

MANUAL for Biographical Arguments (simple – KOM and person-event connections - PERSVAL) & Metacommunicative Statements (META) (Version 4.0)

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With Christine Paha 1999, Klara Matjasko 2009, Simone Bringewald & Christin Köber 2012, Lena Dierker 2013

Translated by Robert Leitch (1,4) and Thomas Parfitt (2,3)

The manual contains (in brackets the names of the variables, each of which has several codes)

1. **Simple Biographical arguments (KOM)**
2. **Person-event connections (PERSVAL+CHANCONT + EVENT)**
3. **Additional Variables for 1 and 2: (SUBJ OBJ)**
4. **Metacommunicative statements (META).** These are not related to autobiographical arguments.

To date, the manual or parts of it has been used for these publications:

- Habermas, T., & Paha, C. (2001). The development of coherence in adolescents' life narratives. *Narrative Inquiry, 11*, 35-54. (KOM)
- Habermas, T., Ott, L. M., Schubert, M., Schneider, B., & Pate, A. (2008). Stuck in the past: Negative bias, explanatory style, temporal order, and evaluative perspectives in life narratives of clinically depressed individuals. *Depression and Anxiety, 25*, E121-E132. (KOM)
- Habermas, T., & de Silveira, C. (2008). The development of global coherence in life narratives across adolescence: Temporal, causal, and thematic aspects. *Developmental Psychology, 44*, 707-721. (KOM; precursor of PERSVAL)
- Habermas, T., Negele, A., & Brenneisen Mayer, F. (2010). „Honey, you're jumping about“ – Mothers' scaffolding of their children's and adolescents' life narration. *Cognitive Development, 25*, 339-351. (KOM; precursor of PERSVAL)
- Habermas, T., & Köber, C. (2015). Autobiographical reasoning in life narratives buffers the effect of biographical disruptions on the sense of self-continuity. *Memory, 23*, 564-574. doi: 10.1080/09658211.2014.920885 (KOM; PERSVAL)
- Köber, C., Schmiedek, F., & Habermas, T. (2015). Characterizing lifespan development of three aspects of coherence in life narratives: A cohort-sequential study. *Developmental Psychology, 51*, 260-275. doi: 10.1037/a0038668 (KOM, PERSVAL)

For systematic description of these and other biographical arguments see:

- Habermas, T. (2011). Autobiographical reasoning: Mechanisms and functions. In T. Habermas (Ed.), *The development of autobiographical reasoning in adolescence and beyond*. New Directions in Child and Adolescent Development, 131, 1-17. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Habermas, T., & Köber, C. (2015). Autobiographical reasoning is constitutive for narrative identity: The role of the life story for personal continuity. In K. C. McLean & M. Syed (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of identity development* (pp. 149-165). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

In the examples, underlined propositions are coded.

1.) Simple Biographical Arguments (Variable KOM)

This variable covers biographical arguments locating particular experiences in the context of someone's entire life. Thus a statement is not expressly coded if it only depicts an episode or simply summarizes something ("chronicle"). Other autobiographical arguments are discussed in Habermas (2011), especially re-appraisals, which are defined in a still different (untranslated) manual.

- reference to developmental status (DEV)
- reference to biographical background (BB)
- formative experience (FORM1, FORM2)
- lessons learnt from experiences (LL)
- universally valid insights into/realizations about "the world" (GENINS1, GENINS2)
- turning points (TP)

Two codes are further specified by a 1 or 2 to code whether a general claim (1) is related in a specific, plausible way to one's life (2).

If in doubt, adhere to this order of priority: DEV> BB > FORM> LL> GENINS> TP

Category: **Developmental status**

Code: **DEV**

Definition: Comments on the developmental status of an individual, i.e. statements indicating that the narrator makes assumptions about a specific developmental status and corresponding talents, interests, appropriate forms of behavior, etc. Code only the first proposition in which the reference to the developmental status becomes clear.

Examples:

- * *At the time I wasn't aware of any of that, /
after all I was still too young for it.*
- * *I've simply grown out of that.*
- * *Yes; well, I only have good things to tell about my childhood.
Although my mother's first child was very ill,
but as children you didn't feel that way about it .
Er, she was born without a uvula...*
- * *And then there came this saying
"If you tell anyone that,
then Dad will go to prison."
And then of course a child gets very intimidated.*
- * *I'd done training to become a doctor's receptionist.
And, er, from my point of view today, it was clearly too early.
Well, having already finished everything by 17,
well, I would never do that again.
[This implies an idea of what is "too early" for a certain age and what is not.]*
- * *At the time I was seven years old
when she was born,
well, even today we still love each other above all else,*

and actually, er, even then it was already a mother-child relationship.

Well, I mean

I was in fact only seven,

but over the years things developed in such a way

that I took over the role of mother for her

because our own mother became seriously ill.

[The "in fact" implies that, at the age of seven, a mother-child relationship with a younger sibling is actually unusual.]

* *as with every pubescent child, that's the very first thing you worry about*

Oh God, what do your friends think of you

* *Yes, er, I grew up in, for me, very cramped conditions,*

three people in a two-room flat.

So for me as a child it was somehow negative,

simply because where did you play?

* *As a child you don't know it yet,*

then as a child you are simply still too young for that.

* *because the people around me were not adjusted to that*

and as a youth I, er, couldn't communicate

what that actually did to me

Counterexamples [these are not coded]:

* *But I dunno*

how old I was.

Then I had, I caught on to

how my father was sleeping around.

And my mother noticed

that I had caught on.

And at the time that was all very hard for me to understand.

[One can in fact assume that "at the time" implies that these circumstances are hard to understand "as a child", but that is not said explicitly enough; it could just as easily be a mere temporal indication, i.e. the reference to the person's own developmental status at the time is not clear enough.]

* *Here I have done things*

that I didn't know about at all

and that I hadn't even heard of.

And as a child I thought

I can't paint at all.

Here I've learnt to paint

[mere statement of age]

* *and I went pretty early,*

that is, at barely the age of one, er yes, for family reasons, er, when I was barely one

year old, to Andalusia to stay with my grandmother on the Spanish side,

er, then I grew up with my grandmother

[mere indication of time and age]

Category: **Biographical background**

Code: **BB**

Definition: Passages are coded where a person's behavior or experience is explained with the help of (unique or repeated) earlier experiences and circumstances in that person's life story, experiences and circumstances that have created a special sensitivity towards certain situations or lent them a particular significance. Such experiences/reactions explained through past experiences are often in some way extraordinary, deviant, still in need of clarification, or surprising.
Code statements about (auto)biographical experiences serving as a background to later experiences and reactions.
Code the proposition in which the biographically explained experience or behavior is described (underlined in the examples). Thus each individual experience that is biographically explained is coded separately. If the experience extends over more than one proposition, code only the first proposition.

Examples:

- * *Simply on account of the fright,
what kind of,
I'd say,
 close relationship there actually was with my mother. /
And my mother is very very ill, just psychologically, /
and after all, the experience of what went on. /
This close bond, so this was too much, much too much, /
well, love can also be stifling. /
And yes, that is actually my subject here, /
that I myself have problems with. /
That I also give myself up,
I'd say,
when I love someone. /
Or that I don't stifle someone else /
when I love someone. /*
[The current problems with love are understood in light of earlier problems with the mother.]
- * *And when he came so threateningly toward me
I completely blew my top,
knocking him to the ground.
Only later did it occur to me
that perhaps the reason for it was
that he reminded me of the man
who raped me.*
- * *When my father caught me with marijuana
he reacted really drastically,
not talking to me any more for 8 weeks.
Mind you, that was because
his best friend died of heroin abuse.*
- * *and then I finished my A-levels/Highschool right in the middle of all this madness /
and then had very good A-levels
and so I thought
now I'll study medicine
and then somehow I'll see that I do that better*
[The narrator has previously talked about his father's death, whereupon he changes his study plans.]

Counterexamples [not to be coded]:

- * *and in the meantime another sister has joined us,*

*she's now two years old
and, er, I very often take the two of them,
well, just like my sisters did with me at the time /
I very often take the two of them with me into town
[This is not about an idiosyncratic meaning of a situation or an idiosyncratic reaction to a situation]*

- * *as I grew up in this multicultural family
I'm actually real tolerant and open
[Here current behavior is not explained concretely enough through earlier
experiences.]*

Category: **Formative experiences: Simple claims**

Code: **FORM1**

Definition: Code explicit claims that circumstances and experiences of a person's life have had a lasting, formative influence on this person. Code FORM1, if the claim is not backed up sufficiently to code FORM2 (see below).

DO NOT code first experience with no explicit lasting effects.

Code in the proposition that claims the formative influence.

Examples:

- * *This period formed me most.*
- * *My first relationship had a major influence on me.*
- * *Girlfriends have had a strong impact on me.*
- * *That has stayed with me right up till now.*
- * *the time from 9th to 12th grade ,
when I was 15 to 18;
has of course formed me the most*

Counterexample (Do not code):

*That somehow stuck in my memory as my first and very nice holiday
[First time, coded as MEM]*

*That was a decisive experience,
Because for the first time I noticed
That I am not alone*

Category: **Formative experiences: Backed-up claims**

Code: **FORM2**

Definition: Code explicit claims that circumstances and experiences of a person's life have had a lasting, formative influence on this person. In contrast to FORM1, formative influences of certain life events or circumstances are not only claimed, but what was formative and what the consequences were is also more or less plausibly named.

DO NOT code first experience with no explicit lasting effects.

Code the proposition that claims the formative influence.

Examples:

- * *er (-) yes, perhaps it has led to me
no longer attaching so much importance to money today*

Category: **Lessons learned**

Code: **LL**

Definition: The narrator draws a lesson from a narrated experience. The narrator has learnt something for the future, how s/he should handle certain, relatively specific situations in the future.
Code the first proposition where the lesson is drawn.

Examples:

- * *After that I told myself,
when I fall in love,
then the next time I must,
when I fall in love,
take care
that school doesn't suffer from that.*
- * *my husband is thirteen, well, partner, is twelve years older
and in the meantime he's got Parkinson's
I'm familiar with that from my mother
well, here too I'm again assigned the role of care-giver
which, however, I'll now approach differently
well, I'll get myself a great deal more help*
- * *I dunno, at the age of twelve to sixteen I also noticed /
you somehow get to know a lot of friends, /
who don't, however, stay friends for long /
and you shouldn't always enter into friendships so quickly the first time /
if you don't really suit each other*

Counterexample:

- * *As a small child I was bitten by a mastiff,
and since then I steer well clear of dogs
because even today I'm terribly frightened of them.
[Coded as BB because of order of priority]*

Category: **Generalized insight, life maxims**

Code: **GENINS1**

Definition: Universally valid insights into and realizations about how “the world” or “life” generally function. Included in this code are also maxims (see example). Such reflections may also be relatively trivial; they should, however, show that the narrator understands them as general statements about a law of life. The statement must not be restricted to a particular person but must be a universally valid realization. GENINS statements must not refer to a single object/experience/person but at least to a group of them. Example: “It's always nerve-racking talking with Herbert” is not coded, on the other hand “It's always nerve-racking talking with Frankfurters” is.

In comparison to code LL this category is more comprehensive.

Code in the first proposition of the insights.

DO NOT CODE figures of speech employed in a stereotyped manner, without any recognizable reference as regards content. This is true above all of constantly repeated sayings or dicta, if for example the narrator adds to every sentence “oh well, that's the way things go in life”.

In contrast to GENINS2, the generalization is not inferred from a specific experience.

Examples:

- * *You don't get on in life,*
if you don't use your elbows.
- * *I think*
getting married is always just a big disappointment
- * *Whatever will be, will be*
[worldly wisdom]

Category: **Generalized insight, life maxims**

Code: **GENINS2**

Definition: In contrast to GENINS1, this code is attributed if the universally valid insights into, realizations, or maxims are related to or inferred from a specific event or experience.

Examples:

- * *I missed him for many months.*
It's probably always like that,
(when it's the first kiss).
 - * *Everybody's parents are separated*
why should it be different with mine?
 - * *And well, I had other girlfriends before, too, /*
that I'm no longer such good friends with /
and that came about /
because we always, well, they became different /
and they always changed completely /
also because of the boys /
and that's perfectly clear, well, typical somehow /
and then they became bitchier and bitchier
- Nowadays you know*
that in childhood a lot happens, very foundational stuff (-)

Counterexamples:

- * *Frankfurt is a hotbed of vice,*
you can't leave a young woman alone there
[regards only a specific city]
- * *After all Berlin is the capital*
- * *Talking to Herbert was actually completely nerve-racking for everybody*
[Reason: here a case of regularity is in fact mentioned, but this is too specific to count as a universally valid law of life.]

Category: **Turning points**

Code: **TP**

Definition: Code statements about turning points in life, a change of direction in life, breaks or severe disruptions in life. Turning points have long lasting biographical consequences, which often become clear only after the event.

Code the first proposition that sets the turning point.

Examples:

- * I made a 180-degree about-turn in my life.
- * Yes, that was the first break.
- * Then, for the first time in my life, I had to take on responsibility.
- * *The fact that all of a sudden the child was there turned my life upside down*

2.) Personality and Values (Variable PERSVAL)

Additional Variable Change/Continuity (CHANCONT)

Additional Variable Type of Link with an Event (EVENT)¹

Statements about personality, values and talent are coded. CODE each trait/value/talent that appears for the first time in a segment, is semantically independent and clearly different from the previously mentioned trait/value/talent.

If, and only if, the PERSVAL variable is coded, both additional codes are coded.

NOTE: “*Segment*” refers to our system of segmenting entire life narratives. A segment (minimum 4 clauses/propositions) is a part of an entire life narrative that corresponds to a specific event or an extended event or an extended argument. In the case of single event narratives (e.g., following the instruction to narrate a turning point experience) segment typically corresponds to the entire single event narrative.

Specifications of “semantic independence:

DO NOT CODE attributions of traits, values or talent that only serve to clarify an attribution already made in the same segment.

If two traits/values/talents, which are to be assigned to the same semantic dimension are named in the same segment (e.g., honest/cheater), the trait/value/talent which is described by the narrator as the dominant trait/value/talent, or alternatively the first to be mentioned, is coded. This mainly concerns statements of exceptions („despite“, „although“) or antitheses („but“).

Furthermore two traits may be construed in the same segment as a change/development from trait A to trait B. In this case, the trait that currently exists is coded, or the one acquired later; all additional codes relate to this trait. The same (and what follows) applies to value and talent. If two traits within a segment are semantically different, they are coded separately, even if empirically they influence one another (for example “anxiety” and “ambition”).

Exemplifications of a trait, which implicitly refer to another trait, are coded separately. If a personality trait/ value / talent is provided in the form of a quotation (for example, „my friend always says that I am very serious“), this may only be coded if the narrator agrees with this characterization or its opposite. This may be indicated by an explicit confirmation of or objection which implies that the opposite is true) to the quoted statement.

DO NOT CODE life maxims or coping strategies that are construed as an opinion or advice (often with an impersonal „one should“).

If in doubt, adhere to this **order of priority:**

1.) **REV > EEXP > PEXE + DISM**

2.) If in spite of rule 1 several events could be coded, the event named first is coded as of highest priority.

¹ The codes PEXE and EEXP correspond to our codes „Person explains event“ and „event explains change in personality (Habermas & Paha, 2000; Habermas & de Silveira, 2000); DISM corresponds to Pasupathi's “dismissal”/“challenge”, and REV corresponds to Pasupathi's „reveal” connections.

2.1) Variable Personality and Values PERSVAL

The code is entered in the proposition in which the personality trait / value / talent is mentioned.

Category: Personality

Code: **PERS**

Definition: Personality traits are temporally relatively stable attributes which predispose a person to certain behaviors. Personality traits are both concrete attributions of traits („independent“, „self-aware“, „choleric“) and more metaphorical attributions („to be a baby“, „crybaby“, „lucky fellow“, „unlucky fellow“).

A personality trait must be explicitly named in the text. A mood or a pattern of behavior that covers more than one action, is not connected to a particular situation, and indirectly points to a personality trait, may be considered a trait attribution IF an adjective can be ascribed to this mood/behavioral pattern which describes a personality attribute that is independent of the situation and outlasts it. Expressions such as „I'm a person who...“, „It's so like me“, „I have this impulse to ...“, may point to such a behavioral pattern, but are not a necessary condition for a proposition to be coded. If a mood/behavioral pattern is coded, it may not at the same time be coded as event in the Variable EVENT.

Personality traits are also coded if the speaker mitigates the markedness of a trait or describes a trait by negating another trait. Comparative statements about personality (e.g. „more independent than my brother“) that are not based on universal standards also belong to this category. Here the trait of the person to whom the statement applies is coded, not the trait of the person who is used as a standard.

Sexual orientation and gender preferences in general, e.g. in relation to friendships, are coded as personality traits, inasmuch as these are explicitly underlined. As a borderline case, the limitation of a trait to a very large area of life (e.g. work life, private life) is still coded.

Divergences in the developmental stage („late bloomer“, „precocious“, late developer“) are coded as PERS.

Some terms for describing traits (such as *'dependent, flexible, needy'*) can refer either to internal, mental states, or to external, real conditions. Only those descriptions of traits are coded which refer to internal states.

Criteria for exclusion:

DO NOT CODE if the attribution of a trait is limited to one specific situation. In this case the situation does not serve to explain a 'trait' present in other situations, but the 'trait' is only seen in this situation. This includes specific relationships since this 'trait' does not serve to describe the personality but is a „relationship personality trait“ in relation to a particular person.

DO NOT CODE drug-induced changes, mental illness or simple moods. Everyday terms such as „crazy“ and „nuts“ are personality traits if they are not explicitly related to a mental disorder.

DO NOT CODE general preferences nor interests nor global assessments like „kind“, „nice“, „stupid“, „weird“ and „cool“.

Examples:

erm, yeah, puberty, I was erm (-) always rather a so, so what, really shy and quiet and good PERS SAM PEXE
so I never rebelled
and because of that it was also rather very very restricted and constrained
and as I said
I was a late developer in all areas PERS SAM PEXE

so I never had a boyfriend

*I'm an introvert partly an introvert erm
 but through my job I was forced to do very specific things erm
 which perhaps don't correspond to my nature so well
 but erm through being forced in that company erm
 I also changed like that
 which is logically something that happens in the course of life
and I really try to address everything **PERS CHA EEXP**
 if something's up*

*when I'm in a community
 there too I try to erm a bit the the the basis and deal with people properly and fairly
 [The code is not entered on the line where „introversion“ is mentioned, but where having become less
 introverted is stated]*

*erm yes I do think,
that I erm always set erm high standards for myself, definitely, (--) **PERS SAM PEXE***

*and erm although I was already employed there as a departmental secretary,
 but it was yet another colleague
 and my then boss always used to say to me
 „but Mrs So-and-so went to university“
 and so to speak I had come from secretarial school
 so I did my training in Germany
 and that pushed me so much towards going to university
 that I said
 so I don't like that kind of thing,
 that someone says to me
 that she's been to university
 and I have, precisely because I haven't been to university,
 because of that people see you like this or like that,
 so I didn't like that
 and I actually always wanted to go to university,“
 [The personality trait is not given a term; however, setting high standards for oneself may, for example, easily
 be described as „ambitious“]*

*And, but I'm a bit, I'm not as positive any more **PERS CHA DISM***

*as I once was
 and I'm actually, it's actually a shame isn't it
 that you erm weren't happy any more
 I'm, I like laughing
 like making little jokes
 I like erm being happy
 but I'm losing my happiness a bit“
 [„Happiness“ is indeed a mood, but here it describes a change in personality in the sense that the narrator has
 lost her happy disposition]*

*I used to be so, yeah I was quite quite loud **PERS NO NO***

*and I always ran people ragged **PERS NO NO***

*and erm yeah I was a difficult child
 let's put it like that, erm yeah*

*and I for hobbies so I always enjoyed making lots of things
 the whole time always just in my little bedroom and I tinkered around...
 [„Running people ragged“ is coded separately here, because it implies the trait „mean“, which is semantically*

different from a „loud child“. Being a „difficult child“ follows from „being loud“ and is for that reason not coded separately]

Borderline cases, which are still coded:

*so and then at that I changed schools
and came here to the Bettina School,
and erm then was here, so I was a really small insecure child ((laughs very quietly)) **PERS NO EEXP**
for these two years
and had no self-ac' erm -egot' erm so a erm self-confidence at all any more
but then I somehow nouris' noticed,
that suddenly here everybody likes me so much
and found it really kind of nice like that
and then I have here even now a whole lot of friends*
[The narrator subsequently reports that she finds lots of new friends, therefore it is questionable whether the diminished self-confidence is permanent.]

*'I'd found a job in Frankfurt again
erm did it for a fashion designer
sadly I never set up on my own
I should have done that
it would definitely have been sensible
but I I never trusted myself career, so personally I'm self-confident **PERS NO PEXE**
but career-wise I never was
so I always I've always found it hard to sell me to sell myself.*

Counter examples which are not to be coded:

*Yes and, then h' ha' but some kids sh' she shouts at a lot for example Roland,
because he likes hitting people
he always hits people*
[„hitting someone“ comprises no more than an act and for that reason is not a comprehensive behavioral pattern, from which a personality trait could be concluded]

*And then Ingrid and I got into a quarrel
because Ingrid so she is erm very so ((teacher's name)) always says
Ingrid is very powerful. (-) and she erm she's she has
and I'm also someti' I'm also very powerful
and erm then I we like often got into quarrels
because we're both as strong as each o'
because we both want to be stronger than the other,
but s' and then we got into like a big conflict
and Ingrid doesn't want to have anything to do with me any more*
[Here „powerful“ does not refer to a trait but a social position in the class]

*Then I got a car too
and with it I could, so I was like free, so to speak,
wasn't bound to anybody,
could drive
wherever I wanted and that kind of thing,
a nice feeling,
but at the start you don't even know how to appreciate
that you're so free and independent.*
[„Independence“ is not coded, because it regards objective independence, not as a personality trait.]

*And then like there you realize
through this illness
that people simply change
that they become more senile too,
get older and simply needier.
[Here „needy“ describes an external circumstance.]*

*„but then erm m m my mother and I had a car accident and then it's like a bit, then I erm, like for two years had
was then erm, so
then I was about five,
then I became kind of really scared for two years
because I because it was like such a shock for me.“
[This is only a change in mood and only for two years, therefore not lasting]*

*OK. So I'd just start now with my parents' separation
which came very suddenly for me erm
yeah then there was a huge to-do erm
everyone was fighting
I had to take care of my sisters an awful lot
erm yeah that wasn't such a nice situation erm*

*I think
I also changed most through that
because I simply wasn't at all used to it
and I had to take on more responsibility above all for my sister
because she felt pretty alone then
and then she'd naturally always come to me
because she's younger
[Here taking on responsibility only relates to the relationship with the sister and is therefore not a global
change of a trait]*

*„erm this childlessness also shaped me
and when it comes down to it too erm the beginning
that I didn't erm trust myself
erm to have an illegitimate child
and my mother didn't help me
and my father did try
but didn't get any further with this young man and his parents
and that they both sent me alone to erm to in this case to Sweden
there there was then an an abortion
I went there alone
alone to the hospital only a Swedish acquaintance was there
but my parents my closest family no-one was there
and my fat my father even till his death the cost of this abortion stuck with him as negative in his will
it was deducted from me,“
[This does not contain a cross-situational trait, even if one might here be tempted to code something like
„lacking self-confidence“]*

*„So my father wanted to send me to judo,
I said
„no, I'd rather play piano“,
erm yeah I was supposed to,
I don't know, box,*

then I said

„no, I'd rather go to a painting class“

so people, people erm could see like how driven I was for creative expression“

[this does not include a statement about personality; even being „driven erm for creative expression“ is not a trait but at most a mood.]

„then we then I got on better with my brother too,

'cos for the first few years we fought all the time

we we didn't get on at all,

we couldn't stand each other,

we hit each other all the time and so on,

and erm then since my mother's been working

we've actually got on really well,

'cos we have to rely on each other so much you know

and erm we're like really often at home on our own and everything.“

[Only the relationship with the brother is described]

Category: Value

Code: **VALUE**

Definition

A value is a highly generalized and relatively stable attitude of a person, which determines judgments and also actions, such as for example „loyalty“, „honesty“, „diligence“ and „family unity“. Values are differentiated from simple interests and preferences by their obligatory character.

Only code negated values if they are explicitly named.

It must be clear that the person concerned has internalized the value concerned. This means that membership of a religion or an ideological group alone is **not** sufficient to be coded.

Also code values which are limited to one domain (e.g. „patriotism“, „friends are important to me“) because of their relevance for identity.

Examples:

so as I said

my friends were more or less the same the whole time

I didn't have like a huge friendship group, but that was deliberate

*because I wanted to cultivate friendships **VALUE NO PEXE***

and erm not like other people

I don't know

have 30 people and only go to and fro and only superficially

was actually also, I actually liked it too, English and mathematics,

but like the problem was simply

that I didn't want to become a teacher

and especially not since I erm, back then I you know I always connected teaching with my social studies teacher

and erm because of that it was always like negative

and erm I always wanted to have a career

and not always stay at school

I mean

I thought to myself

I'm I'm also a family person.

VALUE NO PEXE

that I will of course have a family

*and that consequently in my job I'll then have lots erm of time for my children,
so that I can help them better,
so that I can spend the summer holidays, actually all the holidays with them,
[The narrator explains her first choice of studies by her attitude to family life]*

*„I knew
what war meant
and I knew erm
how criminal it is
so I developed a theme
to like protect myself from the trauma of war, VALUE NO PEXE
conscientious objection, erm recruited nationwide“
[The value is implicit but clear, e.g. pacifism]*

*and erm one of the best holidays was erm in 1997
because I went to the USA to an Indian camp
together with another friend
and erm it was just something really special
because I felt like
erm that the erm way of living and the culture and the beliefs of the Indians were much closer and more familiar
to me VALUE NO REV
as erm now for example so I'm I'm an atheist
and I don't belong to any any church
erm that I can with it that it's a really good starting point for me
and that I just like found a piece of myself erm
and it's kind of like a part of me
and still erm even today a very good and important memory, this experience with the Indians, everything I
learnt about about them there*

*[Perhaps you can explain again a bit more precisely what your brother's marriage meant for your family and
how it is today.]
Yeah so (-) as I said,
he made a wrong decision about it,
he's so kind of a bla black sheep in our family,
he does like everything wrong,
there's always a bad one
and there was a very big influence on my Father
that he like so to speak lost his hon honor with all the family in India, he (-) wa, VALUE NO PEXE
he was ashamed of it,
and that's why he hit him.
[„Family honor“ is a value.]*

Counter examples not to be coded:

*so I don't want to cast suspicion on her or anything
but she seems to quite a Nazi
three people in our class are having to repeat a year because of her
[Only code being „a Nazi“ or „racist“ if it is clear that the person concerned has internalized these „values“]*

*„So in the end erm
I was a bit sorry about it,
I didn't take my alternative community service very seriously any more,
it was actually more just tiresome erm
which is a shame,*

*because actually it's like about doing something good
without then asking for anything great in return
but maybe like just the result wasn't there
because then if you were as a caretaker position,
advertised as a caretaker position,
and if you don't really see the result of your work erm
then then how can I say it erm
you don't get any motivation or satisfaction from it,
so in the end it was an office job, like temping in an office
and didn't have anything directly to do with social issues, indirectly of course it did a bit, but not directly,
so that you couldn't see it."*

[Although the narrator implicitly refers to a value (altruism), he does not identify with it nor ascribes it to any other person]

Category: Talent

Code: **TAL**

Code statements about stable cognitive abilities (e.g. bright, dumb, intelligent) and innate talents (e.g. musical, mathematical or linguistic giftedness). An exception: code psychosocial skills (e.g. sociableness) as personality traits. Do not code abilities learned e.g. at school or at work.

Examples:

*so I don't do as well with mathematics, spatial thinking, logical thinking
I realized that at school*

PERS NO REV

2.2 Additional variable: Sameness/change over time SAMCHA

Is an explicit statement made about constancy / sameness over time or change in traits, values or talents, involving a comparison between „before and today“?

Category: no explicit statement

Code: **NO**

Definition: No explicit statements made about constancy / sameness or changes in a trait/value/talent

Examples

*of course erm they were written from a somewhat youthful viewpoint
so like you hadn't really seen much of the world
but you just erm tried to express in words, in a really romantic style of writing,
erm the thoughts that went through your mind*

*and that's continued up until today
and people say to me
that I've become a good lyricist or even
that I can write good poems,
because I can just make that kind of thing up as I go along. **TAL NO PEXE**
that's not difficult for me. A natural gift hehe.
[The constancy and that's continued up until today“ refers here to the action, not to the gift]*

Category: Explicit statements about consistency

Code: **SAM**

Definition: The narrator explicitly expresses that a trait/value/talent both existed earlier and has remained the same up to today (e.g. „always“).

Examples: see above

Category: Explicit statements about change

Code: **CHA**

Definition: The narrator explicitly expresses that a trait/value/talent has changed over the course of life (e.g. „(nowadays) not any more“, „in that respect I've changed“).

Exceptions: Formulations that do not include a comparison between „earlier“ and „today“ („that has shaped me“; „that contributed to my development“) are not sufficiently explicit.

Examples: see above

2.3) Additional variable: Type of link with an event EVENT

If you have coded the main variable PERSVAL, check the statement about personality/value or talent for a link to an event/events. This must be a causal / motivational / (non-)revelatory link between an event and a personality trait/value or talent. If such a link is present, code it. If an event is contrasted with an alternative, counterfactual event, code the link with the event, which actually took place.

Also omissions, subjective experiences and hypothetical events count as event.

DO NOT CODE evaluations as good or bad as events.

Distinguish between various kinds of link:

Category: No link between personality/value/talent and an event

Code: **NO**

Definition: Personality/value/talent is NOT linked to an event.

Example:

*so the other thing you need to know about me (-)
if you mean personality traits
by nature I'm erm very pragmatically minded **PERS NO NO**
so I don't try mu much
I'm an introvert partly an introvert erm
['Pragmatism' is not linked to any event.]*

*+Erm erm, and I went to a demonstration,
it was really good (-) and I think you can,
as heartless as Bush is, that's, I think that's like **PERS NO NO**
I can't I just can't imagine
how you can be like that*

*or it's like the same thing with poachers
or like with people who abuse children,
I don't get it at
and then I like totally get thinking about it
and I often talk to my mother about it, hmmm.*

*And erm yeah following on from that
we just have the erm Hungarian family tradition,
so we erm stand together as a family pretty closely, **VALUE NO NO**
and then I like realized erm looking back,
where I just
I don't know
whether it came from the last interview, or just like generally,
I just thought about
what I like about my family
or what I like think about
when I just remember the good old days, yeah the good old days hehe,
when everyone was at home,*

Borderline case

*then this girl got transferred here in 9th grade, but now it's like, so s' I
so I like found out from my friends, from, from
from my friend who lives above us
erm I found out about
that she had got beaten up at her old school
and erm that's why she transferred
and so to speak came after us
but like since then she hasn't schemed any more **PERS CHA NO**
and that's all like okay,
so I've talked about that for so long
(but) because it's really the only bad thing,
which has happened in my life, like lasting, lasting bad thing
[The girl was earlier described as a „schemer“. Here it is not clear whether her personality changed or her*

desisting from scheming was an exception. When in doubt, code the changed trait.

Category: Personality/value/talent is explains or shows in a typical behavior/event

Code: **PEXE**

Definition: A trait of the person (timidity, openness...) or value or talent shows itself in an event typical of it. The personality trait/value/talent is exemplified by an event/action, or the personality trait/value/talent motivates or explains the action/event. Heteronomous events, reactions in one's entourage and the narrator's social position may also be explained by traits of the narrator. In the same way, others' traits may explain reactions and actions of the narrator or of a third party. A causal-motivational or revelatory link must be **direct**, i.e. it may not be mediated by further causal chains (e.g. the suicide of a person cannot be explained directly by his/her parents' sadistic personality traits).

*„and I was always such an extremely shy child, so like not at all
so I like almost never said anything and so on, and then all these new people
suddenly there were thirty of us pupils
and in the other one there were seventeen of us
that was pretty hard,
and the problem was
that somehow they all knew each other
and I was the only girl
who really didn't know anyone“* **PERS NO PEXE**

*„and at the same time but after puberty (-) so in the mid-50s, so in the dark time of Adenauer, erm [hesitantly]
the rebellious spirits stirred in me (-)
then I began to construct something like a protest identity **PERS NO PEXE**
That culminated in me running away from school, from high school, as an 18 year-old,
because I was having a love affair with a teacher's daughter
and I ran away from school immediately“*

*in those days I had an awful lot of leisure activities,
i.e. I erm played a lot of table tennis and took violin lessons
and was erm to some extent,
so these are my mother's descriptions again,
very under-occupied
that is,*

*somehow you couldn't really please me, **PERS NO PEXE**
no matter what I did,
however much I was on the move,
I was always jittery and antsy and so on and so forth“*

Category: Atypical action/event in spite of personality/value/talent

Code: **DISM**

Definition: The link between a trait/value/talent and event shows an action NOT typical of the person, or the person's refraining from a typical action. The person reacts to an event in an atypical manner; this behavior is exceptional. The person would not describe him/herself in this way and explicitly makes this clear, dismissing the action/event as indicating anything about one's

personality/values/talents, for example through concessive links (*despite, although*) or conjunctions which express contradictions, objections or limitations (e.g. *on the other hand, as opposed to, in contrast to, by contrast, by way of contrast, on the contrary, whereas, but, though, although, nevertheless, nonetheless, however, meanwhile, only, albeit, yet*).

DO NOT CODE heteronomous events, reactions in one's entourage and social positions.

Examples:

normally my class is full of, yeah, I'd say, nerds **PERS NO DISM**

*but on the class trip they all went crazy
they were passing round one bottle of vodka after the next
some were just lying still in the corner
and were crying to themselves for some reason
some girls were just crying
without having had anything to drink*

*when suddenly the the child [laughs] erm plops out
and you have it in your arms
and that was actually the (-) last time when I really remember when I shed tears
so I normally try to control myself* **PERS NO DISM**
but in that case everything like ca- came out

Category: Event explains change in personality/value/talent

Code: **EEXP**

Definition: Through an event the person changes his/her personality, values or talents. The change is deep-reaching and lasting and not simply situative.
Heteronomous events, reactions in one's entourage and social positions count as event/action.

Examples

*"my brother was,
while I still hadn't been born,
already drafted for the war
and lost a leg there (-)
and when he came back (-)
it was all very painful for him
and he somehow felt inferior too* **PERS NO EEXP**
and he then began to drink heavily."

[The last line is not coded, because it is not a change in personality per se, but simply an action]

*"We then had a fur shop,
which is also a factor
in me protecting animals today."* **VALUE NO EEXP**

[The value is only implicitly named here, but is nonetheless coded because the experience is named in which the value is grounded, and it has changed the person very greatly]

*this trip, I think,
changed an awful lot for me
so for one thing at that moment I understood
what people mean by
"the meaning of life is living"
and erm (-) it just made me a bit more self-aware*

PERS CHA EEXP

Borderline cases, which are still coded:

*„yeah there were only children
who could hardly speak English,
you somehow had to make yourselves understood
and it was just really something
which just changed me somehow (-)*

yeah, how you interact with other cultures,

VALUE NO EEXP

*what other countries are, like simply different kinds of food,
we did every day a different delegation cooked something,
so you (can) sometimes eat Japanese food, or Korean or American burgers or, that was like really,
and you learned so much about the other cultures
and made really close friendships and”*

[Here a foundational open-mindedness and its catalyst are named, though only implicitly]

Category: Event reveals/leads to the recognition of personality traits, values or talents

Code: **REV**

Definition: Through an action/event the narrator becomes aware of a hitherto hidden trait/value/talent. The trait/value/talent already existed before the event. Thus the event does not change the self but only the perception of the self.

Heteronomous events, reactions in one's entourage and social positions count as event/action.

Examples:

*“and erm it took me a long time just to admit
for starters that I want somebody
and that I would like a woman*

PERS SAM REV

*I like, I'd dealt with it for a long time, hmmm fate or whatever,
but underneath the desires were always there
and this new therapist was in a position to bring these desires to the light of day
and that's why erm there erm yeah was a lot of chemistry between us
if you like*

*this woman is so amazing
so if I'd got to know here a long time ago
perhaps I'd be further along,
but it was only supposed to happen now
everything has it's time I think.”*

[The narrator became of her homosexuality through the therapy.]

3.) Additional variables for 1. (KOM) and 2. (PERSVAL)

3.1 Additional variable: Subject of biographical arguments (SUBJ)

Code who is making the autobiographical argument. This may be the narrator him/herself, but it may also be another individual or a generalized other, whose comments the narrator reports. For all biographical arguments, differentiate between the narrator, another person, and generalized others. (Helpful question: who is championing the biographical argument?)

Category: **Subject is the narrator**

Code: **1**

Definition: The biographical arguments are championed by the narrator him/herself (see the numerous examples above)

Category: **Subject is another person**

Code: **2**

Definition: The biographical arguments come from another person and are reported by the narrator.

Example

*When my father caught me with marijuana,
he reacted really strongly,
 didn't speak to me any more for 8 weeks. But that was because his best friend died of heroin abuse.
 [KOM=BB SUBJ=2]*

Category: **Subject is a generalized other**

Code: **3**

Definition: According to the narrator, the biographical arguments come from a generalized other, as for example, "all humanity", "everybody" etc.

Example:

*Everybody tells me
that I was still much too young for that. [CODE: KOM=DEV SUBJ=3]*

3.2 Additional variable: Object of biographical argument (OBJ)

Indicate here to whom the comments typical of life stories refer. This may be the narrator him/herself, but it may also be another person, or generalized others, such as “everybody”, “people”, “all humanity” etc. (Helpful question: to whom does the biographical argument refer?)

Category: **Object is narrator**

Code: **1**

Definition: The biographical arguments refer to the narrator.

Example

*Because I then had to repeat 6th grade,
my mother told me,
that in the future I should do more for school. [KOM=LL OBJ=1]*

Category: **Object is another person**

Code: **2**

Definition: The biographical arguments refer to another person.

Examples:

The divorce was a really bad rupture for my mother in life. [KOM=TP OBJ=2]

Category: **Objects are generalized others**

Code: **3**

Definition: The biographical arguments refer to generalized others.

Examples:

Those are burdens that people have to bear. [KOM = GENINS1 PERSOBJ=3]

4.) Metacommunicative statements (Variable META)

Metacommunicative statements “step outside” the narrative:

- * comment on one's own mode of narration (NAR)
- * comment on memory (MEM)
- * remark to the interviewer (INT)

If in doubt, adhere to this order of priority: INT > NAR > MEM !

Category: **Comment on memory**

Code: **MEM**

Definition: Code all kinds of comments on memory: One remembers well or badly, frequently or otherwise not at all. Code the first proposition that names remembering or knowing.
DO NOT CODE actual difficulties in remembering that are not explicitly commented on.

Examples:

- * *I would say
pretty much the first thing
I remember after my birth*
- * *of course I don't remember that any more, either*
- * *My first love, I still only remember that vaguely too*
- * *I don't know, either,
why that has stuck in my mind.*
- * *I still know
where I had my first smoke*
- * *I don't know any more, either.*
- * *I've no idea
which year that was.*
- * *Whether that was a Wednesday
I don't know.*
- * *I have no memory at all for dates.*

Counterexamples:

- * *That was - what's-her-name?*
[uncommented difficulty in remembering]
- * *yes, and then, what I like remembering again and again
is Stefanie*
[this is an implicit evaluation of the event, fundamentally it is not about memory]
- * *I don't know, either /
how long they were married.*
[This is mere ignorance of the date.]

Category: **Comment on narration**

Code: **NAR**

Definition: Comment on one's own narration. Remarks on his/her own narration that occur when the narrator starts faltering and considers how to continue the story of his/her life. Code each proposition.

Examples:

- * *I don't know
what I should tell*
- * *I've never told anybody that*
- * *I'm just realizing
I'm somehow getting tangled up in the story ...*
- * *What else is there to tell?*
- * *I need to think for a moment.*
- * *I can't think of anything else /
that I should say.*
- * *What came after that?*
- * *Now I remember something else
that I wanted to talk about*
- * *What I should also mention...*
- * *This is always important to me /
when I tell people about it.*

Counterexamples:

- * *I've got nothing negative to say about primary school.*
- * *Er, let's put it this way*
- * *well, I must say
[cliché]*

Category **Direct comment or question to interviewer**

Code: **INT**

Definition: Questions/remarks, etc., put/made directly to the interviewer. These remarks should at least be so explicitly directed at the interviewer that in principle it would be possible for her to respond to them (see counterexample). Also code direct replies to what the interviewer said. Code each relevant proposition.

Examples:

- * *Is the way
I'm doing it
right?*
- * *But I don't know
if the task was meant that way(?)*

Counterexample:

* *By the way, I then went to see the school psychologist.*

[This remark may be directed implicitly at the interviewer – who is also a “psychologist” - in this case, however, that would be too subliminal.]