



The healthy self as body capital: Individuals, market-based societies, body politics and visual media twentieth century Europe

An international conference, Université de Strasbourg

Salle de conférence, MISHA, Allée du Général Rouvillois, Strasbourg

23-25 February 2017

Do you know how much rapid eye movement (REM) sleep you need to work efficiently, look at food labels to ensure that you are getting all the required vitamins and minerals or know someone who uses a step counter to know if they are getting enough physical activity? These are just a few examples of the perceptions of health and individual practices in twentieth century Europe. This century may be characterized by an expansion of products and techniques for the body and its health. These are not only witnessed by, but contributed to and were affected by, a flood of visuals that circulated transnationally and the advent of a media society. Bodily health has evolved as a new form of capital (Bourdieu 1979): a form of symbolic capital that can be transformed into economic capital.

The ERC funded research group “The healthy self as body capital: individuals, market-based societies and body politics in visual twentieth century Europe” led by Christian Bonah (Université de Strasbourg) and Anja Laukötter (MPIHD, Berlin) will research this understanding of body capital, and its history, by focusing on the history of visual mass media (film, TV, Internet) and inédits (amateur, family and private visuals) throughout the twentieth century in Europe and beyond.

The research project begins with the premise that visuals are not conceived merely as a mirror or expression of what is observed; visuals are regarded as a distinct, interactive performative power of mass media societies. We consider them essential and novel firstly because their distribution is considerably extensive, secondly because they transcend professional and social groups, thirdly because of their utilitarian character and fourthly they echo economic market principles in terms of promotion/communication. Herein, we suggest visuals have heuristic and analytic meanings.

Our objective is to understand the role that modern visual mass media have played in what may be cast as the transition from a national bio-political public health paradigm at the beginning of the nineteenth century to societal forms of the late twentieth century where better and healthier life is increasingly shaped by market forces/fundamentalism. Herein, the beginning of the nineteenth century is characterized by collective bodies, a work force and labour society, as well as state interests in being able to mobilize large cohorts of able-bodied workers, soldiers and colonial subjects and the late twentieth century is characterized by individuals, body capital in a consumer society, and market incentives – leading to what may be defined as commoditized or commodified bodies. We aim to study these developments through the lenses of the visuals in the histories of three European countries that are central to the economy and visual production, yet differ in their visual culture and their embrace of neo-liberal market policies during the twentieth century: France, Germany and Great Britain. Moreover the developments in and influences of the United States and Canada, as well as Russia/USSR, will be included as complementary references and as analytical counterpoints. Within this spatial historical framework the project focuses on four main fields of health interests in the twentieth century:

- history of food/nutrition
- history of movement/exercise/sports
- history of sexuality/reproduction/infants
- history of dependency/addiction/overconsumption.

The inaugural conference of this research group to be held in Strasbourg (23-25 February 2017) will bring together topic and media related scholars from the fields of history, history of medicine, media studies, film studies and film history. The conference will approach and explore the broad field of the project's research agenda with four distinct, yet overlapping, axes:

1. **Between local formations and global realms**

This panel will explore developments and relationships between the formation, activities and goals of global organizations (ranging from UNESCO to WHO) in casting and spreading their aims via visuals. It will focus on how global institutions conceptualized health issues as global issues and the role visuals played in these efforts. Moreover the panel will focus on local organized configurations (such as the amateur film movement) and how these groups used visuals as an expression of a new individual and collective understanding of health.

2. **Between Medicine, Sciences and Markets**

This panel will explore the connections and relationships in the history of medicine, between different scientific fields (from psychiatry, psychology to neurobiology and chemistry) and various industrial actors (such as pharmaceutical industries). The panel will not only explore how these different power players constructed and worked on the consumer with and within visuals, but also how the (economic) interests overlap between different fields and countries over the twentieth century.

3. **Between state regulation and subjectification**

The third panel highlights the role of visual media in two different agencies and their possible interactions. The efforts and practices of state regulation will be explored in considering how different European health systems shaped the efforts to enforce/educate its citizens to live healthy lives and how economic interests played out. Moreover, by focusing on the individuals' perspectives the panel will not only explore how individual people reacted to these state efforts, but also how individuals actively performed health. Thus the panel will focus on practices of internalizations of health practices that have been described in concepts such as the "preventive self" (Lengwiler/Madarász 2010).

4. **Between Collectivization and Distinction**

The fourth panel explores how visuals play out in various developments within European countries and the USA, ranging from phenomena described as different forms of collectivization and distinction. On the one hand we find different forms of health related group configurations, such as self-help groups (for example, AIDS activists, AnonymousAlcoholics or obesity support groups), to promote new health related attitudes and practices. At the same time we find individuals organized in different distinct activity groups (such as Aerobics or vegan movements) that promote not only a new healthy life, but function as a new marker of social difference and class boundaries.

Thursday, February 23rd

13:00-13:30 *Welcome and General Introduction*

Christian Bonah & Anja Laukötter (Université de Strasbourg & MPIHD Berlin)

13:30-14:30 Keynote lecture

From colonial to global history: knowledge, diseases and the government of bodies.

Jean-Paul Gaudillière (Cermes 3, Paris INSERM)

Panel 1 – Global practices and local realities

14:30-14:40 Introduction

Christian Bonah (Université de Strasbourg)

14:40-15:20 *Zika Virus, Global Digital Health, and Technologies of Data Visualization*

Kirsten Ostherr (Rice University, USA)

coffee break

15:40-16:20 *Human Rights and Human Capital: Unesco's The World is Rich (1947)*

Zoe Druick (Simon Fraser University, Canada)

16:20-17:00 *Children in need: amateurism, authenticity and the BBC*

Karen Lury (University of Glasgow)

17:00-17:15 Commentary

Yvonne Zimmermann (Universität Marburg)

18:00 Film projection at the Odyssée Cinema

Modeler, cultiver son corps : le regard Dim Dam Dom

Joël Danet (Université de Strasbourg) avec la collaboration de l'INA

20:00 *Dinner*

Friday, February 24th

9:00-10:00 Keynote lecture

Pills for profit and the pharmaceutical governance of the body

Jakob Tanner (Universität Zürich)

Panel 2 – Health message AV: From patients to health consumers

10:00-10:10 Introduction

Alexandre Sumpf (Université de Strasbourg)

10:10-10:50 *"What does the firm get out of subscribing?" Selling health and safety in Britain, c.1916-1950*

Mike Esbester (University of Portsmouth)

coffee break

11:10-11:50 *"We have a contract with humanity": Corporate culture, communication and conflict in the health industries*

Vinzenz Hediger (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

11:50-12:30 *Scripting, Performing and Encountering Medicine and Health in Postwar British Television*

Timothy Boon (Science Museum London)

12:30-12:45 Commentary

Scott Curtis (Northwestern University, USA)

lunch

13:30-14:30 Keynote lecture

The Utopian and Prosaic Sides of Health Prevention: Policies, Propaganda and Practices

Martin Lengwiler (Universität Basel)

Panel 3 – Education, influence and internalization

14:30-14:40 Introduction

Anja Laukötter (MPIHD, Berlin)

14:40-15:20 *Public health and the mass media turn in the UK from the 1950s*

Virginia Berridge (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, University of London)

coffee break

15:40-16:20 *Measuring Subjectivation. The Reception of Health Education Programs and the Evaluation Conundrum*

Luc Berlivet (CNRS, Paris)

16:20-17:00 *Images for Self-Instruction and Desire - Visual Material and the Expanding Market for Participatory Sports in the USA, 1890s-1930s*

Olaf Stieglitz (Universität zu Köln)

17:00-17:15 Commentary

David Cantor (National Institute of Health, Bethesda)

17:30 Film projection

Interiorizing and individualizing mouvement as body capital

Joël Danet (Université de Strasbourg)

Saturday, February 25th

9:00-10:00 Keynote lecture

Configurations of Collective Distinctions

Otniel E. Dror (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Panel 4 - New movements and bodies in intermedial forms

10:00-10:10 Introduction

Anne Masseran & Philippe Chavot (Université de Strasbourg/Lorraine)

10:10-10:50 *Count your calories! Body size as a visual marker of the self in early 20th century US*

Nina Mackert (Universität Erfurt)

coffee break

11:10-11:50 *Cinema Is I Fly: J. J. Gibson and the Aviation Psychology Program's Test Films*

Oliver Gaycken (University of Maryland)

11:50-12:30 *VALIE EXPORT — représentations et espaces de liberté*

Sophie Delpeux (Université Sorbonne Paris I)

12:30-12:45 Commentary

Lutz Sauerteig (Durham University)

12:45-13:45 Roundtable discussion

Ursula von Keitz (Filmuniversität Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Berlin)

Paul-André Rosental (Sciences Po, Paris)

13:45-14:00 Final remarks and closing

