Nostalgia old and new – Contrasting the sentimental with the xenophobic faces of nostalgia
Yiannis Gabriel, University of Bath

Organizational nostalgia is a wide-ranging phenomenon whereby older organizational participants idealize the past, irredeemably lost. Against such a past, the present is persistently found to be lacking and impoverished. Nostalgia is a complex emotion, both positive and negative, public and private and presents us with a paradox – how can memories of a past forever lost be experienced as pleasant? In earlier work, I argued that nostalgia is a coping mechanism for the discontents of present day – in particular, I suggested that nostalgia bolsters our injured narcissism by enabling a 'has been' to feel important again as having lived in an organization's golden age. In this presentation, I will contrast this sentimental type of nostalgia with an aggressive, xenophobic type that is currently embraced by right wing movements. This strident nostalgia is not yearning for a past irredeemably lost, but seeks to bring it back by violent means if necessary. Aggressive nostalgia constructs a past in mythical terms as a time of purity, solidarity and greatness, free of parasites and undesirables. I shall argue that this nostalgia fuels authoritarian ideologies and movements and represents a significant threat for the currently faltering European project.

Organizational Nostalgia Increases Work Meaning: The Moderating Role of Burnout
Constantine Sedikides, University of Southampton

This talk addresses the relevance of organizational nostalgia for the meaning that employees ascribe to their work (work meaning). We hypothesized, and found, that organizational nostalgia enhances work meaning and thereby reduces turnover intentions. In Study 1, an employee survey, spontaneously experienced organizational nostalgia was associated with higher work meaning. In Study 2, an organizational-
nostalgia induction increased work meaning, which subsequently predicted lowered turnover intentions. In Study 3, an organizational-nostalgia induction increased work meaning and thereby lowered turnover intentions, especially among employees who reported relatively high levels of burnout. When burnout is high, organizational nostalgia functions as a rich source of meaning that benefits employees’ work experience.

**Nostalgia and Museums – Invaluable Tool or Curse?**

Eva Heesen, Leibniz Universität Hannover

For many historians playing on people’s emotions and simplifying reality by painting black-and-white pictures is counter-intuitive. However, for historians working in museums emotional representations and easily tangible constructs of historical events, frameworks and developments are a potent tool when trying to attract visitors. Nostalgia and museums are caught in a state of mutual dependency: museums feed on people’s apparent need for nostalgic visions of the past while at the same time fostering their longing for it. The way in which exhibitions ‘sell history’ is crucial for a museum’s continued inflow of visitors and experience shows that topics which resonate with the public on an emotional level tend to be best-sellers.

This paper argues for nostalgia as escapism, an often indistinct longing for a recognisable yet markedly different version of reality. Coincidentally, the canvases for these projections are unfailingly supplied by the past. The ‘good old times’-theme evokes a vision of the past which does not faithfully mirror reality. Yet, the need to escape certain woes of modern reality drives people to look to the past for an improved ‘feel-good’ version of their world. These can range from ideas of a simpler world to that of an allegedly glorious past. The paper further argues that nostalgia, as form of escapism, is not exclusively triggered by topics with a positive connotation. Exhibitions covering themes of war and destruction appeal to people on a grand scale and evoke a nostalgic longing which does by no means equal the wish to personally live through the experience. Nostalgia essentially relates to imagined realities.

The paper will use examples form past exhibitions held at the Historical Museum in Hanover to back up these observations.
Nostalgia, Metaphor and the Subjective Understanding of Identity Transition
Mairi Maclean, University of Bath and Charles Harvey, Newcastle University
Business School

This paper examines the relevance of employing an oral history method and narrative interview techniques for business historians. We explore the use of oral history interviews as a means of capturing the expression of subjective experience in narrative and metaphor. We do so by analysing interviews concerning the transition of East German identities following reunification with West Germany. Self-expression emerges as critical to the vital identity work required for social integration following transformation, metaphor providing a means of articulating deep-rooted patterns of thought.

In the eastern Länder following reunification, the collective memory of space sparked a nostalgic longing for the erstwhile GDR, so widespread that it was accorded its own word, ‘Ostalgie’. This manifested itself both retrospectively and prospectively, in relation to nostalgia for what had been lost with the dissolution of the GDR, yet complemented by a sense of hope(lessness) for a projected future. This rose-tinted revision of the former GDR promoted memories of belonging in which friendships and community relations were in some way better. This was in large part a reinvention of meaning or mistaken memory, since it overlooked the regime’s obvious shortcomings and whatever torment it might have caused its citizens. Yet the self-deceiving nature of this nostalgia did not appear to make it any less real for participants, in terms of how they subjectively experienced actuality.

We demonstrate that employing an oral history methodology can benefit business historians by affording access to the human dimension of a research project, unlocking the subjective understanding of experience by low-power actors among the non-hegemonic classes. Hence, employing an oral history methodology provides a valuable means of countering narrative imperialism, exemplified here by the dominant West German success story grounded in Western-style individual freedom.