



Research Committee on the History of Sociology  
International Sociological Association (ISA)

# Newsletter

September 2009  
Addendum II

## **GOTHENBURG CALL FOR PAPERS: A FURTHER NOTE OF CLARIFICATION RELATED TO RCHS**

Below please find a list of RCHS sessions that have been suggested thus far. If you would like to give a paper and you think it fits into one of the sessions proposed, please write to the individual coordinators but please also send a copy of your abstract to the secretary, Andreas Hess ([a.hess@ucd.ie](mailto:a.hess@ucd.ie)).

Can I also point out that it is unlikely that all sessions listed will be part of the final program. We might have to merge some sessions or even simply forget about some of them. This of course depends on the supply of suggested papers and talks. The final decision of which session will definitely run (as you can see, we have one or two too many) will be made in consultation with the session organisers and in discussion with members of the executive committee. However, the last decision remains of course with the chief organisers of the World Congress.

- **The Future of Publishing with Special Regards to the History of Sociology**  
(contact Raf Vanderstaeten: [raf.vanderstraeten@ugent.be](mailto:raf.vanderstraeten@ugent.be))

The rise of disciplines is connected with the formation of groups/networks of specialists. It is connected with the emergence of 'scientific communities' – theorised about since Thomas Kuhn. But how is such a community of specialists brought together, how are common orientations among members of a scientific community upheld?

In this light, attention can be directed to the rise of specialised forms of scientific communication, such as specialised scientific journals. The establishment of such journals facilitates the formation of networks of (potential) authors. These journals and the publications therein 'control' the formation of scientific disciplines. The authors of articles accept the specialisation chosen by the journal, but at the same time they continually modify this specialisation by the cumulative effect of their published findings. Journals and their editorial boards also regulate and control access to scientific communication. The current peer review system puts up a barrier, but also grants a minimal form of credit or recognition to published research findings. It secures the shared values of a scientific community and endorses what the scientific community takes to be certified knowledge.

However, specialised publication media not only enable the communication of research findings. They also influence how contributions to scientific communication can be made. In a kind of feedback loop, they interfere in the scientific production process. Publication possibilities influence the choice of relevant topics, of theoretical debates, of methodological standards, etc. There exist clearly restrictive conditions regarding

what type of communication is acceptable for publication. The journals also change the temporal structure of the field of science. In comparison with the production and circulation of books, periodicals lead to the *rapid* succession of *small* contributions. Publications in periodicals succeed each other at short and regular intervals. The periodicity of appearance indeed presses scientists to publish at regular intervals ('publish or perish').

For this session, papers are invited which address the dynamics of discipline formation and specialisation via analyses of publication or communication practices. Apart from written media (books and journals), attention can also be focussed upon the history of scholarly conferences and associations or other disciplinary network structures.

- **Public Intellectuals** (contact Christian Fleck, Graz: christian.fleck@uni-graz.at)
- **Sociological Perspectives on Conceptual and Intellectual History/Histories** (contact Andreas Hess, Dublin: a.hess@ucd.ie)

Papers in this session will discuss the state of both the traditional (K. Mannheim) and modern forms (R. K. Merton, P. Bourdieu) of practicing the sociology of knowledge. Also, contributions are welcome which discuss the question of whether sociologists can learn something from Cambridge-style intellectual history (Q. Skinner, J.G.A. Pocock, S. Collini) or from conceptual history (as proposed by R. Koselleck).

- **The History of Empirical Social Research and Statistics** (contact: Imelda Georges, Berlin: i.gorges@gmx.de)
- **National Traditions and Trajectories** (contact Christian Fleck, Graz: Christian.fleck@uni-graz.at)
- (joint session with the ISA RC on the Sociology of Leisure): **Leisure through the Ages: Comparative Insights** (contact Ishwar Modi, Jaipur: iiiss2005modi@yahoo.co.in)
- **Adam Smith and his Relevance to Sociology** (contact Ragnvald Kalleberg, Oslo: ragnvald.kalleberg@sosgeo.uio.no)
- **The Entangled History of Gender and Sociology** (contact Theresa Wobbe, Erfurt: maria-theresa.wobbe@uni-erfurt.de)

If sociology contributes to an understanding of our world by defining new objects of research and reevaluating its rich heritage, this implies a new openness regarding its own epistemic history. We propose to discuss this historicity with respect to the concepts of gender and sociology as embedded in (trans)national contexts (1870s-1920s). How have gender and sociology emerged in the context of discourses on the social? How has gender been created, while sociology established its distinct set of concepts such as differentiation, law, and society? To which extent do these concepts contribute to the codification of social objects, and how do they invent persons, which then in turn may alter these classifications? To what extent do these concepts reflect both national paths and mutual transnational observations? The aim of the session is to provide a reflexive perspective on the entangled history of gender and sociology. We intend to understand how sociology took part in the scientification of social categories on the one hand, and how these notions have nurtured our gendered imagination of modernity on the other. While the session has its point of departure in the French-German case, further cases are welcome.

- **The history of sociology: how and why do we write the history of sociology? What is the role of biography?** (contact Cherry Schrecker, Nancy: cherry.schrecker@univ-nancy2.fr)
- **Agenda Setting and Steering Mechanisms in National Sociologies** (contact Jennifer Platt, Sussex: j.platt@sussex.ac.uk)

Attempts have sometimes been made to influence the directions of national sociologies. These may stem from government agendas which indicate the topics and types of research that are being encouraged – often through the provision of funding opportunities. Internal steering mechanisms within national associations and more general disciplinary contexts of sociology are probably weaker, and any collective sense of directions for sociology may be only slightly developed. Nevertheless there are some mechanisms which may attempt to create an internally-directed set of research questions and approaches: Presidential addresses, editorials, inaugurals and on occasion more explicit agencies such as disciplinary task-forces or submissions concerning policy made to government bodies. Other unintentional means are more indirect, with the effects of cues emanating from book reviews, symposia and disputes. In this session we invite contributions which describe whichever of these mechanisms are pertinent in a particular national context, and assess the extent to which they have in fact affected the direction of sociology in that country.

- **Author-meets-Critics session** (contact Charles Crothers, Auckland: charles.crothers@aut.ac.nz)
- *Two planned sessions: Japan: A rich history of sociological theories and empirical Applications, I/II* (contact Kiyomitsu Yui, Kobe: k-yui@cf7.so-net.ne.jp)

Sociological studies in Japan have a history of roughly 140 years and have reached a level of sophistication similar to that of sociological studies in the West. However, sometimes they tend to be invisible to the rest of the world, mainly because of language barriers. In this session we would like to showcase the latest achievements of mainly young sociologists in various fields of sociological investigations in Japan. We thus hope to contribute to a renewed and more inclusive vision of the history of sociology. We also hope that this session could serve as a reminder that sociology has also had a history in non-Western societies. This session is organized in cooperation with the Japanese Association for the Study of the History of Sociology.

*Andreas Hess* (Secretary)

PS: I am currently on sabbatical (until September 2010). Until the end of this year I can also be contacted at Yale where I am currently a Research Fellow ([andreas.hess@yale.edu](mailto:andreas.hess@yale.edu)). I will access both my Yale and UCD email regularly. However, if you should have any urgent queries please bear with me; it could take a few days before I'll be able get back to you.

PPS: Can I also draw your attention to the current rules and regulations concerning membership in the ISA and in RCHS. This is particularly important in light of the big Gothenburg congress next year.

## RCHS Subscription

The basic RCHS subscription is US\$10 for one year, or \$30 for 4 years. For students, however, it is \$5 or \$15. This reduced rate also applies to others from non-OECD countries who can't afford to pay the full rate. If unable to arrange even the reduced rate, please write to the Secretary to explain the circumstances and ask for free membership. RCHS is a Research Committee of ISA, so RCHS members are expected to be ISA members. The ISA membership registration form is available on <http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/formisa.htm>. There is also now a new facility for paying directly with credit card to the central ISA; further details are available from the ISA website.

If you are not an ISA member you should pay your membership fees directly into the new RCHS bank account (see details below) and by additionally notifying the secretary via e-mail: [a.hess@ucd.ie](mailto:a.hess@ucd.ie) or via post: Dr. Andreas Hess, School of Sociology, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland. Please do NOT send cheques since extra charges apply.

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Membership in the RCHS is open to anyone interested in the field. You become a member as soon as your application form and money have been received by the secretary

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