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**Negotiating trade union identities.
Self-images of Miners' Trade Union officials in the workers' education system in post-war Germany.**

Labour and economic history have often interpreted trade unions as 'collective subjects' in industrial relations, especially in post-war West Germany after the institutionalisation of workers' co-determination in 1951. This focus on industrial relations and a lack of sources can be held responsible for the little effort dedicated to the exploration of self-concepts and social types of individuals inside the trade unions. This concerns for example officials, and the important aspect of qualification and education of potential full-time officials for the trade unions.

My paper aims at following recent research on the changing workers' milieus in the economic reconstruction and growth ("Economic Miracle") after 1945. A special focus is laid on the implications for the trade union education system. It is based on the analysis of approximately 800 narrative curricula vitae, written by officials of the Miners and Energy Workers' Trade Union (*Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau und Energie*, IGBE) between 1953 and 1967. These "Ego-Documents" were produced in order to apply for the next level in the educational hierarchy organised by the trade union education centre in Haltern am See (North-Rhine-Westphalia).

I follow the hypothesis of a dominant tension in the workers' educational system between the necessities of technical training and the promotion of "trade union consciousness". The paper examines consequently how the participants imagined themselves as 'ideal' officials and drew the picture of the 'perfect' trade union member in the CVs. They did so by coping with the experience of Nazism and by negotiating the borders between work, leisure time, consumerism and political engagement, i.e. between the public and private sphere.

In this diachronic perspective three narratives can be described, dealing with war experience: a narrative of continuity, a narrative of exclusion and a narrative of conversion. This leads to the distinction of a dichotomist constellation of ideal typical officials' lives: on the one hand a politicised and class-conscious type, on the other hand an individualised, professional and private-orientated type of trade union officials' image. Furthermore, this observation is interpreted by the category of 'generationality' as "bipolar unit" (K. Mannheim) and juxtaposed to dominant issues of social history after 1945. Thus, it becomes evident that linear narratives and ideologemes of "embourgeoisement" ("*Verbürgerlichung*"), de-proletarianisation and de-politicisation of trade union members and workers in the economic growth of the 1950s and 1960s were as such an inherent part of the negotiation of roles and identities inside the trade union education system. Consequently, on a historiographic level, these lines of interpretation have to be revised critically. This correction shouldn't focus on 'real' latent class consciousness, however, it should consider the trade union education system from the angle of the trade union internal public sphere. This perspective emphasises how the negotiation of self-images entrained a process of integration, which guaranteed the trade union's capacity of action during the coal and energy crisis after 1958.