



# Newsletter

January 2008

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## A Comment from the President

### The Wrong Role Model

The recently established European Research Council selected its first beneficiaries recently from among a number of grant applications that was much higher than anyone expected. In this comment, I want to address the ERC’s selection procedures, which, in my view, were completely inappropriate. Had the ERC chosen another model to

evaluate the applications, the damages would have been smaller.

Scholars increasingly criticize the way the European Commission is funding scientific research. The Framework Program functions according to the model of “calls.” As a result of time-consuming and opaque negotiations between several actors, the Commission announces the topics for which it is willing to accept proposals. Only consortia are eligible to participate. Consortia consist of bundled research teams from several European member states. The size of these consortia varies strongly and a consortium can consist of hundreds of researchers assembled in

more than a dozen teams. Preparing a proposal is a time-consuming business and the acceptance rates are not high; according to a report by the European Commission only one in five submissions finally got grants in 2005. Nevertheless researchers from every corner of Europe line up regularly in Brussels and the member states' governments proudly announce their success rates and the amount of cash flowing from Brussels into their national pockets. Winners in these competitions get funds for up to five years. However, a disproportional amount of time has to be spent on sheer management affairs. This is not the result of the proverbial „managing scientists is like herding cats“ but, instead, the unintended consequence of “Eurocrats” fear of corruption.

Scientists uninterested in this kind of contract research delight themselves with horror stories that insiders tell with gusto. Those whose field of competence does not fit into the “calls” are sidestepped, and therefore angry. Nearly all scholars and research policy-makers have lamented the systematic exclusion of whole fields of research, especially basic research, and have argued for revision. In 2006 a European Research Council was established and secured a first budget – 7.5 billion Euros for the first seven years of subsidizing basic research. The sum seems to be high, but it was clear from the outset that the demand would outpace the means. In 2005 alone, the EU spent 4.6 billions through its “calls”. One billion a year for basic research is a drop in the bucket. Research policy advocates asked for more, but the politicians who settled the agreement on the actual EU budget preferred to

channel nearly as much money as before to Europe’s agro-business and traditional clientele.

The most important innovation of the creation of the ERC was the farewell to “top down” funding. European researchers should be free to set their own priorities and suggest what they think are the most promising topics to be investigated. Obviously whatever they suggested would be “excellent”, at least according to the pompous rhetoric of the ERC: “Bringing Great Ideas to Life” reads the headline on ERC’s website; ERC documents are full of the rhetoric of “risk taking”, “overcoming established frontiers” and similar phrases.

One can be sure that the 22 members of the Scientific Board, including two Nobel Laureates, and all of them Academia’s elitists knew that the funds allocated to their Council are not sufficient. Therefore they came to the conclusion to spend the money according to the “bottom up” principle but to erect at least some barriers.

As guinea pigs of the brave new world, the Council selected „Starting Independent Investigators“, plainly young researchers, two to nine years after finishing their Ph.D., as the only scholars eligible to submit proposals in the first round of ERC funding. Who could oppose this? Putting youth forward sounds always good, and investing in them might finally further at least one of the goals of EU’s Lisbon-strategy with its rhetoric of knowledge based economy into being.

On 25 April 2007, the closing date of the competition, the ERC had 9,167 proposals in its post-box. The 290 million Euros earmarked for this

program will fund not more than 260 successful applications, according to a press release by ERC. What's missing in the press release is the remarkable rejection rate of nearly 97 per cent. The worst expectations became true. No one could seriously argue that this competition offered a fair chance for each applicant. Certainly, one can anticipate that the ERC's representatives will urge the European Commission and EU member state's governments to enlarge ERC's budget in the future. But the damage done to young researchers who submitted proposals to the ERC this year can hardly be overestimated. 9000+ young researchers prepared proposals. Since only three out of one hundred succeeded, one can calculate the economic losses fairly accurately. Writing such a proposal requires at least one month of one's work-time (here, I'm not calculating the time spent by the counseling of senior scholars and mentors). About 8,907 person months or 740+ person years have been wasted in this application process. When in August 8 907 young researchers receive the rejection letter from Brussels, they will need a lot of consoling and moral encouragement. During the fall 2007 some 300 more will join them because their proposals failed in the second stage (ERC's Starting Grant is a two step procedure, eliminating the huge majority of applicants in the first stage and inviting 559 to submit an enlarged version within 6 weeks with the effect of rejecting the majority of them once more). Besides this exorbitant ravage of human capital on the side of the applicants there are costs on the side of ERC too. To select the 260 or so fortunate recipients of grants, some 20 panels have been established for which about 200 experts

have been recruited. All 9 167 proposals have to be reviewed and approved. If one calculates one-half hour minimum for each, about 100 weeks of work-time of Europe's best and most creative senior researchers have been dispersed for this endeavour. Not included in this computation is the time spent by ERC's administrative staff that had to check the incoming proposals, copying them for the evaluators, etc. For each evaluator there will be finally one winner and 45 losers.

No doubt the well-minded members of ERC's Scientific Board will argue that they could not foresee the amount of incoming proposals. Nevertheless one must suggest that they chose the wrong model for their business. The ERC modelled itself after the U.S. National Research Council. The NRC was established during World War I when American scholars and politicians realized the shortcomings in their country's scientific infrastructure. The success of NRC contributed to its export overseas. Practically all national research organizations in Europe adopted routines from their American counterpart. America's NRC works because all members of any scientific discipline are able to observe their whole field, follow the publication output of their colleagues, have often an onsite familiarity with research sites, and are therefore in a position to make sound decisions about promising young researchers. The reason for this is quite simple – Americans share a common language; they share scholarly space wherein scientific communication takes place in the course of annual conferences; and they share common journals and other publication opportunities. The notion of a

“American Research Area” is superfluous because this already exists, along with a well-established system that distributes rewards to those who are employed at universities that win annually ranking competitions. This American system produces unwanted side effects as well, most obviously the increasing parochialism of American scholars and scientists. The overwhelming majority of American don’t speak or read foreign languages and practically no one in America reads non-English scholarly publications.

Nothing comparable exists in larger Europe, which extends beyond the European Union and its 27 member states. ERC grants are possible for applicants from non-member states, like Switzerland and Norway, candidate states as Turkey, and European outposts like Israel. A “Green Paper” published in April 2007 by the European Commission on the perspectives of the European Research Area is full of laments about the fragmentation of the European scientific and research landscape, the lack of a common labour-market for academics, the relative immobility of scholars, and all the other shortcomings that make the appearance of the European Research Area highly unlikely for the near future.

ERC panellists are unlikely to know their scholarly counterparts in Europe, let alone the most promising young researchers among them. I say with no malice whatsoever toward the ERC’s scientific board members and its 200 panellists that the 260-something winners in the present competition won’t be selected because of their individual creativity, their willingness to break new ground and take risks, but because they

are affiliates of well-known senior researchers or employed at, or at least connected to, the most prominent universities in Europe. Robert K. Merton, founder of sociology of science, labelled the mechanisms at work the “Matthew effect” (*one that hath shall be given*). It might be that the highest ranking universities assemble collectively the brightest minds but there is no indication that the distribution of promising young women and men correlates with any of the established rankings. Starting scientists and scholars of high potential may be scattered much more evenly in larger Europe.

The 200 ERC evaluators make their decisions on the basis of few pages written by the applicants. Besides a *curriculum vitae* and a self-evaluation, applicants submit only a proposal that lays out their intellectual problems and the infrastructures available to them to pursue them. It’s not an easy task to evaluate such proposals, which by their nature are just promises to do something in the future. Evaluating young researchers’ potential is an even harder business because one has less of a track record by which to judge applicants’ acumen and their determination to see projects through to the end.

The ERC might have spent some effort scrutinizing the history of research funding by the Rockefeller Foundation. From the mid 1920s onwards, the Rockefeller Foundation gave one-year fellowships to young researchers throughout the world, including Europe. The European research area of these days was less populated than today, of course, but the social, cultural, and particularly the scholarly fragmentation was as high as it is today. Rockefeller’s

officers, working out of Paris, commissioned about twenty American professors to travel for two months in Europe to look out for candidates to whom fellowships might be offered. Each year, the Rockefeller Foundation offered about 250 fellowships to Europeans, quite the same number as the ERC allocates today. The published directories of former Rockefeller Fellows now reads like a Who's Who in Science and Scholarship. Historians of science think unanimously that the Rockefeller Fellowship program was one of the most successful funding schemes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to stimulate scientific research. But this, of course, is a model that places a premium on the judgment of established scholars who are able to

recognize the sparkling, creative habits of mind that make for eventual breakthrough work. What the ERC has opted for, instead, is a plodding bureaucratic machine that honours personal connections and predictable work.

(A shorter edited version of this article appeared previously in *The Times Higher*.)

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## Intellectual History and History of Sociology – A Critical Response to the Traditional Mertonian Approach

At last year's final plenary session at the *Transatlantic Voyages* conference in Nancy repeated appeals were made by Jennifer Platt and Christian Fleck to get away from what they see as mere 'hero worshipping' in the history of sociology. We should stop, so the two argued, looking only at individual case studies or individuals' favourite sociologists and

their (presumed) roles in and contribution to the discipline. Instead we should employ the Mertonian model, studying publication patterns, age groups and cohorts, the professional calling of individual sociologists, their contribution to the formation of the profession, etc.

I find that argument convincing – but only to an extent. Yes, there has been occasional hero-worshipping, but let's be frank, some of it has produced great (and even entertaining) results. Studying charismatic individuals and their contribution to the discipline will always have its place in the history of sociology, and praising one particular person's achievement or the celebration of the birth of an entire paradigm through that one person will always accompany that approach.

The problem with Jennifer Platt and Christian Fleck's appeal lies rather in what it does not say and in what it

consciously or unconsciously excludes. In many ways, I would argue that their argument does not go far enough. I maintain that in order to understand the history of sociology it would be self-limiting only to refer back to the traditional Mertonian methods of studying the history of sociology and the employment of the traditional tools of that disciplinary tradition. Fact is that the history of sociology, its paradigms (including the contributions of individual theorists) cannot be written by referring to sociology alone. As Wolf Lepenies has so poignantly demonstrated in *Between Literature and Science: The Rise of Sociology*, sociology emerged as a third academic field situated between and in relation with the arts (literature in particular) and the natural sciences (most prominently amongst them evolutionary approaches). Lepenies also suspected that sociology and the social sciences would always retain the birthmarks and will probably always remain entangled in that complex relational web of the three cultures and that in case of an attempt to 'solve' the ambiguities by getting rid of the delicate balance or to side with one field would inevitably result in the return of the suppressed side(s).

But one could go even beyond Lepenies. Some of the most interesting applications and developments of sociological ideas have come from outside the discipline. In many ways sociology has been very good at exporting its ideas; at the same time it has not been very good at taking on board and incorporating what other disciplines have achieved with the help of sociological tools. This becomes particularly clear when comparing two fields, the history of sociology and intellectual history. In what follows I would like to pick out just two recent

publications in intellectual history to illustrate my point.

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Francois Dosse became known as the author of the two-volume comprising *History of Structuralism* (1991 and 1992), probably the best introduction and historical treatment of the subject from a critical intellectual history and history of ideas standpoint. In his most recent book Dosse now gives his own approach a similar treatment. *La marche des idées* (Éditions La Découverte, Paris 2003) introduces the reader to two fields which partly overlap but which are also distinct enterprises - the history of intellectuals and intellectual history. In the first part, which is devoted to the history of intellectuals, Dosse takes issue with two viewpoints. The first viewpoint operates with a nominalist definition of the intellectual. It assumes that intellectuals form a specific group committed to certain forms of social and political action. Sociologically speaking, this group is a result of the functionalist division of labour; brains and intellect are employed as opposed to manual work and labour. The second viewpoint sees intellectuals as stemming from a cultural milieu or niche of artists and writers who are committed to a political cause (consisting mainly of political opinions and positions that had emerged during the French Revolution and that would later reappear in the Dreyfus affair). According to Dosse, each view is somewhat limited. The nominalists' definition does not include the rather small niches or segments of specific subcultures while the second viewpoint does not catch the great number of thinkers who live outside that specific intellectual subculture and those milieus.

Dosse discusses various sociological attempts that have tried to account for both phenomena but in the end he comes to the conclusion that while sociological explanations go a long way to analyse the various milieus, sociological explanations often fall short in terms of content or substance (Pierre Bourdieu being perhaps the most prominent example of having delivered brilliantly on nominalist grounds but failing miserably in terms of substantive issues, particularly in his *Homo Academicus*). Another problem for sociologists is that of comparing and contrasting cultures and countries. Sociologists usually work with conceptual tools that necessarily abstract from concrete forms with the consequence that they usually miss out on the uniqueness of cultural achievements (intellectual and otherwise).

According to Dosse, sociology will not be able to solve the problem of tackling intellectuals and their history and ideas. Dosse recommends to social scientists who are interested in the history and sociology of intellectuals to embark on a dialogue with two distinct approaches, one known as the Cambridge School (Quentin Skinner and John G.A. Pocock most prominently), the other known as the German *Begriffsgeschichte* or the history of concepts and ideas (as promoted by Reinhardt Koselleck). While the Cambridge School has been particularly good in re-introducing classic political thinking to intellectual history – in particular the re-discovery and account of classic republicanism was a unique achievement – the German *Begriffsgeschichte* has the advantage of combining the history of ideas and concepts with social history. Taken together, the two approaches have a clear

advantage over sociological notions of intellectual ideas and milieus because they allow not only for a discussion of form and appearance but also for the treatment of the substance and content of intellectual ideas and concepts. Both are also better in terms of comparative approaches.

The second study I would like to turn to in support of my argument that an appeal to the sociology of science is not enough, is a comparative history of the educated and intellectual classes before the First World War, published as *Das Zeitalter der Intelligenz – Zur vergleichenden Geschichte der Gebildeten in Europa* (Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, Göttingen 2006). The author of this study is Denis Sdvižkov, a historian associated with the University of Moscow who has worked together with Polish, German and French historians on a good number of comparative history projects, an outcome of which is this book. *The Age of Intelligence – A Comparative History of the Educated Classes in Europe* is a remarkable achievement and a great work of synthesis. It starts with an etymological discussion of the term ‘intelligence’, a term that has the same roots as ‘intellectual’ but which turns out to be more inclusive than the word ‘intellectual’ since it includes not only various cultural milieus and subcultures across Europe but also addresses functional aspects such as the educated and cultured classes that exist in all European countries. The author is keen on showing the enormous variety, the plurality of forms ranging from French *intellectuals*, the German *Gebildete* and *Bildungsbürgertum*, the Polish *Intelligencja* to the Russian *intelligencija*. The way in which modernization, educational reforms, the

rise of the middle classes and the emergence of the civil sphere emerged in each country explains the unique role of the educated classes and intellectual milieus in each country. Sdvižkov sees a continuum but also a clear west-east contrast: the west having clearly an advantage in terms of civil society achievements while the further east one goes the murkier the concept and understanding of civil society gets – but also the more heroic the acts of the intellectuals become. This is not the place to recall the peculiarities of each country and culture that is discussed in the book, suffice is to say that in the last chapter the author compares and contrasts four of them (France, Germany, Poland and Russia). It is particularly this last chapter, which is the most fruitful one because it outlines an entire agenda and even points towards the major obstacles that any intellectual history, any history of ideas and, to a good part, any history of sociology would have to address.

Let's go briefly through the points that the author raises. There is, first of all the problem of how to compare sensibly the educated classes and intellectual milieus across countries and cultures. Sdvižkov states that we lack solid criteria for comparison. In most cases we instinctively look first at the peculiar context, the core and the outer limits of the educated and intellectual classes. We do so by studying the meaning that groups or individuals give to their actions. Usually we write the history of the educated class from its own perspective and we therefore remain entangled in the web of their own mythologization and its particular use of language. It becomes almost impossible to derive common features from such

singular constellations. The question that arises is then: is it possible to study any 'regular verbs' beyond the mere accumulation and description of singular cases?

Secondly, if we are to model the educated classes comparatively what do we model them after? Sure, the conceptual frames of a Weber, Simmel, Troeltsch or Mannheim or the even more specific elite or class theories from Michels to Mills and from Parsons to Bourdieu have helped us in understanding the cultural and social embeddedness of intellectual end educated classes, elites or even free-flowing strata. Yet, such conceptualisations remain more often than not neutral vis-à-vis values or substantial argumentation. Also, often the strata conditions referred to are country or culture specific. For example, the German *Bildungsbürgertum* or the republican *noblesse d'État* make only limited sense outside their specific German or French contexts.

Thirdly, how do we account for contingencies that, as we all agree, are at work but that we find often hard to integrate into our conceptual framework? On the micro-level, how do we deal with dynastic or familial intellectual traditions? And on the meso and macro-level, how do we account for heterogeneity? How crucial are 'foreign' contributions to the educated strata of a nation, a country or a culture? As Sdvižkov points out, in this context the history of Jewish intellectuals provides a great insight. A European east-west distinction can be observed with high levels of Jewish acculturation and assimilation in the West and low integration in the East. In any case, the

issue of homogenisation trends or inclinations towards 'indiginization' need to be addressed. As Sdvižkov points out, in the case of the educated and intellectual classes we can encounter both, the 'melting pot' as well as the 'pot of trouble'.

Regional heterogeneity is another troubling point when it comes to the history of the educated and intellectual classes. The difference between town and countryside on one side and small town/city and capital on the other side have been crucial to both the formation of intellectual milieus and publics and to political and social ideas. To associate intellectual and educated life solely with an urban environment and a large public would be a serious mistake. To apply a one-sided view to religious upbringing and belonging would be equally erroneous. How Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism are exactly linked to the emergence of the educated class remains to be studied. Again, are there any regular patterns that can be identified across various nations and cultures? The same applies to the distinction of agnostics and atheists vis-à-vis believers or confessionals. And last but not least, a larger question may lurk behind the religious question: What exactly is the connection between intellectual ambition, priesthood and secularisation? Are intellectuals the new secularised priests?

A crucial factor in any attempt to comprehend the educated classes and the intellectuals is whether they can be seen as a collective actor. What is the exact relationship between the educated, the intellectuals and the state? Is there a stratum that can be identified as being more likely to cater to intellectuals'

needs? Is this stratum necessarily the middle class? Are wealth or other forms of property a hindrance or beneficial to the life of the mind? Are old and established elites and intellectuals necessarily in opposition? And what about the increasing professionalization of the life of the mind?

Finally Sdvižkov reminds us that we also have to address the political and moral question of whether there really exists an intrinsic relationship between intelligence and liberalism. After all, have we not witnessed numerous examples of wilful cooperation between intelligence and totalitarianism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century? This last question throws up the question of morality and whether we really need a kind of intellectual moral force that reminds us constantly of our wrongdoings. Have the detrimental experiences of totalitarianism and the way intellectuals participated in it not rendered an intellectual class useless or unnecessary?

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I have referred to the two studies here in such details to show that there are fields of study out there that are concerned with (and partly discuss and answer) sociological questions in a thorough way. I could have picked out another half dozen books that have appeared in recent times that should be of interest to the history of sociology (most prominently amongst them Stefan Collini's fascinating engagement with the thesis that Britain knows no intellectuals, in his *Absent Minds*, Oxford 2006). However, the main concern here was with the limitations of a call for the traditional history of sociology approach as the only alternative and as the only way forward.

I would argue instead that we should do both the traditional sociology approach - and much more. Why limiting ourselves in ambition? Towards the end of his life even Robert K. Merton got into *Begriffsgeschichte* (see his book *The Travels and Adventures of Serendipity*, 2004) So let us look over the professional fence and let us widen our horizon. What is happening in intellectual history and the history of ideas has become almost

indistinguishable from the history of sociology.

Why should we leave all those good sociological questions (and answers) to others? Are we lacking ambition or has finally professional (self)censorship kicked in?

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### Latest Member Publications (2007/08):

Hans Henrick BRUUN: *Science Values and Politics in Max Weber's Methodology* (New Expanded Edition), Ashgate, Aldershot 2007 . A new introduction of 55 pages has been added to the 1972 original, which has in addition been totally overhauled, including translation into English of all German quotations.

Daniel CHERNILO: *A Social Theory of the Nation State: The Political Forms of Modernity beyond Methodological Nationalism*, Routledge, London 2007 (193 + xii). This book construes a novel and original social theory of the nation-state. It rejects nationalistic ways of thinking that take the nation-state for granted as much as globalist orthodoxy that speaks of its current and definitive decline.

Sven ELIAESON: "Neo-Liberalism and Civil Society. Swedish Exceptionalism and Polish Pluralism", CIFE (Nice and Berlin), in: *L'Europe en Formation*, No. 4/2006 (Decembre)

Sven ELIAESON (ed.): *Building Civil Society and Democracy in New Europe*, Cambridge Scholars Publisher, Newcastle 2008 (pp363, i-xiii) With contributions from Sverker Gustavsson, Jürgen Nautz, Henryk Domanski, Christopher G.A. Bryant, Jan Kubik, Joanna Kurczewska, Stephen Turner, Stein Ringen, Nico Stehr, Jan-Erik Lane, Bernhard Wessels, Nikolai Genov, Jürgen Schmidt, Leslie Holmes, Andrzej Rychard, and Włodzimierz Wesolowski.

Sven ELIAESON and Ragnvald KALLEBERG (eds) *Academics as Public Intellectuals*, Cambridge Scholars Publisher, Newcastle 2008 (pp320). With contributions from Ragnvald Kalleberg, Liam Stone, Bernd Weiler, Linda Holmaas, Markus Schweiger, Sven Eliaeson, Hedvig Ekerwald and Örjan Rodhe, Per Wisselgren, Joanna Bielecka-Prus and Aleksandra Walentynowicz, Ken Roberts, Nilgun Celebi, Govindan Parayil, Christopher Schlembach and Craig Calhoun.

Andreas HESS: “Against unspoilt authenticity: a re-appraisal of Helmuth Plessner’s ‘The Limits of Community’ (1924)”, in: *Irish Journal of Sociology* (Special Issue on ‘Communities’, eds. M. Corcoran and M. Devlin), Vol 16, No 2, December 2007, pp11-26

Andreas HESS: “The Social Bonds of Cooking: Gastronomic Societies in the Basque Country”, in: *Cultural Sociology*, Vol. 1, No 3, November 2007, pp383-408

#### Free advertisement

*If you have a new publication out, please let us know. Just send a note to the secretary and we will be happy to include your latest publication(s) in our next newsletter.*

## 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.

# Interim conference in Umea, Sweden (21-24 August 2008)

*Dear RCHS Members,*

This summer I hope that we will see each other at our Interim conference in Sweden! Per Wisselgren, Björn Wittrock and I have tried our best to organise it well for you.

We are happy to announce that *Saïd Arjomand*, who published with E. Tiryakian *Rethinking Civilizational Analysis* (2004), *Raewyn Connell*, who came out last year with *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science*, *Johan Heilbron* who published with others *Pour une histoire des sciences sociales. Hommage à Pierre Bourdieu* in 2004, and *Eileen Yeo* who published with others *Engendering the Social* in 2004 - to mention just this among all other things they have published - they are all coming as keynote speakers to our conference! I do hope they will give rise to lively discussions around our communal project, the history of sociology.

What did patriarchy and colonialism mean for the development of today's sociology, how did the relations between elites and peripheral groups change, how did one elite succeed another, how was one paradigm replaced by another, and how did societal and intradisciplinary factors interact? What can it mean to be sociological in researching one's own history? The conference theme of perspectives from the periphery can encompass a broad number of questions.

We do hope that also more traditional RCHS interests such as to lift to the forefront a special sociologist, a special concept or a special oeuvre or to go into the history of the discipline of sociology in one's own country or region also are presented in papers in August!

We have applied for and we have been given grants for these four keynote speakers from USA, Australia, France/the Netherlands and Scotland, for the conference infrastructure (access to PC projectors etc) and for refreshments. There is no registration fee for members of the RCHS. (The participants themselves pay for lunches, the conference dinner, housing and travels.)

All details are at the website, [www.periphery2008.se](http://www.periphery2008.se). In short, last day for submission of abstracts is already January 31 although we will look for paper abstracts even after the last submission day, the last date for registration is *May 31*, the conference itself takes place Thursday August 21 – Sunday August 24. If you are participating with a paper or through leading a session and you need a letter confirming your participation for to be able to apply for money, we will help you with such letter. Tickets are much cheaper now than in a few months' time, so hurry to your travel agency/internet! Don't hesitate to contact our conference secretary for information on how to travel:

[kaarina.streijffert@umea-congress.se](mailto:kaarina.streijffert@umea-congress.se)

We, interim conference organisers, now need you, members of RCHS! Your networks are the base for the conference! Do give RCHS some hours through spreading to your contacts the call for papers and the website address, [www.periphery2008.se](http://www.periphery2008.se) and inspire them to come to the August conference!

You can also remind them that this might be their life chance to come to the north of our globe! Umea, the conference city in Sweden, is on the same latitude (N 63°) as Alaska and south Greenland. It is less than 400 km from the Polar circle. Still, the Gulf Stream makes Umea warm. Today it is dark with white snow, with sunrise after 9 o'clock and sunset before 3 pm, but in August the sun will be up more than 15 hours a day! So welcome to the City of the Sun!

I have also been thinking of some sessions that would be good to have but that we don't have today. See also other ?-marked session topics in the session list further below. Could you think of leading any of these, reformulated or not?

- 1) "The national histories of sociology" (histories from different countries or regions of the introduction of sociology in the area and its following evolvement), 2) "Meeting Western sociology. Personal accounts with reflections" (post-colonial criticism of our subject), 3) "The history of the relationship between Nordic sociology and the sociology in USA – personal accounts" (how did links come about and what influence did these links have?), 4) "Engendering sociology in the Nordic countries. The first generation of gender sociologists in the Nordic countries – personal accounts", 5) Scientific power and 6) "Changing theories of centres and peripheries" (these two last sessions can be theoretical or build on discourse analysis)

We hope young researchers will find their way to Umea to give us new ideas and we hope old sociologists, who have the history of the subject in their own bodily minds, will share their knowledge and experience with us all. We hope for many fruitful meetings at our interim conference!

A Warm Welcome in Umea!

*Hedda Ekerwald*

Organiser and member of the board of RCHS

.....  
Interim conference in Sweden August 21-24. Please remember and use our conference website:

[www.periphery2008.se](http://www.periphery2008.se)



# Perspectives from the Periphery: ISA RCHS Interim Conference, Umeå University, August 21-24, 2008

*LIST OF SESSION PROPOSALS (by January 7, 2008)*

## 1. **Trans-Atlantic Reciprocity** (Sven Eliaeson: [sven\\_eliaeson@hotmail.com](mailto:sven_eliaeson@hotmail.com))

Trans-Atlantic reciprocity is an old phenomenon. Samuel Pufendorf inspired the US constitution. Ben. Franklin exemplifies European “WASPish” virtues. The USA is the first European union. If Thomas Paine was British or American is a “mote point”. John Locke’s and Herbert Spencer’s strong influence in America is striking. The diffusion of Chicago school concepts in Europe is significant, as are the European (German) imprint on the founding fathers of the Chicago school. The USA and Europe appear as communicating bowls in several respects. In social science a lot of concepts and research agendas have been initiated in the USA but often by innovative European migrants. Many stages of Social and Political Theory appear in Europe with a time-lag, often because phenomena such as modern mass democracy, lobbying, ethnic tensions, migration and integration appear in the USA long before they become on the problem agenda in Europe, where the Metternich system functioned as a “freezer” until 1919. Most major paradigms are developed in the USA with European classics as sources of inspiration. However, notable differences between the European and the American polity also limit the application of American experiences for comparative analyses. America is an identity giving other stimulating European “Selbstbetrachtung aus der Ferne”. This session especially welcomes contributions on such scholars as the Myrdals, de Tocqueville, Robert Park, Albion Small, Max Weber, Friedrich (Freddy) List, Sorokin, Parsons, Lazarsfeld, Schutz and Edward Shils, influential on both sides of the Atlantic ocean.

## 2. **The History of Empirical Social Research and Statistics** (Irmela Gorges: [I.Gorges@fhvr-berlin.de](mailto:I.Gorges@fhvr-berlin.de) or [I.Gorges@gmx.de](mailto:I.Gorges@gmx.de))

The proposed session takes up an almost traditional theme of RCHS that has been set up by researchers interested in the subject more than a decade ago. Colleagues who are interested in presenting a paper on the history of research methods, research institutes, the development of statistical bureaus or international contacts between research institutions and the development of methods initiated by these contacts, are invited to join the session. Especially papers about the development of the issue on historical developments of institutions and research instruments in countries in transition and the efforts to harmonize research methods within the EU are welcome. However, we also would like to encourage researchers to present papers on the development of statistical bureaus or the history of research methods in non European countries.

## 3. **Education in Social Science Below University Level** (Anna Larsson: [anna.larsson@educ.umu.se](mailto:anna.larsson@educ.umu.se))

In the history of social science central areas of analysis are the production, formation and distribution of social scientific knowledge. Questions about university education in social science disciplines have also been addressed. This session, though, will focus on social science at lower levels of education. Many interesting questions can be posed. How is social science presented to young people at different school levels? Which changes over time can be observed and how can those changes be analyzed? Which areas and themes are being treated, which concepts, theories and methods are being introduced and in what order? How are school teachers in social science being educated? How are new research findings being distributed to the teachings in schools? How is social science being formed and reformed when meeting the school context, educators and pupils? What social knowledge do pupils have at different ages? How is teaching of

social knowledge being organized in schools? What are the relations between the university disciplines and different school subjects in the area of social science? In this session papers on these questions in different historical and national contexts are welcome as well as papers on other topics concerning the theme described.

**4. Gender and the History of Sociology** (Sanja Magdaleni?:  
sanja.magdalenic@sociology.su.se)

The past decades have witnessed a rise of the interest in the relationship between gender and the history of sociology. Which similarities and differences concerning the ways in which gender was implicated in the historical development of sociology as a discipline and a profession have been identified across national sociology fields? What do we know about the attempts to place gender on the sociological agenda that occurred in different arenas, such as sociology departments or professional associations? To what extent has the absence and the rediscovery of women pioneers in sociology influenced how we think about and write the history of sociology? If you wish to present a paper dealing with these and related issues, please send an abstract of no more than one page to my e-mail address.

**5. The Sociology of Octavio Paz** (Oliver Kozlarek: okozlarek@yahoo.com)

The session will discuss the work of Mexican poet, essayist and cultural critic Octavio Paz (1914-1998) as an important contribution to sociology. One important topic will be the relationship between literature and sociology. Is it only a “competition for interpretation” (*Deutungskonkurrenz*) (Lepenies) that separates these two intellectual realms? What characterizes this relationship in Mexico? A second line of discussion will address the genuine sociological contributions that Paz has actually made. The most evident topics are his critique of modernity, his early understanding of multiple modernities, but also his anthropological understanding of communication and social action.

**6. Coming to Terms with the Red Past: Sociology and Communism** (Christian Fleck and Andreas Hess: christian.fleck@uni-graz.at and a.hess@ucd.ie)

Sociology has quite a few dead bodies in the cupboard, starting from the Webbs and their enthusiasm for the communist project up to the scandals of recent times such as the recent revelations about the Stalinist past of Zygmunt Bauman. In this session we would like to look at individual social scientists but we would also like to discuss what sociologists can maybe learn from the past. Additionally, we would like to include approaches that look at such questions as sociology and collective memory.

**7. Methodological Problems in the History of Sociology** (Christian Fleck:

christian.fleck@uni-graz.at)

**8. Didactic Issues in Relation to Methodology of the History of Sociology** (Christian Fleck: christian.fleck@uni-graz.at)

**9. Sociological Couples** (?)

**10. History of Sociology and the Social Sciences in the Nordic Countries** (?)

**11. General Session on the History of Sociology and the Social Sciences** (?)

## 12. The Next Generation: New Dissertations on the History of Sociology and the Social Sciences (?)

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### Perspectives from the Periphery: Call for Papers

#### International Conference on the History of Sociology and the Social Sciences / ISA RCHS Interim Conference

Umeå University, Sweden, August 21-24, 2008

In August 21-24, 2008, the Interim Conference of the International Sociological Association's (ISA) Research Committee on the History of Sociology (RCHS) will take place at Umeå University, Sweden. The conference will be thematically focused on "Perspectives from the Periphery".

In the centre of attention will be issues related to different geographical, social, disciplinary and temporal peripheries. How is the local related to the global? Is there a political geography of social theory? In what ways have gender, ethnicity and class structured the production of social knowledge -- and our understandings of it? What do experiences from the non-western margins say about today's spatial and temporal limits, and power relations? Is a trans-national history of the social sciences without a cognitive centre possible, and how would in that case such a history look like?

The conference especially welcomes papers related to one or several of the following sub-themes and topics. But since the aim of the conference is to offer an open and inclusive understanding, papers on other aspects of the history of sociology and the social sciences are welcome as well:

- Geographical peripheries: history of sociology and the social sciences in Sweden and other small or non-western countries; glocal and/or postcolonial perspectives, etc.
- Social peripheries: women as forgotten pioneers and newcomers on the sociological scene, social scientific couples, class and ethnic perspectives, power relations, etc.
- Institutional peripheries: extra-academic social research; state investigations and non-governmental organisations; disciplinary boundaries and academic hierarchies, etc.
- Temporal peripheries: 1968 -- forty years later; long-term historical perspectives; cultural historical perspectives, etc.

There will be three types of sessions: four keynote lectures, two plenary

sessions and a number of parallel workshop sessions.

Keynote speakers will be:

- \* Prof. Saïd A. Arjomand (Department of Sociology, State University of New York – Stony Brook)
- \* Prof. Raewyn Connell (Faculty of Education and Social Research, University of Sydney)
- \* Prof. Johan Heilbron (Centre de sociologie européenne, Paris, and Erasmus University, Rotterdam)
- \* Prof. Eileen Yeo (Department of History, University of Strathclyde)

One of the plenary sessions will be a book session centred round Prof. Jennifer Platt's *The British Sociological Association: A Sociological History* (Sociologypress). The other plenary session will be organised by the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study.

The conference is co-hosted by the Department of Historical Studies, Umeå University, the Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, and the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS).

\*Submission deadline for paper abstracts: January 31, 2008!\*

For further information go to the conference website at [www.periphery2008.se](http://www.periphery2008.se).

For questions regarding the scientific programme or if you are interested in proposing a session, please contact the conference organisers Prof. Hedvig Ekerwald (Uppsala University), Dr Per Wisselgren (Umeå University) and Prof. Björn Wittrock (SCAS) via email [periphery2008@histstud.umu.se](mailto:periphery2008@histstud.umu.se).

For practical issues please contact the Conference Secretary Mrs Kaarina Streijffert, Umeå Congress AB, at [kaarina.streijffert@umea-congress.se](mailto:kaarina.streijffert@umea-congress.se).

*Welcome to Umeå and Perspectives from the Periphery in August 2008!*

*Hedvig Ekerwald, Per Wisselgren and Björn Wittrock*

# Qualitatives 2008: The Chicago School and Beyond

May 21<sup>st</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> 2008

Abstract Deadline Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup> 2008

<http://www.unbf.ca/arts/Soci/qualitatives2008.php>

The 25<sup>th</sup> Qualitative Analysis Conference will be jointly hosted by the Department of Sociology, University of New Brunswick and the Atlantic Centre for Qualitative Research and Analysis, St Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada from May 21<sup>st</sup> to May 24<sup>th</sup> 2008. The 2008 Qualitatives will celebrate both the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conference and the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Nels Anderson's *The Hobo*, one of the first Chicago School ethnographies. In order to celebrate this special anniversary, we have significantly expanded the themed portion of the program and have confirmed the participation of an exciting array of speakers. Exciting as they are, the themed sessions compose only a small part of the program. The conference remains the major Canadian venue for the presentation of qualitative research of all types and across various disciplines. The conference theme, *The Chicago School and Beyond*, pays homage to the Chicago School roots of the conference while remaining open to research using other forms of qualitative inquiry.

We welcome papers from both novice and veteran qualitative researchers on

- any substantive topic
- qualitative research design and methodology
- the history and impact of the Chicago School of Sociology
- the life and contribution of Nels Anderson

The deadline for submissions of abstracts is Saturday, March 1, 2008. Please submit your abstract electronically to [qual2008@unb.ca](mailto:qual2008@unb.ca) as either plain text, Roreal Word Perfect, or Microsoft Word (make sure to put 'Qualitatives 2008 abstract' in the subject of your email,. Please provide the following information:

1. Presenting author's family name, given name, initials
2. Institutional affiliation and department
3. Title of paper
4. Brief abstract 150-200 words. Include a clear statement of the research design employed and the methods of data collection used in the study on which your paper is based.
5. Full names and contact information for all authors (phone, fax, email, post)

If you have any questions regarding the 2008 Qualitatives please contact Dr Jacqueline Low [jlow@unb.ca](mailto:jlow@unb.ca) or Dr Gary Bowden [glb@unb.ca](mailto:glb@unb.ca).