities to appreciate the social value of creativity, also in terms of culturalism.

Subjectivism and constructivism are methodological tools for interpreting how social changes influence the everyday life of people and how people build frames for their life-narration's continuum of past, present and future. Seeing the changes of society through individually experienced and subjectively told events, the methodological frames of social studies have become flexible, fluid, liquid and transformable. Interactive methodological principles emphasise subjective voices both from the researchers and researched. (e.g. Creswell 2007). Researchers have mainly understood qualitative strategies to be emancipating and empowering. This is often offered as a reason for listening to the voice of the people, especially in ethnographic studies of people in the margins of society or in minority positions. When evaluating qualitative results, it is worth considering the fact that ethnographies, biographical studies and other kinds of narrative constructions can also serve the aims of the government.

Contributors of the social action theory want to see all the actions of social actors or activities of the society's participants as meaningful in themselves. In accordance with the increased demands of subjectivism, the principles of scientific objectivity in mainstream sociology are criticised, as their findings are often too formal and impersonal. Through scientific observation, the researched objects were subordinated to the rule of the order of things which is in accordance with systemic order. This criticism also made the existing tension between individual freedom and systemic governance visible in more general terms (e.g. Crotty 1998, Delanty 2005). The tension, which now characterizes methodological argumentation in social sciences, signifies the current political situation in an individualised society. Promotion of active citizens and subordination of obedient civilised bodies − both of these are continuously debated as principal political intentions inside the world of social research as well as in the current practices of the society.

## 4. Evaluating a biographical research carrier

It can be argued that most of the methodological problems in current cultural and social theory still remain unsolved. Rather, in some way, they culminate in the life-political approach. Research dealing with life-political issues is connected to the expression of individual capacities. Empowerment of subordinated groups in discriminated situations is thought to happen through increasing self-awareness. In the flexible frames of constructivism and culturalism it is shown through narrative means. These conceptual frameworks are influenced by both the traditions of Critical Theory (started by the Frankfurt school) and Cultural Studies (which originated in Birmingham) (see Ahponen 2004). But as critical interpreters of discourse analyses have remarked, when the empowering discourses of the everyday life are reconceptualised as being mediated through channels of publicity, they are transformed to follow the genres of governance. Even though substances of these discourses can influence in political practices, their public formation also shapes life models so that given meanings follow the forms of government when they contribute our self-construction. (Fairclough 2003: 32-34). So the complexes of creativity and alienation contain a dilemma which is the clue for answering to life-political challenges of biographical studies.

This problematic can be exemplified by experiences from a research career which was started from ethnographical ways of life–studies during the renewed wave of qualitative research in the turn of the 1970's and 1980's. This fashionable approach had a pioneering status, although having its roots in Chicago school of sociology's tradition of urban ethnography. In this tradition the social change was considered both in the society's structural level and the everyday level. When studying ways of life in social change, the research group that was focused on here found inspiration from the Polish biographical heritage in connection with phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. (Roos, Sicinski, 1987.) A theoretical framework was sought to contribute to emancipatory and empowering interpretation of life-situations, the basic idea being giving the voice to the ordinary people and letting them tell their stories. The meaningfulness of the most illustrative events was emphasised in connection with the biggest structural changes of the

society in their lifetime.

Adoption of this perspective has also drawn researcher's attention to the fact that the purposefulness of way of life –studies needs critical evaluation. Critical theory, and particularly Theodor Adorno's and Max Horkheimer's (1979) critical analysis of enlightenment helps to see how problems of life-management and mastery of life are connected to systemic rule and social governance in civil means. Cultural elitism, included in T. Adorno's negative dialectics, should, however, be taken into consideration when discussing life-political problems in terms of politics of culture. T. Adorno's cultural view has been discussed by various representatives of cultural studies, with the emphasis put on the everyday culture at 'grassroots level', and all activities are interpreted as being culturally meaningful.

Deconstruction of meanings taken as granted was a significant aspect of discursive interpretations in life-political studies. Both outsiders' and insiders' views have been taken into consideration in the construction of cultural and social boundaries between liberation and alienation of subordinated people. Critical cultural theory needs to be renewed in the actualisation of this inherent problem. Characteristically, cultural citizenship means civic engagement both in the affairs of common welfare and in the pursuit of individual happiness (Ahponen 2004, Bellamy 2008: 114-123). Either the results of social inequalities are shared by interactive partners, or profits and losses of social affairs are individually paid. Z. Bauman's (2011: 101) opinion is that currently discursive subjects are expected to seek and find individual answers to socially constructed problems. Culturally diverse identities are narrated as fragmented, hybrid or liquid constellations of lonely selves in the subjective fields of identity politics.

## 5. Life-political interpretation of creativity and the therapeutic management of the self: aims for autobiographical research

Interpretation of autobiographical data can serve contrary aims in social interactions and social cures. In anamnesis, emancipating and empowering aspects are mixed with alienating processes. There is an increasing demand for intimate confessions, included in life-stories, as it feeds the sensation-seeking public and gives a promise of a cure for some solvable states of ill-being. Both of these are increasingly

utilised in life-political soft governance.

Therapeutic consultation is manipulatively advertised for cases of life-catastrophes. Health programmes are seen essential for current life-strategies. The politics of 'life itself', as N. Rose (2007) argues, are seen as a bio-political issue, and therefore a space of ethical political concern. The management of bio-politics demands that we consciously take a responsibility of the risks which are already among us, caused by the society getting more and more complex in the way described by Ulrich Beck (2009). Life-risk management is a double-sided process. Risk-management experts must consult ordinary people to know how risks are experienced. They advise then people further to manage procedures for controlling risks and inventing trustful solutions to daily problems.

Researchers have differing intentions and motives for using autobiographies as their data and applying their results to social practices. One aim of collecting autobiographical data is showing that ordinary people have a personal voice and something to say. This might be a way to strengthen their self-confidence, especially in studies of subordinated or discriminated people. An idea is to encourage the people to develop their practices creatively. Empowerment helps in self-understanding. Awareness on one's own life-situation helps in the interpretation of the whole life process. Liberated individuals are encouraged to become able to manage their own life by making it sensible and emotionally satisfactory.

One reason for conducting life-political studies is finding information. Life-stories contain information about generality of activities and popularity of hobbies and preferences. Information about the consumption of everyday culture is seen being relevant as such but it is also useful for the market purposes. Furthermore, activities and their rankings in terms of cultural capital are presented and calculated to have material comparable to produce entertainment. Popular publicity games, such as reality-TV, show individualisation in the mirror of the narcissism of competitive society's demands. But 'meanings', created for publicity's various fashions, easily vanish – as Z. Bauman (2006: 140) says, they 'fall away faster than the time it takes to articulate and absorb them'.

The results from the collected autobiographies also give evidence about confessional self-governance which is justified by the demand for increasing

therapeutic self-management. This kind of research can then be used to support soft social management strategies, which in turn offers possibilities for developing pedagogic programs and disciplinary practices. Strategically, this research may serve to make decent citizens more obedient and better-suited for liquid and transformative demands, preconditioned by the maintenance of the coherent social order and legitimacy of the risk-society and the liquid modernity in the service of neo-liberal control mechanisms.

From another perspective it can be seen that 'seducing' autobiographical data is useful for manipulative and even subordinating life-political purposes when the privacy of everyday doings and intimate affairs of any people is made public. Thus it is possible to develop better soft and liquid strategies to analyse and interpret the individual life as connected to the order of the governance and the governmental structure. These kinds of interpretations are in accordance with the neo-Foucaultian analysis on how the civilised technologies of the self are structured and the strategic use of discipline is taken in the service of the normalising power (e.g. Bratich et al., 2003).

This is connected to the other side of individualisation in the competitive society. The problem of 'wasted people' has to be solved. This, then, means development of strategies for treating outsiders of society. Handling people who behave in self-destructive ways leads to a need for developing more and more management methods to ensure safety. Many stories are written to warn people about what is not good living. Therapeutic consults and social insurance experts are needed to cure damaged or wasted human relationships. Further, as Z. Bauman (2007: 12) remarks, in the liquid procedural society the 'positive' side of this development is that fear of uncertainty is bolstered in the media through narrative means because it has its uses for commercial and political investments. Because liquid society is risky in its precarious situations, it demands continuous solidification to be at least seemingly trustworthy for people to feel secure enough to continue their daily lives. Therefore it is the life-stories, containing both success and misery, episodes of chaotic situations and narration of cured operations, that guarantee that governmental law and order sells well in the 'vicious circle' of the life politics.

## 6. Conclusions

Life-political governance is discussed in this article in order to note how the fashion of biographical, autobiographical or auto-ethnographical studies is connected to the (de)constructive turn in social sciences. This turn is argued to be double-sided, containing both liberating and subordinating elements for social and cultural citizenship. A question, essential for further discussion, is whether social constructivism as a genre has become involved in the soft governance of civilised management of people as citizens under the complex rules of reflexive modernisation. The focus is on how the interpretation of life-political processes is included in this turn because principally meaningful biographical data is not innocent when subjected to the research. Under our life-conditions it is a tool both for freedom and alienation of individuals as social beings. The social space inside which our lived experiences are met is constantly changing to manage the tensions between privacy and publicity in our everyday lives.

The conceptual framework and the methodological context of biographical studies are defined in terms of phenomenology, ethnography and social constructivism. Different ways of using life-histories, autobiographies and narrative episodes are discussed through practices of qualitative analysis. Contextual problems also concern generational typologies and thematically focused social classifications. Ways of understanding and interpreting biographical data are connected with problems of how the social structuration processes work and how the data containing individual aspects of courses of life and life-histories is used for the purposes of societal governance for maintaining structural order.

Critical evaluation of autobiographical studies is important. It will increase our consciousness and help people to become aware of how biographical narratives can serve as tools for empowerment of people but also of how biographies represent increasing individualism in the age of ego-centric society. Furthermore, data of this sort can be used for the purposes of social and political governance by means of softly subordinating control of the individualised citizens. This way the problems of 'life itself' are key issues in a knowledge society labelled by reflexive modernisation, life-politics and creative entertainment performances.

An increased demand of autobiographical literature is connected to this

problem-sphere as such but autobiographical studies also became fashionable as resulted by the constructive, narrative or discursive turn in cultural and social studies. Now the emphasis is more and more put on the analysis of how life-political reasoning is argued. Different strategies, used for collecting autobiographical data and analysing the findings through increasingly qualified and nuanced means, also show how influential this interest sphere is (see e.g. Creswell 2007, Lee 2000, Roberts 2002, see also several prints of *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by N. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln). In future, it might be interesting to analyse and compare types of argumentation used in autobiographical studies in the context of empowerment, self-governance and governmental authorisation.

A critical discussion on life-political strategies is needed so that we can reach a deeper understanding of the problems of cultural citizenship. We must improve the current society so that we can peacefully solve everyday problems between locals and newcomers in the future cosmopolitan communities. Liquid society demands continuous changes, because social space is stretched by people who try to manage themselves and their interactions in creative ways. Social solidarity and individual creativity have to be balanced to solve complex life-situations together, so that alienation caused by the unequal results of competitive egoism can be overcome.

Although there is quite a lot literature referring to biographical studies, life-political orientation, life-governance and the soft social government, there is still a need for methodological discussion about how these elements mix with each other and how they are justified through current trends of cultural politics. This argumentation is needed to increase the awareness of the scientific community, the other experts and the part of the public that takes notice of the problems inherent in the current liquid, precarious and ambivalent situation. The mission is discovering positive ways for solving everyday problems and developing cultural political practices to interpret life issues creatively. Everyday affairs contain political tools for people to act more and more conscious citizens in the future society. It is important to learn to use these tools so that people with meaningful things to say are not subordinated by softly discriminative means of life-governance. An important aspect is finding out how to encourage even the 'wasted' fellow citizens to believe both in themselves and in our common solidarity, so that we can have a prosperous world of

equality to live in.

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