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Editors' Introduction

Our conference is fast approaching, and we look forward to the many stimulating conversations it promises. To whet our collective appetite, we include in this edition of *Theory* abstracts of papers to be presented in Cambridge, June 27-29. Thank you to co-chairs Patrick Baert and Agnes Ku for their excellent work in organizing and managing the event, and for the tremendous support provided by Kate Williams. We are also excited about the two pieces we feature in this edition. Continuing our ongoing series on how sociological theory is taught in various parts of the world, Lars Döpking examines the situation in Germany. Additionally, Natàlia Cantó-Milà discusses the ongoing “mainstreaming of relational sociology,” by way of introducing the new focus of the journal *Digithum: a relational perspective on culture society*. Many members may be interested in participating in the journal’s various endeavors, and so we encourage you to visit its website: <http://journals.uoc.edu/index.php/digithum/>.

We look forward to seeing many of you in Cambridge.

Erik Schneiderhan and Daniel Silver

How Sociological Theory is Taught in Germany

Lars Döpking, Georg-August Universität Göttingen

By answering the call of Cinthya Guzman and Daniel Silver (Guzman and Silver 2015) to “invert the lens” and to take a closer look at all the ways in which sociological theory is taught in different countries, this article examines the German case. For this, we will give at first an overview of sociology’s landscape in Germany, followed by an explanation of our approach. Afterwards we will point out some preliminary findings and discuss them on the one hand in regard to Guzman & Silver’s article and on the other hand to the findings of similar projects from Germany, which examine the prominence and importance of different authors and theoretical texts in German sociological education. Finally, we will present general characteristics about the persons who are teaching sociological theory in Germany and outline some future research questions that lead us to compare socio-theoretical approaches and stiles of teaching it in other countries.

Sociological Theory in Germany

Germany is well known for its prominent role in the history of sociological theory. But while Weber, Marx and Simmel belong to its founding figures, the influence of dedicated theory from Germany on the international debate has been declining since the end of the Second World War. That was caused by – among other factors – the massive emigration of nonconformist intellectuals fleeing Nazi persecution. There have been various attempts to restore German sociological theory to its former position of international prominence – the “Frankfurt School” or “Philosophical Anthropology” for example. Yet it has not reached its prior status, especially since the end of the Luhmann-Habermas controversy and the death of the former, who is – outside of the US – quite famous (Joas and Knöbl 2009: 251). Nonetheless, theory is still a popular subject in sociological education and prominent in disciplinary discussions in Germany. Some would say it is a national sphere of its own, far away from the more empirical approaches of our more internationally connected discipline, which is symbolized by the number of published theory books and their conventional status within the discipline. Additionally, since 2014 various authors have debated in the official journal of the German Sociological Association (“Soziologie”) about which sociological books or texts should have been read by all students during their studies (Gerhards 2014) or which authors are the most influential and

prominent among them and are applied in seminar papers or BA/MA theses (Lenger, Rieder and Schneiker 2014). These attempts and their critics (Holzhauser 2015) show the attention that is given to theory within the German sociologic-scientific community and its importance for the discipline's identity - sociological theory is "still a thing" in Germany.

These subjective observations are supported by the curricula of German universities.¹ The German Sociological Association lists 72 universities which offer degree courses with sociological topics, of whom 56 provide dedicated theory courses. 42 universities also have a masters program where sociological theory is taught as a subject. All major sociology programs in Germany offer theory courses, some more, some less, but, generally speaking, the likelihood of being a sociologist from Germany who has not read Luhmann, Bourdieu, Weber or Foucault is vanishingly low. As the reader might have noticed, the situation is quite similar to the Canadian one: A big and widespread emphasis on theory. But the authors we used to exemplify our point shed a light on the divergences between the two countries we discovered in our exploration, which we are going to present here.

What did we do?

Our goal was to give an empirically reasoned overview of theory classes in Germany. Guided by Guzman and Silver's initiating work, we aimed at first to gather the entirety of sociological theory course syllabi from Germany between 2012 and 2015 in the hopes of analyzing them in detail. For this, we searched the university websites to create a complete list. Our working definition of a theory course was relatively wide and became more concrete in the process: We treated something as a theory course if it had no clear empirical focus or component and did not deal primarily with issues of method. By working with this definition, we gathered 2418 courses and listed them together with their course description and lecturer. Afterwards we asked the theory chairs of all sociological departments to send us those courses' syllabi. To our regret, only a few responded, so that our original approach - analyzing the material qualitatively like Guzman and Silver - had to be altered. We thus decided to analyze the course titles and course descriptions we had already gathered by coding them in regard to the authors read, lecturers' characteristics, and type of approach. For the last we differentiated between author or thematic related and general approaches, such as introductory lectures. The lecturers were coded in regard to their position and gender, while the author-category could be filled with all the famous names that were given to us in the course descriptions.

This method clearly has at least two problems: On the one hand, the type of approach correlates with the probability of finding information in the description about what authors are read. While it is quite easy to know which author is read in an author-related course, it is a much more difficult task to extract the information from the other courses, mainly because the course description is not standardized. On the other hand, we cannot determine with complete confidence whether a listed course is actually a "real theory" course: The course description

¹ The associations' official website gives a quick overview: <http://www.studium.org/soziologie/>.

may indicate that, but without analyzing its syllabus, this approach is more based on intuition than it might seem at first glance. It follows from the forgoing that our insights about the author-related courses are much more valid than the “big picture” about all courses we are going to paint, so please take it with a grain of salt and recognize this validity gap in our data. Nevertheless our results do permit an evaluation of nearly all theory courses offered in Germany.²

Sociological Peculiarities of the Germans, or who is read?

In Germany 15% of sociological theory courses offered are author-related. That means that they concentrate on one, two or, in a few cases, three authors by reading their central works, reconstructing and discussing them against each other. Another 20% of the field is covered by general theory courses, where students are given a wide overview of the theoretical field, typically in form of a lecture – more of that later. It follows that the most theory courses are thematically structured: In roughly 65% of the courses,³ a social phenomenon, a school of thought, or a class of sociological problems is confronted in a theoretical way. If we want to know who the more or less influential authors in German sociological education are, in our opinion the best way is to look at the author-related courses: They are where students get in touch closely with sociological theory and they are quite likely to shape how one studies and perceives our discipline.

Looking at those courses, the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann is the most read and is in this sense the most influential author in Germany. In 379 courses, 53 times he was the author primarily read, which sums up to a full 14% of the total set. Luhmann’s commanding position is followed by Pierre Bourdieu (49 / 13%), Max Weber (36 / 9.5%), Michel Foucault, and Georg Simmel (22 and 21 courses / 6%). In contrast to Canada, Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim, who form among with Weber the “Big 3” sociological theorists there (Guzman & Silver 2015:19), take the 9th and 10th place, both exceeded by Norbert Elias, Erving Goffman and Jürgen Habermas:

² Because a few universities do not make their past courses public, some of them are missing nonetheless.

³ Note that these numbers may shift because the “thematic approach” group is the one where some courses are labeled as a theory course who are probably not.

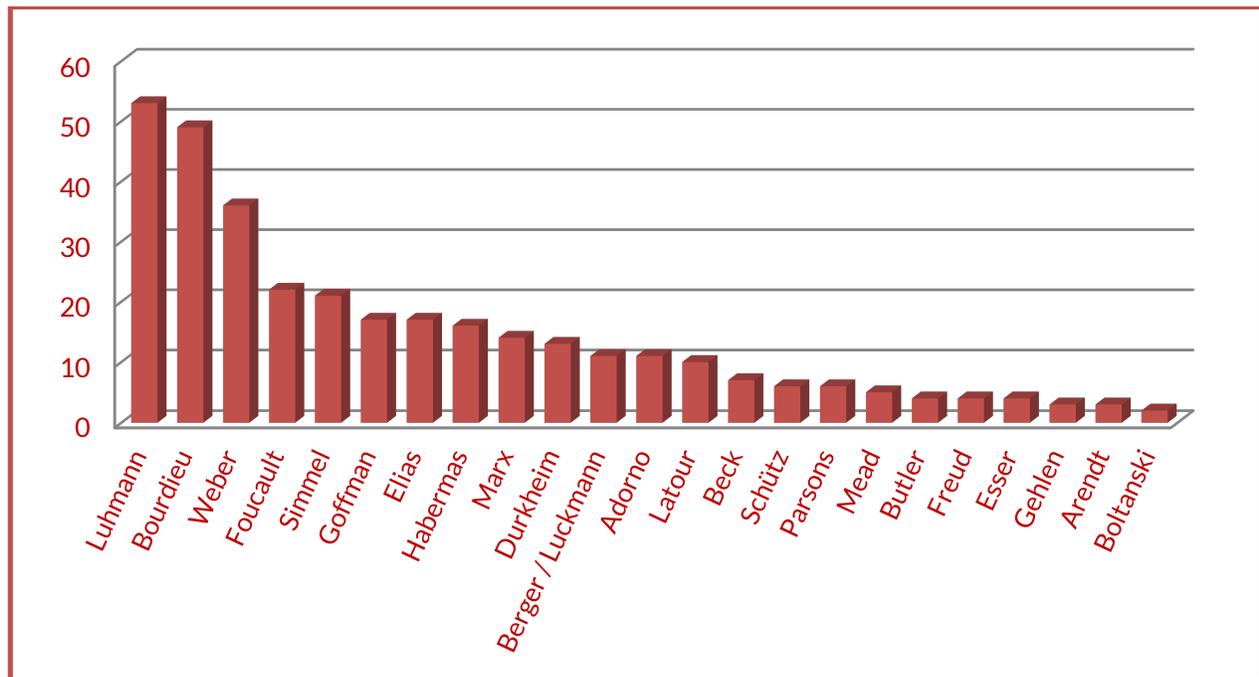


Figure 1: Author related courses in Germany (total numbers, individual mentions were cut, n=379)

When we take a look at the most common combinations of authors in these courses, it is again Luhmann, who is often discussed against Habermas,⁴ Bruno Latour, or Talcott Parsons. But because we could only find 37 courses which match this criterion, we should not generalize these observations. Moreover, it is interesting to note that prominent authors in Canada like, C. Wright Mills or Dorothy Smith, who has one of the highest authority there, are not present in our sample, while other important authors like Antonio Gramsci or Anthony Giddens are covered in only one course, another clear sign of regional peculiarities.⁵

The picture alters, however, if we add the other categories of courses to our examination. While Luhmann is still first – he is mentioned in 153 course descriptions or titles – he is now followed by Weber (149), Bourdieu (129), Simmel (91) and Marx (85). This shift is partly caused by general lectures, in which the “Big 3” occupy a firm position, which explains the sixth place Durkheim holds in Germany according to this sample:

⁴ This combination is caused by the famous Luhmann-Habermas controversy, which bothered German sociologists since the 1980s (Knöbl 2015: 12).

⁵ The Canadian sample has a higher quality than ours. According to Guzman and Silver’s findings, Durkheim, Weber and Marx have the most authority among sociological theorists in Canada. Authority means, that they are strongly connected to other authors and that they are “central hubs” of the theoretical education. These three authors are followed by Foucault, Goffman, Bourdieu and Dorothy Smith, while Mead and Simmel are also quite important. We cannot generate anything similar from our sample, but a comparison is still enlightened.

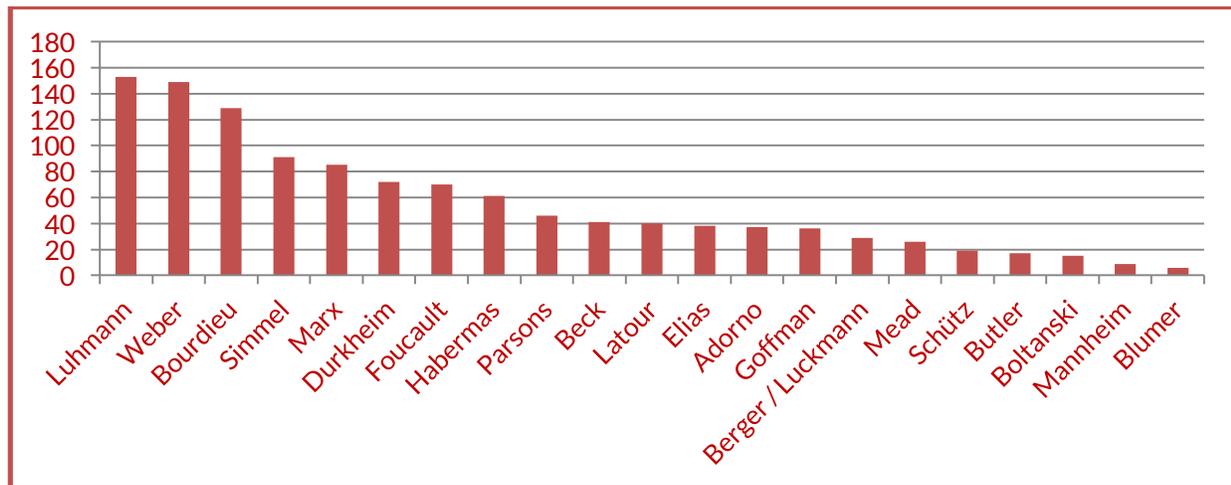


Figure 2: Top 20 sociology theorists in Germany, sorted by their quantity of mention in total numbers.

So whereas we should be cautious to infer too much from this dataset, we are certain that Luhmann, Weber and Bourdieu belong to the most influential theorists in German sociological-theoretical education today. Intriguingly this finding contradicts on the one hand with the observations of Gerhards and coincides on the other hand with Lenger, Rieder and Schneiker's findings: Gerhards asked 32 college professors from Germany about the most important sociological texts, which in their views should be read by all sociology students. Based on this research he compiled a "Top 10 of Sociology" in which a text of Luhmann was not even listed. Furthermore, Marx, Foucault, Habermas, Simmel, Goffmann and Parsons are also missing on his List (Gerhards 2014: 316). There appears to be differences between what some professors see as relevant to sociological theoretical training and what they teach in practice at universities to their students.⁶

Lenger, Rieder and Schneiker followed a different approach: They asked students in a survey about their theory preferences together with questions about how frequently they apply different authors in seminar papers and theses and how aware students are of them. There are some overlaps between their theorist lists and ours (Lenger, Rieder and Schneiker 2014: 453-6). For instance, one sees that Bourdieu, Luhmann and Weber are the three most frequently applied authors and that they are, with exception of Luhmann and Marx, who is more than well-known, the most known and popular theorists among students. Apart from that, Luhmann drops in popularity to the 16th position, exceeded by Michel Foucault, Theodor W. Adorno, Judith Butler or Ulrich Beck, who all did not show up in Gerhards ranking.⁷ One could say that this is a classical causation in the sense that because students are usually confronted with Weber, Bourdieu and Luhmann in their author-related reading courses, they know and often apply them, which confirms in part our thesis of the three most influential theorists in

⁶ The best institutional possibility for a student to read one of the opus magni Gerhards compiled is an author related course: But how should one have read Merton's "Social Theory and Social Structure" if there is not a single Merton-focused course in Germany between 2012 and 2015?

⁷ This relatively low popularity might be caused by the characteristics of Luhmann's writing. In Germany, Luhmann is often compared to Hermann Hesse, which means, if you start reading him, there are two possibilities: Either you will never read him again or you won't be reading anything else.

Germany.

For the more thematic courses, we can only state that there is a wide variety of topics. Even the most frequent themes like “gender”, “organization”, “capitalism” or “modernity” cannot cover more than five, four or three percent of the sample. A strong narrative is difficult to propose here. But we can show that in Germany modernization theory is still an important approach, German sociologists reacted to the (past) crisis of capitalistic accumulation, gender studies are quite popular, and organizations are seen as important social phenomena:

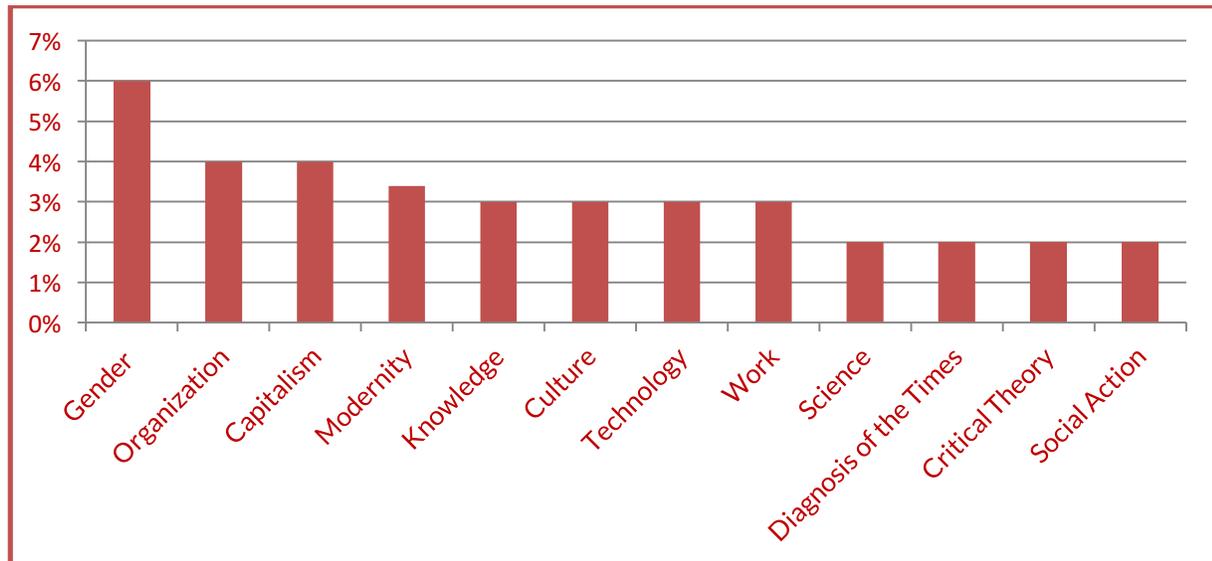


Figure 3: Top 10 most popular topics in German theoretical courses, sorted by their percentile amount.

Moving from these detailed findings, we now compare the overall teaching patterns in the German general and thematic courses to the findings from Canada. We suggest that the differences in authors typically coincide with a different approach to theory in general.

Organizational schemas in Germany

As we have mentioned, general theory courses in Germany cover only roughly 20% of the sample. That is because much of the theoretical teaching is done in the author (15%) or thematic (65%) courses, which are dedicated to problems in different research fields or to special authors. Nonetheless, general theory courses are usually mandatory for all students and constitute the core of teaching in Germany – every sociologist has heard or will have heard one of these lectures in his or her life. Despite their centrality, they are nowhere near as canonized as in Canada. Besides the classical-contemporary scheme examined by Guzman and Silver (2015: 17), theory in Germany taught in two main forms: in lectures structured around micro-macro theories,⁸ or as a half-year course without an explicit narrative in the course title

⁸ This group consists of courses which are framed as micro-macro, community-society or social-order theory. Because the organizing principle is quite similar, they were put together.

or description. To answer the questions raised by Guzman and Silver: It is not common, but also not unknown to organize the lectures according to the classical-contemporary scheme. We found only nine Departments where it is prevalent. By contrast, eleven Departments utilize the micro-macro paradigm, while 29 offer unspecialized general courses. Seven do not offer any general theory courses at all.

The reasons for the prominence of the micro vs. macro heuristic are not apparent in these data. But the phenomena could be connected to the prominent position of Luhmann, who avoided action-theoretical questions and developed a theory of social systems.⁹ Intriguingly, the link between micro and macro is rarely on the educational agenda - we found only three courses that were exclusively dedicated to the connection problems of macro and micro perspectives - an observation that corresponds with our perception of their gap in German sociological pedagogy.

Who is teaching sociological theory?

Last but not least we examine the characteristics of theoretical instructors in Germany. Most of the theory courses are offered by professors (45%), fewer by post-doctoral (25%) or PhD-Students (29%) - the remaining 1% could not be defined based on the sample. These numbers hardly shift if we examine the different categories and largely represent the work distribution at sociological chairs and the education system at German universities: While PhD-Students normally only have to offer one course per semester, professors run four on average. Furthermore, most of the lectures are given by them, what explains their relatively high amount of teaching in comparison to their overall numbers at the institutions.

The gender statistics are much more striking: Only 27.5% of the courses we examined are taught by women. This number is even lower among professors, of whom merely 22.5 % are women, while on the PhD-Level nearly 35% of the courses are taught by them. In comparison to Canada, this is quite alarming: Guzman and Silver pointed out that their rate was nearly twice as high as in Germany (2015: 21). While a recent study points out that there is a 44 percent higher chance for women to get tenure in Germany (Lutter and Schröder 2016: 1004), which might also be on the decline (1008), it remains to be seen whether this gender gap persists in the future and if sociological theory generally contradicts this development. In the meantime, we should discuss why sociological theory is still a male domain, although gender is the most popular topic at thematic related theory courses.

Wrap up: Sociological Theory in Germany

The picture we drew of sociological theory's landscape in Germany consists of three central elements: At First, the "Big 3", e.g. Weber, Durkheim and Marx, do not form the most influential authors in Germany. Here, Niklas Luhmann, Pierre Bourdieu and Max Weber are frequently read in reading courses and, partly because of that, are well-known and applied by our

⁹. In some ways this decision resembles Parsons' theorizing from his middle period forward, as it unfolds fairly independent from questions of social action.

students. In addition to that, many authors who are quite famous in Canada are not even known or taught over here. Sociological traditions differ a lot among these two countries and if we want to compose a provocative thesis, Karl Marx is far less important than Georg Simmel in Germany. Secondly, Germany has no dominant organizational principle of theory teaching and perhaps proceeds according to its own model – micro vs macro -- which is not as strongly evident Canada. Thirdly, the gender gap of sociological theory instructors is far deeper in Germany than in Canada. While the overall situation in the discipline is changing over the last couple of years, theory remains a male domain.

However, there are still many open questions which could not be addressed in this paper, partly as a function of data limitations: How are all the different authors connected to each other? What popular theory narratives are told in our syllabi? Why is Niklas Luhmann such a central author? We hope to address these issues in our future work and remain eager to compare our work to findings in other countries.

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Mainstreaming Relational Sociology – Relational Analysis of Culture in Digithum

Natàlia Cantó-Milà, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya *

Relational sociology is becoming a topic which is present in many sociological debates.

Often it is presented as an interesting perspective largely ignored but worth exploring or reduced to a synonym of social network analysis. Scholars who have been working on the field of relational sociology have wondered whether we could think of relational sociology as a new paradigm within the social sciences, or whether it is more like a turn (like the affective or the linguistic turn); a turn that brings very different kinds of epistemologies and methodological understandings together under the same umbrella, but does not share epistemological and methodological premises so that a paradigm can emerge. (Prandini 2005) If we think of all the sociologists that have worked with an implicit or explicit relational model, it is difficult to argue that relational sociology may be a paradigm, since they do not share many premises. However, there are some points in common which are relevant enough to be able to reconsider the possibility of an intense dialogue and the potential for a strong and fruitful paradigm. A point upon which scholars working on relational sociology agree is the fact that relational sociology strives to overcome the old battle between agency and structure, or between methodological individualism and holism, thus proposing a new and more fruitful object of study for sociology, which may bring us together following the steps of one of sociology's forefathers, Georg Simmel, who already at the turn of the twentieth century claimed that the object of sociology could not be the individual or the societal whole, but that which makes society and individuals as we know them possible: social relations, and social relations that crystallise in more durable 'forms of sociation,' stable and yet deeply relational in their nature.

Thus, relational sociology is as old as the discipline of sociology itself, and its grounding principles and basis have been with us for more than a century. As Emirbayer already pointed out in his 'Manifesto for a Relational Sociology' almost twenty years ago (Emirbayer 1997:290), we can already find a strong relational tendency in sociology as early as in Karl Marx's thought, for instance. And yet, despite the undeniable relational component of this thought, it could be argued that Marx still sought to ground his theories upon substances, as his theory of value paradigmatically shows. Despite all possible relations that lie behind prices and exchange values, the 'true' exchange value of an object resides in the amount of time that has been invested (has been used) in its production, and we are speaking of labour time here. It was only

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a generation later, in the works of Georg Simmel, as we were suggesting, that this grounding on substance was completely left behind. In fact, he analysed the tendency of looking for substances, for 'absolutes' that hold that which has been crystallised in relations beyond these relations, and depicted this tendency as follows:

'To begin with an obvious example of this tendency: light is regarded as a fine substance emanating from bodies, heat as a substance, physical life as the activity of material living spirits, psychological processes as being supported by a specific substance of the soul. The mythologies that posit a thunderer behind the thunder, a solid substructure below the earth to keep it from falling or spirits in the stars to conduct them in their celestial course—all these are searching for a substance, not only as the embodiment of the perceived qualities and motions, but as the initial active force. An absolute is sought beyond the mere relationships between objects, beyond their accidental and temporal existence. Early modes of thought are unable to reconcile themselves to change, to the coming and going of all terrestrial forms of physical and mental life. Every kind of living creature represents to them a unique act of creation; institutions, forms of living, valuations have existed eternally and absolutely as they exist today; the phenomena of the world have validity not only for man and his organized life, but are in themselves as we perceive them. In short, the first tendency of thought, by which we seek to direct the disorderly flow of impressions into a regular channel and to discover a fixed structure amidst their fluctuations, is focused upon the substance and the absolute, in contrast with which all particular happenings and relations are relegated to a preliminary stage which the understanding has to transcend.' (Simmel 2004:100)

In a poetic language that makes the temporal distance between us and his works palpable, Simmel presented his 'relativist' (relational) approach as an alternative to the search for absolutes in times in which he thought that knowledge was capable of sustaining itself relationally for the first time; without last assumptions, without eternally validity and truth beyond any scope of time, place, circumstance and, above all, relation. Unlike Marx, consequently, Simmel did not base his theory of value upon any substantiality, but made it derive from crystallised reciprocal relations, which fix values in their positions in the same way and manner as the combination of gravitational forces fix planets in their stable orbits. The relational source and character of their stable positions makes them no less stable, and explains for us how this stability is and became possible in the first place.

This relational approach that was outlined in Simmel's works did not find a strong echo after the First World War tore apart the world the forefathers of our discipline had known. A rather substantialist sociology stood in its place and grew stronger until the last decades of the last century, when sociologist and social theorist began anew to think of our object of study as a conglomerate of relationships that crystallise into more or less durable structures and scopes of action.

This understanding of relationality brings immediately contemporary sociological works to mind, like the works of Pierre Bourdieu, and his theory of social positions and social fields, as well as Luhmann's system theory and his key concept of 'communication' (which we could understand as relations without causing any harm to his theory), or Harrison White's, Charles Tilly's or Paul DiMaggio's approaches. These theories explain systems and social positions as well as social structures as resulting from relations that crystallise and mutually stabilise each other – they may indeed be considered as 'socially constructed', yet this social constructions are as real as it gets, and as difficult to change and mould as concrete walls. And this is a major contribution to our discipline: to think of social structure as a net of relationships that fix people, be them individuals or groups, in particular positions and generate stories, narratives, about the reasons behind and the origins of these positions.

Relational and network sociology is today more alive than ever. A generation of younger scholars, including Daniel Silver, François Dépelteau, Christian Papilloud, Olli Phyyhtinen or Frédéric Vanderberghe, among many others are mainstreaming relational sociology and arguing how and why relational and network sociology is of crucial heuristic value to sociological analyses as well as theoretically and methodologically fit for this challenge.

In this context I am very happy and grateful to be able to present to you the journal *Digithum. A Relational Perspective on Culture and Society*. This journal has recently taken a new thematic orientation, and has become co-edited by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Open University of Catalonia) and the University of Antioquia. As a result of these recent changes, Digithum has become a journal that aims to become a platform for relational social scientists to share their work and ideas, and to enrich this growing academic community of relationism, seeking to mainstream the relational approach and, particularly, relational sociology, to the very heart of our discipline.

Hence, and on behalf of Digithum's team, I would like to invite scholars interested in relational sociology to take this journal's new thematic and theoretical scope into account, and of course to submit and thus share their work with this growing community. You can check our latest call for paper (deadline 1, September) following this link:

<http://journals.uoc.edu/index.php/digithum/pages/view/call-for-articles-2016>

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ISA Sociological Theory (RC 16) Conference Abstracts

ISA Sociological Theory (RC16) Conference

Selwyn College, Cambridge UK

27 - 29 June 2016

The conference continues the RC16 tradition of encouraging presentations on the entire range of topics under the general heading of sociological theory. The conference will begin at 5pm on Monday 27th and end at 5pm on Wednesday 29th June 2016. Drinks and canapés will be served on Monday evening, and the conference dinner will take place on Tuesday. Pre-booking is required for the Tuesday dinner, but all are welcome for Monday night drinks and canapés. Each session will last for 90 minutes, including 20 minutes per presenter and 10 minutes for general questions. Each presenter will have 15 minutes to present and 5 minutes for individual questions.

Please contact **Kate Williams** rc16conference@sociology.cam.ac.uk with any queries. Further details are also and interactive venue maps are available on the [website](#).

Tuesday 28th June

9:30 – 11:00

Ilaria Riccioni

Rethinking sociological meaning

In the recent few years sociology and its tools of interpreting social issues seem to lag behind journalistic investigations and psychological interpretations of social phenomena. Sociology as a theoretical approach to reality seems to have become inadequate to unfold its own meaning of being. Social issues are complex relations of many different factors and the classics were well aware of it. Pareto, for example, had already realized by the beginning of the Nineteenth Century that economy was not enough to explain social issues, nevertheless it was becoming the dominant discipline used to tackle social demands. In this paper the different issues on logical and non-logical action inquired by Pareto will be taken into consideration in order to posit it in the contemporary debate on social questions of action, elites and social phenomena. On one side the question of what is a social context in contemporary society and on the other side how contemporary societies have changed in terms of groups, of influence instead of impersonal mass society. Is it possible to assume that, as Frankfurt School was predicting, modern man has lost radical positions and consequently take for "natural" every "social" construction so to leave behind any critical possibility to rethink social life as interconnected relations.

Frédéric Vandenberghe

Structures, interaction and relations

The time of grand synthetic theories is over. Instead of comprehensive social theory, we now have a variety of new approaches, such as analytic sociology, realist sociology, pragmatic sociology, cultural sociology, moral sociology and, of late, also relational sociology, that are aggressively pushed by academic entrepreneurs in the social sciences. In this paper, I will look more intently at relational sociology to find out if it is more than a metamethodology and to see what the magical operator of relationality can do for a general social theory. More particularly, I will try to develop a realist theory of the social that combines relational conceptions of social structure, interactionist perspective on the lifeworld and relational conceptions of subjectivity into a unitary framework.

Jason Mast and Erik Ringmar

Sociological Theory and the Cognitive Neurosciences: Challenges, Possibilities and Pathways Forward

Until recently sociologists have had good reason to ignore developments in the fields of neuroscience and cognitive theory. These fields had been overly deterministic and focused on the wrong level of analysis. Neurological facts are not social facts, after all, and social action is a meaningful activity that must be studied in terms of how actual human beings interpret their worlds, not in terms of scans of neurons firing in an individual brain. Things have changed: the points of intersection between the social and cognitive neurosciences are proliferating, and their points of contact deepening. Today, concepts such as embodiment and plasticity pervade the cognitive neurosciences, which is representative of the extent to which the field has reformulated its understandings of brain-body-culture and society inter-connectedness. To varying degrees literature, history, anthropology, and sociology attended to the rise of the cognitive in the 1990s. Now the “cognitive” is increasingly accompanied by a newer term, “neuroscience.” As of 2015, each of these disciplines contains a subfield with “neuro-” stuck on the front of it. The most prominent points of intersection within sociology include: a) Cultural cognitivists (out of Rutgers and Princeton; i.e. DiMaggio; Cerulo; Zerubavel); b) Reinterpreting Bourdieu, now as “neurocognitive” theorist (Lizardo; Ignatow; Strand; Cerulo); c) Foucauldian tradition, examining cognitive neuroscience as a knowledge regime (Rose and Abi-Rached); d) A new category of “critical neuroscientists,” who inflect their Foucault with Latourian SSK, (Choudhury and Slaby; Slaby and Gallagher; Epstein); e) Whereas late-Durkheimians, interactionists, and many others, have adopted a wait-and-see approach to the spread of the cognitive neurosciences.

Cinthya Guzman

Inverting the Lens: An Exploration of the Theoretical Foundation of Sociology Departments within a Canadian Context

The purpose of this paper is to examine the theoretical foundation of sociology within a Canadian context. Primarily using the work of Donald Levine (1995) and R.W Connell (1997), I discuss the boundaries of sociological thought, and how sociology departments construct their theoretical education. The aim is to bring to light the theories that are read by students, and forwarded by their professors, in order to understand the frames by which students are taught to pursue sociological inquiry. This paper conducts a qualitative study in the form of a content analysis of department information, professor research interests, and syllabi data. Ultimately, I argue that marginalized theorists, most represented by women, and persons of colour, lack adequate representation in the sociological theoretical curriculum. The strong presence of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, confine the boundaries of classical thought, limiting the usage of other theorists’ work. With efforts to make contemporary theory a genre of various perspectives, there still needs to be more representation of diversity, which includes but is not limited to women’s and global perspectives. This would ensure that the dialogue between sociologists lie on a rich theoretical foundation, which will provide a clearer understanding of

11:30 – 13:00

Marek Skovajsa

The Conservative Constructivism of Heinz O. Ziegler's Sociology of Ideas

My aim in this paper is to show the contemporary relevance of the sociology of ideas proposed by the Czech-German sociologist Heinz Otto Ziegler (1903-1944). This relevance, I argue, can be found in the concept of political legitimacy that Ziegler developed in opposition to “constructivism” which he resented in modern rationalist political theories, from Rousseau to Hegel to Carl Schmitt, with their characteristic tendency to see concrete social phenomena as products of social actors acting on abstract general principles. In what is only an apparent paradox, Ziegler’s own position can be described as “conservative constructivism” as in it the rejection of rationalism in politics comes combined with a constructivist view of political life inspired by Max Weber’s concept of legitimacy. I also show that Ziegler’s mature position on this matter resulted from a profound revision of his earlier understanding of ideology. In the well-known article on ideology (“Ideologienlehre”, 1927), Ziegler had promoted a “naturalist” and “empiricist” sociology of ideas which he associated with Pareto as well as with his teacher Gottfried Salomon against “historical cultural sociology” represented by the German historicist school and also by Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge. Ziegler’s antihistoricist argument was based on the notion that every unique historical situation is the product of identical “constants of human nature” such as certain universal human affects, interests and instincts. But in his chef-d'oeuvre, *The Modern Nation* (1931), an insightful dissection of the concept of nation as the instance of an extraordinarily powerful legitimizing idea, elements of a different sociology of ideas can be identified and assembled into a relatively coherent whole. Leaving behind the problematic concept of ahistorical human constants this theory embraces instead the historicized.

Isabel Kusche

Motivations versus vocabularies of motive: On the linkage between politicians and voters

Currently most attempts to understand the linkage between politicians and voters use rational-choice approaches and therefore implicitly or explicitly the notion of exchange. Much of classic sociology understood exchange and reciprocity as essential aspects of the social. However, it was divided regarding the question as to whether the ensuing relationships are to be understood as motivated by instrumental rationality or by an orientation towards norms. Especially Bourdieu attempted to avoid these alternatives by understanding actors not as carriers of motives but of practices. Yet, this perspective does not easily lend itself to questions that concern the link between a specific societal field and the public that “consumes” the products of this field. Bourdieu’s argument of homology underestimates the complicated dynamic between the production of field-specific capital and the mobilization of the public that is necessary in order to accumulate capital in a field such as politics. The efforts triggered by this dynamic range from political marketing to political clientelism, and their analysis has mostly been left to political scientists. This has resulted in a dominance of rational-choice approaches that conceive parties and voters as actors whose relationship is a causal effect of the incentives they offer each other. A closer analysis of the theoretical premises of these contributions reveals a confusion of social expectations with individual psychological motives. In order to bring sociology back into the analysis of the linkage between politicians and voters, I suggest to turn to the notion of vocabularies of motive as proposed by C. W. Mills. The way parties try to address their voters can then be understood as the result of particular political conceptions as

to how politicians and parties relate to voters and vice versa. These conceptions are conventional attributions that make sense in particular political settings, but are not representations of “actual” psychological motives.

Agnes Ku

Generational Change through Politics: The Umbrella Movement as Theatre

This paper seeks to address the question of generational change in politics through examining the interplay among actors, discourse and event with regard to the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong in 2014. The significance of the movement lies not only in dramatizing state-society conflict but also in putting in place a theatre that played out the process of generational change toward greater radicalism, through the interplay between state and civil society and between old and new forces within civil society. While a new wave of radicalism was on the rise in society, it took specific ideas, discourses and practices by particular actors to shape the specific contour of the pro-democracy struggle. A number of key ideas were articulated through a web of discourses that guided, facilitated and regulated action with certain self-radicalizing, self-fulfilling and yet self-limiting tendencies. Yet, they also bred further claims, created tensions and produced dissents that pulled the movement in somewhat conflicting directions. A dual process of re-centering and de-centering of leadership was seen at work in the movement, which signified the emergence of some new political forces arising out of a new generation in search of a renewed way of activism. This paper will draw on the insights of discourse analysis and dramaturgical perspective to illuminate the dynamics, tensions and changes generated in the process.

Fuyuki Kurasawa

The Making of a Viral Artifact: On 'Kony 2012' as a Global Cultural Phenomenon

The paper analyses the ‘Kony 2012’ video documentary as a cultural phenomenon in the digital age, one that globally ‘went viral’ largely through social media. Released by the US-based NGO Invisible Children in March 2012, the documentary was the key component of a campaign calling for the arrest and prosecution of Joseph Kony, the former leader of the Lord’s Resistance Army, which was responsible for committing mass human rights violations in Uganda and other parts of Central Africa. Yet what explains the video’s virality—the fact that it became the fastest video in history to reach 100 million views on the internet—and its considerable albeit fleeting influence upon the Western public imaginary? In order to answer these questions, the paper proposes a tripartite theoretical framework through which to make sense of the documentary’s visual economy, a framework aiming to reconcile visually endogenous and exogenous dimensions of what pictures do. Firstly, we need to understand how ‘Kony 2012’ inserted itself within the longstanding iconographic repertoire and cultural narratives of redemption and rescue through which Western-based humanitarian and human rights campaigns have legitimized themselves since the late 18th century. Secondly, the paper retraces the video’s socio-visual biography, in order to identify the institutional networks and major social media actors that enabled it to proliferate in digital spaces and thereby gain traction among important segments of Euro-American public opinion. Thirdly, what is required is a grasp of the iconological field within which various civil society actors relationally adopted differing stances towards the video and assessed its impact upon the current situation in Uganda and Central Africa. Hence, the paper aims to demonstrate how sociological theory is essential to explain why certain digital images of distant suffering become political actants in public spheres, whereas others do not.

14:00 – 15:30

Dan Silver***Alienation in a Four-Factor World***

In this presentation, I articulate a new conception of alienation, revising and synthesizing aspects of Marx's and Simmel's theories of alienation. I develop this synthesis in a few steps. First, I review recent re-engagements with classical alienation theory, most notably that of philosopher Rahel Jaeggi and sociologist Gianfranco Poggi, among others. Second, I propose reconceptualizing alienation at the intersection of two basic social processes: growth and integration. Third, I join this reconceptualization to a revised and expanded notion of Marx's theory of alienation. I expand the Marxian conception of production from a "two-factor" notion of capital and labour to a "four-factor" notion of land, labour, capital, and entrepreneurship, drawing out this "multi-factor" conception of production by combining insights from Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Alfred Marshall, Talcott Parsons, and Neil Smelser. These four factors correspond to the ways in which growth and integration may intersect. Fourth, I elaborate how the four factors may interact with one another, sometimes blocking growth and preventing integration. Alienation occurs not only in tensions between capital and labour, but also in tensions between all the factors of production: capital-land, labor-entrepreneurship, labor-land, etc. This conception thus incorporates the Marxian theory in a broader framework, as one possible source of tension among many others. Finally, I suggest that this reimagined theory of alienation carries forward key aspects of Simmel's approach to alienation, namely, the notion of alienation as endemic to the human condition. I conclude with general reflections on the differences between Simmel and Marx's approaches to alienation.

Jeffrey Alexander***Progress and Disillusion: Civil Repair and Its Discontents***

To create an effective understanding of progress and disillusion, we need social theory that avoids the Scylla of endless conflict and the Charybdis of redeeming modernization; that is deeply rooted in democratic theory but avoids the institutionalism of political science; that makes the cultural turn but avoids the resistance to explanation and concept formation that has undermined postmodern thought. In this paper, I argue that Civil Sphere Theory (CST) provides an intellectually persuasive and empirically practical alternative. The civil sphere is at once aspirational and institutional, an idealized community imagined in every nation and civilization but instantiated, in "real civil societies," in necessarily partial ways. In the idealized civil sphere, individual autonomy and collective obligation are intertwined. Cultural codes sustain the democratic motives and relationships that allow civil spheres to be responsive and incorporative. Outside this solidary sphere are economy, state, religion, family, and ethnic life. While they have particularistic, non-civil values and interests, they are not necessarily anti-civil. They can provide facilitating inputs to the civil sphere and aid the project of civil repair. Real civil spheres, however, can never sustain such a harmonious state. CST portrays a dynamic situation of punctuated equilibrium and de-civilizing breakdown, modeling a world filled with contingencies and strains that belies the normative idea of steady state. Plural spheres are difficult to align. Economic, religious, and ethnic pressures are often not just non-civil but anti-civil; they enter deeply into the civil sphere, distorting its utopian promises, creating destructive intrusions difficult to repair. Sometimes social movements are rallying efforts to expand the civil sphere and gain inclusion; just as frequently, however, they are backlash efforts to narrow solidarity and create exclusions. When social strains intensify, the dark exclusionary side of the civil sphere becomes dangerously flammable. Primordial inwardness – religious, ethnic, racial – is evoked to justify a community's democratic institutions. Economic inequality is defended as preserving liberty. Authoritarian policies are represented as essential

for protecting the boundaries of the civil sphere itself.

Filipe Carreira da Silva

Who reads Tocqueville today? A pragmatic genealogy of Democracy in America

This paper addresses a central puzzle in the history of academic disciplines: Why has Alexis de Tocqueville, and his magnum opus *Democracy in America*, recently been subject to a process of decanonization in American sociology and canonization in neighboring political science? Existing approaches emphasize either aspects internal to the text or to the figure of the author, or external factors such as historical contexts and disciplinary dynamics. My explanation questions the assumption that texts are stable and explores the pragmatic interplay between text-artifact-metaphor. The result is a pragmatic genealogy of the successive material incarnations of *Democracy* since the 1830s. This allows me to account for the various meanings that have been associated with *Democracy* (and Tocqueville) at key historical moments in terms of the cultural work of collectives of agents around the text and its material form so as to make it the icon of certain political and disciplinary projects.

Kenneth Thompson

Renewing Moral Panic Theory for the Internet Age

Moral Panic Theory developed in the 1970s in Britain as a way of conceptualising sensationalist media campaigns about the 'immoral' behaviour of young people in public places. It drew on the New Deviancy Theory and embryonic sociology of culture (Cohen 1973), specifically that of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies led by Stuart Hall (Hall et al 1978). The main sources of data were newspaper and television accounts. Subsequently, in the 1980s and 1990s, the theoretical developments were mainly derived from American theories of collective behaviour (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994). These were synthesised by Thompson (1998) and others (Cricher 2000), extending the range to include Risk Society and Discourse Analysis. More recent theoretical and empirical studies have further extended the range (Cricher 2006; Hier 2011; Krinsky 2013) and, in the case of Thompson (2013) incorporating neo-Durkheimian concepts 'collective effervescence', the 'sacred', and 'cultural trauma'. This paper will take stock of these and other developments, ending with a discussion of their adequacy for dealing with moral panics centred on the Internet and its regulation.

16:00 – 17:30

Gilles Verpraet

Cosmopolitan Biographies as cultural sociology

How the biographies of cosmopolitan authors and their working texts contribute to the development of the cultural cosmopolitanism and their creative performance? This question is relevant for post colonial writers such as Césaire, Fanon, Glissant without forgetting the commonwealth authors such as Naipaul, Gilroy. Our presentation intends to clarify the meaning and methods of analysis of these cosmopolitan intellectual biographies. We will specify the frames of reference and the interpretative frameworks for these analyses. A genealogy of these texts and their authors may clarify the meaning of these biographies in regard with the history of the Caribbean, of decolonization, in regard with globalization and its interconnected history. An endogenous analysis specifies the relevant contribution of Glissant, so to give a perspective to the Caribbean diaspora facing the blockage of independence, the mental division of partial decolonization (Fanon), so to promote a rhizomic approach sustaining the continuity between cultures; i.e. le "Tout Monde". This analysis of the

biographies and texts designs a specific relational space (Bourdieu, Cassirer, Emirbayer) between North/south relations, sustaining the continuity between cultures, i.e. le Tout Monde. It is characterized as an audacious attempt to overcome the limitation of colonial past. This configuration contributes to frame a cosmopolitan relational space. By this combination between endogenous textual analysis and social relational deployment, it is possible to evaluate these biographies in an history, and inside the axiology of cosmopolitanism between proximity and distance, identity and alterity and otherness. We will focus on the new relations between sociological imagination and cosmopolitan imagination framed and shaped between these authors, their positioning and their texts (W Mills, Delanty). So comes the epistemological interest to clarify the sociological relations between cultural biography and cosmopolitan axiology.

Marcos Hernando Gonzalez

For a sociology of 'collective intellectuals': Unpacking the theoretical and methodological potential of 'intellectual teams

In past decades, part of the sociology of intellectuals has espoused a 'declinist' thesis – which argues that the 'intellectual' is a waning figure in modern public debate – while another has advanced the idea that intellectuals continue to operate in other forms and through other media. Indeed, while it is true that a position such as that of Sartre is difficult to maintain today – such an intellectual would receive insurmountable challenges – the role of intervening and informing public debate from a 'generalist' perspective continues to be carried forward. Hence the importance, often understudied, of organisations that 'act as' public intellectuals. In this context, drawing from Baert's positioning theory and Eyal and Buchholz's plea for a move towards a sociology of interventions (i.e. for a performative view of intellectual work) this paper traces the theoretical and methodological efficacy of the concept of 'intellectual team'. To achieve this, I will draw from my doctoral research on think tanks' responses to the 2008 crisis, which will facilitate bringing into focus the issue of coordination, as well as that of the institutional conditions of possibility of epistemic authority.

Hans-Peter Mueller

The Ambivalence of Meritocracy. The Discourse on Achievement and Social Justice

In the last decades the Western world encountered a transition from industrial to information societies. Despite this deep transformation, the core economic structure is still capitalism, the political make-up is still formed by democracy and the cultural realm continues to profess values of individualism. And despite growing social inequality in the Western world, the cultural code of legitimation of these inequities follows a logic Michael Young in 1958 named "meritocracy". Meritocracy, literally speaking, means the rule by merit or achievement. What was meant back then by Young to be a satire, forms and informs the social reality of the Western world as a dominant idea, a prevailing ideal and a powerful ideology. How is this possible? Why has become „meritocracy” such a dominant mode of justification of social inequality? Are the three "I's" – idea, ideal and ideology – after all necessary and sufficient to justify growing inequality and to establish the legitimacy for the intricate balance of the Western model of capitalism, democracy and individualism? This set of questions will be answered in three steps: First, the logic and dynamic of meritocracy is outlined by looking at the balance of equality/inequality and the role of equal opportunity and then confronting it with the bleak social reality by referring to the early and late studies on social inequality by Pierre Bourdieu. Secondly, we recall Young's scenario of meritocracy realized and ask the question if the ideal fulfilled forms the good and just society. Thirdly, the issue of legitimacy is addressed and the pernicious question raised why we cling to an unrealizable and obviously unwelcome ideal? Why is meritocracy inevitable?

Tuesday 29th June

9:00 – 10:30

Håkon Larsen

Performing Legitimacy in the Culture Sector: The Case of Opera Houses

To be able to get a grip on how actors engage in legitimating particular organizations we need to treat legitimation as a contingent social process, and study the cultural work and social performances involved in legitimation. There are three crucial aspects to be considered in an action-oriented cultural approach to organizational legitimacy. Firstly, we need to approach legitimacy as a social process. Secondly, we need to understand that legitimacy is an endless, ongoing, contingent accomplishment of the cultural work of various social actors. Thirdly, we need to take seriously the performative aspects of this cultural work. When developing and applying this cultural approach to organizational legitimacy in the culture sector, I have found the work of Jeffrey Alexander, Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot to be particularly helpful. Where Alexander's theory of cultural pragmatics helps us understand the complexities of social performances in late modern societies, the notion of orders of worth helps us give context and contour to the culture structures influencing the performers and their audiences. The cultural approach to studies of organizational performances of legitimacy presented in this paper takes into consideration both strategic and non-strategic actions, and internal and external motivations for actions, in seeking to understand the dynamics of organizational legitimation work. The approach will be applied to an analysis of how the Metropolitan Opera in New York and the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet in Oslo are performing legitimacy in the public sphere.

Phil Smith

Deflating Genius: Mann, Adorno and Nietzsche on Richard Wagner

It is well established in cultural sociology that genius is socially constructed through processes of definition, attribution and performance. We know less about the converse. Here we consider the question by looking to resources from the highest level of elite culture and cultural criticism. Widely considered one of the most ambitious, creative, innovative, visionary and ultimately successful composers of all time, Richard Wagner offers a particularly tough nut to crack. Using resources from cultural and narrative theory the paper unpacks the textual structures and hermeneutic moves through which three major intellectuals attempted this task. Written in the period when Wagner's influence was at its height their deflationary efforts alight variously on targets such as the formal qualities of Wagner's music, his character, the audience, and his historical context. This study identifies some surprising common ground between aesthetic criticism and the way that discourses and narratives have been shown to work within civil society more generally.

Colin Cremin

Going Back To The Future Of The Culture Industry

The concept of the culture industry, introduced by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in their 1944 book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, explains why under conditions of servitude people identify with interests to whom they ought logically to oppose. Their focus is not culture industries as such but rather the adaptation of factory-style techniques to aesthetic production for the purposes of exchange. This leads to the standardisation of culture and the reification of easily reproducible, interchangeable and marketable artefacts, be they films,

music, paintings, celebrities and so on. Familiarity is key to popularity. By seeking out and consuming the ever same, the aesthetic sensibilities and intellectual capacities of the individual are stunted and they regress into a childlike state. To engender novelty minor variations are factored into cultural production. By identifying with and recognising his or herself in these novelties, the person becomes a pseudo-individual with anything substantive liquidated. Rather than consign the culture industry thesis to history, it will be claimed through several examples that it was ahead of its time and is still of critical importance today.

Katelin Albert

Title TBA

Inspired by Swedberg's (2011) call to turn to the "context of discovery," wherein theorizing may find a companion in the world of art, and Harman's speculative realism and object-oriented philosophy, this paper provides a speculative exploration into a "weird" story of the HPV vaccine. Beginning with an academic preface situating this paper in relation to existing sociological theories of objects and technologies, then through the medium of short story science fiction, this work asks readers to imagine this health technology as a real object, with hidden depth, whose "objectness" is not human-centered, but emerges from the object itself. This story theorizes beyond the Kantian human-object relationship, and doing so, imagines the object beyond its constructionist "configuration," which often privileges a designer-centered perspective on the intended and future users of a technology. Drawing on Harman and feminist scholars who have found inspiration in science fiction, this paper is meant to invigorate the imagination of objects and technologies as having their own qualities and relations (with other objects, and not just with humans), wherein objects have realness in themselves, are not necessarily mind dependent, yet co-exist with humans. The purpose of this paper is to encourage unconventional approaches to thought development, here in relation to theories of objects and technologies, and to experiment with speculation as a serious mode of sociological theorizing.

11:00 – 12:30

Martina Cvajner and Giuseppe Sciortino

Performing Sexual Emancipation

In current sociological folklore, the sixties are associated to a radical «Sexual Revolution» that seems to have changed the very same meaning of sexual life. The analysis of its behavioral consequences is currently at the center of an ample variety of social research programs. Across Western countries, and increasingly also outside the western world, there is a growing output of academic literature documenting the changes in sexual practices, roles and identities unleashed by the widening circles of such revolution. At the same time, until now there has been very little work carried out on the cultural sociology of such revolution. Few studies have analyzed how sexual emancipation has been framed, described and narrated for its several audiences. This is surprising, as one of the most outstanding outcomes of this alleged revolution has been the birth and growth of a legitimate market niche of erotic literature, movies and paraphernalia devoted to portray how an emancipated sexual life would look like. The paper analyzes the changes in the character of Emmanuelle, one of the most important and long-lived icons of erotic emancipation. It chronicles the changes in the portrayal of the character of Emmanuelle, a young woman entering a voyage of erotic self-discovery. It starts with the 1959 underground text, bound to quickly become a classic of French and international erotic literature. It follows it through its incarnations in several differentiated strings of erotic movies in the '70s and '80s, as well as its appearance in graphic novels,

magazines, videogames and even pieces of furniture. It continues the analyses with its reboot through various TV-series from the early 90s to 2012. Through the semantic analysis of the codes employed to portray the very same character (and her relations and practices) along several decades and media, the paper is able to address issues of stability and change in the cultural narratives of sexual life.

Craig Browne

Social Freedom and the Dialectic of Control

Axel Honneth's recent conceptualisation and historical reconstruction of social freedom are substantial contributions to critical theory. In this paper, I initially assess the strengths and weakness of Honneth's notion of social freedom. Social freedom, Honneth argues, differs from the established conceptions of negative freedom and reflexive freedom. Social freedom pertains rather to the entire domain of social interaction, or, what Hegel termed, 'ethical life'. Social freedom is likewise distinguished by its 'objectivity', that is, it is dependent on social institutions and is manifested in institutions. The notion of social freedom marks a significant shift towards a sociological approach to social justice and it constitutes a critique of current normative political philosophy. Whilst endorsing these intentions, my analysis finds that Honneth's reconstruction does not entirely satisfy them. The resultant deficiencies, I argue, are not simply due to the selectivity of Honneth's method of normative reconstruction; rather they ensue from his basic conception of the relationship between social action and social institutions. Honneth's conception is based on an underestimation of the structural impediments to social freedom, even though these are largely appreciated in his historical reconstruction of the different spheres of social freedom's elaboration. I argue that the notion of the dialectic of control provides a means of better understanding the conflicts that surround the attempts to realise social freedom. It represents a more complex interpretation of the relationship between social institutions and social action, as well as being more illuminating about existing social reality, both with respect to its potentials for extending social freedom and in its undermining of social freedom. In order to clarify the dynamics of the dialectic of control and develop a notion of social autonomy that is compatible with it, a number of additional perspectives will be drawn on, like those of Giddens, Boltanski and Castoriadis.

Brad West

New national rituals, social change and the ambiguity of the sacred

From Durkheim's analysis of the elementary forms of indigenous rites to recent developments in performance studies, the study of ritual has focussed on uncovering its universal characteristics, with the strength of the symbolic display evaluated in relation to its perceived authenticity. In this paper I forward an alternative agenda with an analytic focus being on different ritual genres and forms. Drawing on Durkheim's insights into the ambiguity of the sacred, it will be argued that rituals that prompt reflexivity are potentially more transformative.

Mervyn Horgan

A Cultural Sociology of the Interaction Order? Towards the Phenomenological Enrichment of Structural Hermeneutics

Beginning with what Schutz calls 'the paramount reality of the Lebenswelt', I treat the copresence of strangers in public space as conceptually generative for cultural sociology. More specifically, this paper builds upon the 'every incivilities' approach developed by Philip Smith et al (2010) by drawing on data from a growing bank of interviews and focus groups where participants provided narrative accounts of rude encounters with strangers in urban

public spaces. These accounts provide us with a range of insights into confluences and discrepancies between the ways that relations between strangers are idealized, enacted and interpreted. While participants' accounts of specific encounters are ostensibly concerned with particular context-bound infractions, I show how these narratives draw upon broader cultural structures, wedging open opportunities for participants to make much bigger claims around the operations of morality, justice and solidarity. By scrutinizing the everyday interpretive machinery that ordinary actors bring to bear on uncivil encounters with strangers, we find an analytic switching point of sorts between cultural structures and the interaction order. By outlining some elements of what I'm calling a cultural sociology of the interaction order, I'll show how cultural sociology might be enlivened by attending to the rich interpersonal dynamics of the interaction order, and similarly, how our understanding of the interaction order might be enriched by attending to the ways in which cultural structures undergird, organize and direct its character and course.

13:30 – 15:00

Michael Blain and Angeline Kearns Blain

Theorizing the War on Terror

This paper will elaborate a genealogy of the biopolitics of empire and resistance, and victimage ritual and “counter-terrorism.” This dynamic involves a sequence of imperial moves (17th C. British implantation of “Protestants” in Ireland, or 19th C. settlement of “whites” on the American frontier; 20th C. US lead campaigns to manage Empire around the world (“regime change,” rehabilitation of “failed states”), provoking indigenous resistance and their subjection by means of victimage rituals, providing rhetorical cover for “counter-terror” campaigns of transplantation and sequestration of problematic populations. The genealogy links three events: the 17th C. British colonization of Ireland, the 19th C. American settlement of the Oregon, and the 20th C. War on Terror. It argues that 1) Anglo-American imperial practices constituted an experiment in the biopolitics of population (e.g., implantation of populations in colonial settlements, transplantation of indigenous populations to reservations), 2) that these practices functioned to constitute the sovereignty of monarchs, emperors, and presidents as omnipotent power subjects and the indigenous populations as “savages” and “terrorists,” 3) the protestant ethic infused the spirit of imperialism with messianic zeal, soldiers, adventurers, settlers, pioneers willing to implement the desires of sovereigns, monarchs and presidents); and 4) the War on Terror is a direct descendent of these historical practices. The paper concludes with a discussion of the power dynamic organizing these events to the current WOT. By expanding our knowledge of this dynamic, we hope to contribute to a better understanding of the terrifying history of the present.

Florian Stoll

From the Global South into Social Theory – Results from research on middle class milieus in urban Kenya

Classical social theory has been developed by Northern authors who took Northern societies as the blueprint for social life in general. Despite all criticism of modernization theory, there is - so far - no sociological theory production which considers contexts in the global South systematically. However, examples like Durkheim's Elementary Forms or Bourdieu's discovery of the habitus in Kabylia illustrate that research out of Euro-America can contribute substantially to theory production. Jean and John Comaroff (2012) even argue that analyses of African contexts can show social developments in 21st century societies clearer than studies in Northern countries. Following this idea, the paper discusses on the background of

research on middle class milieus in urban Kenya how empirical findings and the revision of sociological concepts can provide new insights. Here, socioeconomic or socioprofessional class analysis is not sufficient because there is no homogenous Kenyan middle class which shares the same values, lifestyle and political attitudes. Instead, there are cross-cutting sociocultural influences relevant which partly do not exist in Euro- America: Especially, the relations to the extended family, forms of urban-rural ties, ethnicity and forms of religiosity are crucial and distinctive. These and more influences distinguish sociocultural groups – here called social milieus – with specific orientations and lifestyles: For example, in Nairobi it has been possible to identify a neo-traditional milieu, a committed Christian milieu, young professionals, social climbers, the milieu of liberal cosmopolitans, and a stability-oriented pragmatic milieu. In addition, the presentation interprets the empirical data on middle class milieus with a framework from Cultural Sociology (Collins/Alexander/Lamont) which considers crucial situations, typical sets of meanings and symbolic boundaries. Finally, the paper discusses which theoretical conclusions can be drawn from this and further research in contexts of the global South.

Maria Roscivo

Performing Citizenship – the arts and the political imagination

Within the social sciences, citizenship has largely been conceived as a claims-making activity as citizens and noncitizens (migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers) position themselves as subjects of rights (Isin and Nielsen, 2008) and place demands on the state, for example, through forms of public protest and social movements. More recently, Clarke Coll, Dagnino and Neveu (2014) have argued that citizenship should be conceived in terms of struggles, and that practicing citizenship can mobilise people - in marches and demonstrations - to both demand and embody different social and political relationships. While this view of citizenship is compelling because it shifts the focus from citizenship as an abstract legal category to embodied practices of citizenship, little attention has been paid to how artistic practices can constitute a site of contestation of citizenship, even when they are not explicitly political. This paper argues that this way of conceiving citizenship strictly in terms of a legal category, discursive claims and routine political actions (e.g., voting, taxpaying, protest) is too limited because it neglects expressive and affective modes of communication and action. Building upon performance theory (Taylor, 2002, Alexander, 2004), I argue that artistic performances of citizenship can be politically effective by inviting the imagination of new political and collective futures. In so doing, I put forward the proposition that citizenship can be conceived as a performance in public life. This combines discursive debate, poetic-expressive devices (e.g., acting, music styles, gestures, visual styles) and ludic modes of interaction (Balme, 2005) beyond the state-centred arena of politics or social movements. Ultimately, this paper argues that the arts can constitute a site for alternative and emancipatory projects of citizenship that take place outside commonly defined sites of citizenship (e.g., elections, institutional politics and education) and beyond the state-centred arena of politics.

Erik Schneiderhan, Shamus Khan and Katelin Albert

Theorizing Ethnicity as Enactment

In lay terms, people often think of ethnicity as something we “have” or something we “are.” Such an approach is mirrored within our own social science work. Survey research, for example, implicitly asks that respondents think of their “race/ethnicity” as a property of themselves as they fill in instruments that define what they are. This conceptualization has come under fire in recent years as scholars in disparate fields have argued that variables are not properties of people, but a set of social relations that are “marked and made” (Desmond and Emirbayer 2009). There are various terms for these developments—from “performativity”

(Alexander, 2011; Butler 1990) to “relational sociology” (Emirbayer 1997) to “options” or “hybrids” where categories are symbolic, flexible, and voluntary (Alba 1990; Gans 1979; Waters 1990) to having relational categories “without groups” (Brubaker 2006). Perhaps unwisely, we add to the cacophony of terms by thinking of ethnicity as an enactment, drawing on pragmatism and critical realism to develop our argument. We engage with the notion that enactment encapsulates the developing theoretical tradition where ethnicity (or other variables like gender or class) is something that subjects do, have done to them, or characterize the interactions they are embedded within. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our argument for sociological theory.

15:15 – 16:45

Csaba Szalo

From Ruins to Places: On the Relationship of Cultural Sociology to Phenomenology

Contemporary forms of urban memory are inseparable from various forms of ruins, including industrial ruins, traces of bombings of the second WW transformed into ruins. There are various practices of urban preservation, tourist remakes and retrofashions that aestheticize the traces of the past into ruins. The first part of my paper focuses on conceptual differences between cultural sociology and material culture studies over the materiality of memorial objects. My reconstruction of this controversy deals with their theoretical presuppositions linked to concepts like social function, social construction, history and agency. The second part outlines how cultural sociology of urban memory could be enriched by existential phenomenology's accent on the relationship of a lived body and place.

Dominik Bartmanski and Martina Löw

Building Power: The Construction of Cultural Reality

Although we live in a digital era when the symbolic domain is increasingly synonymous with the virtual reality, concrete civic buildings continue to matter as cultural signifiers. The virtual and the concrete are hardly separable, but it is imperative that we take materiality of built environment on its own terms, both analytically and empirically. Buildings are things endowed not only with social life à la Appadurai but also with their own cultural agency that social scientists from Latour to Miller have by now extensively researched. For one thing, the new flagship architectural interventions are credited with a singular capacity to revitalize urban life and claimed to successfully reinscribe their host cities in global cultural circuits. The epitome of this phenomenon is the much vaunted ‘Bilbao Effect’, the increased visibility and renewed cultural profile of the post-industrial capital of Basque country in Spain linked to its Guggenheim Museum designed by ‘starchitect’ Frank Gehry. Secondly, the case of civic architecture provides a privileged testing ground for constructivist sociological theories of social performance, iconicity, and urbanity, each of which thematizes a distinctive cultural logic. It is also by bringing these three conceptions together that we can start understanding how and under what conditions buildings exert their meaningful influence, and become significant, often contested structures. Social performance theory helps prevent flagship architecture from being reduced to pragmatic considerations of function, and reveals the complex conditions of possibility of building's cultural resonance, or lack thereof. Theory of iconicity emphasizes the importance of form for social meaning-making and reveals materiality of architectural signifier as something that actively inflects rather than passively reflects power. The theory of city's own logic brings in a phenomenological dimension and emphasizes various aspects of local knowledge and site-specific factors that irreducibly contextualize any performance, including architectural ones. Drawing on several European cases and beyond, we present a new

sociological approach to the issue of 'building power': the iconic power of built environment and the construction of cultural power which remains both metaphorical and literal.

Ronald N. Jacobs and Eleanor Townsley

Design, Empathy, and Civil Society: Re-Thinking Benjamin on Aura

In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", Walter Benjamin argued that the authority of an art work and its capacity for producing critical thought was connected to a protection of its aura. Benjamin argued that mass reproduction made this less likely, because viewing had become freed from a sacred and ritualistic context in which the audience was forced to view the object on the terms of the artist. With the ubiquitous and ephemeral nature of mass production, Benjamin argued, art became meaningless. This essay re-visits Benjamin's argument, but we shift our focus away from the artist and toward the design intellectual. There is a class of design intellectuals who continue to recreate a sense of aura around their work, through writings and performances that attach iconic power to their design works. Our focus is on those design intellectuals who manage to transport the power of aura into the domestic sphere itself – the most important examples being iconic architects and furniture designers. Focusing on the specific case of mid-century modern architecture, we argue that iconic design intellectuals are a source of empathy and creativity. For the people who live in these homes, their decisions about how to design their domestic spaces is continually interrupted by a consideration and a respect for the original intentions and the aesthetic vision of the design intellectual. We argue that this has important consequences for civil society, because it challenges the intensely privatized, rationalized, and individualized nature of the contemporary lifeworld.

Eduardo De La Fuente

Surface, substance, setting: Towards a textural sociology

Things, and the qualities of things, are very much on the agenda for sociology, anthropology, philosophy, cultural analysis, and allied fields such science and technology studies, as well as organization and management studies. If we take the latter as our example, we see that discussions of organizational discourses, narratives and symbolism are quickly being supplemented, if not surpassed, by discussions of how design, artefacts and atmospheres contribute to organizational life. In the case of the 'strong program' in cultural sociology, there has also been a turn towards iconicity which Bartmanski and Alexander propose is about the 'interaction between surface and depth'. They add that even if, what we 'experience phenomenologically is a sensible material surface with its own aesthetic power', in the case of icons we have a 'concrete materiality that points beyond itself to the elusive but very real domains of feeling and thought'. Indeed, the 'elusive' might be an apt descriptor of the textural dimensions of social life as what we have at play are things (although, it could be extended to persons and events) where the character or qualities of something are inherently relational. A textural analysis would necessarily be attentive to features of the world that depend on contrast: for e.g., the perception of colour differences, whether something is considered boring or interesting, glossy and new or faded and in a state of disrepair. The textural also points to conditions that are suspended between substance and style, materiality and spirituality, constancy and dynamism - what Simmel termed the dialectic of 'life' and 'form'. The latter's essay on 'The Ruin' could serve as one of the foundational texts of a textural sociology by virtue of its suggestion that 'so long as we speak of a ruin at all and not a mere heap of stones' it is because the 'crumbling power of nature' has not sunk the products of human culture, imagination and desire into the 'formlessness of mere matter'. The paper will ask whether there is such a thing as mere matter and what kinds of fine-grained analyses might be necessary in order to capture textures in their emergent state? The central message will be that terms such

as culture, meaning, value, and communication, look very different from the perspective of the textual.

Announcements

The Winner of the *Junior Theory Prize* is Larissa Buchholz, currently a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University. The winning paper is titled, "What is a global field? Theorizing fields beyond the nation-state". It has been published in 'Sociological Review Monographs'. Larissa will be delivering her acceptance speech at the RC 16 Theory Conference.

Abstract: While scholarship on global and transnational fields has been emerging, hitherto contributions have rarely or not explicitly discussed how Bourdieu's field theory has to be altered when its use expands from a national to a global scale. Starting from the premise that a global field is not a national field writ large, this paper discusses strategies and elements for revising field theory for use beyond national borders. Specifically, the article first proposes analogical theorizing as a systematic approach for extending and modifying the tools of field theory at a global level. Analogical theorizing offers a method for constructing the object in a global context in a way that goes beyond rescaling and minimizes the risk of deductive reification. Against this background and drawing from research on the global visual art field, the article offers criteria for delineating a global field and distinguishes relative functional and vertical autonomy. Finally, it discusses how the concept of 'relative vertical autonomy' contributes in three ways to the development of global field analysis: for theorizing emergence; examining global-national interdependencies; and denationalizing Bourdieu's concept of 'national capital'.

Questioning the "Crisis" of Journalism

Jeffrey Alexander, Elizabeth Butler Breese, and Maria Luengo, eds., *The Crisis of Journalism Reconsidered: Democratic Culture, Professional Codes, Digital Future* (Cambridge University Press). Pub. Date: June 23, 2016.

We've all seen the headlines. Newspapers are forced to downsize. Investigative news stories are fewer and farther in between, while journalists produce "click-worthy" articles meant to perform well on news aggregation sites, Facebook, and Twitter. The crisis of journalism in the digital age has captured the interest and concern of communication scholars and sociologists.

Featuring new studies from scholars hailing from communication and journalism schools and sociology departments in the United States and Europe, *The Crisis of Journalism Reconsidered* brings a dramatically different perspective to bear on the "crisis." Most of the recent literature devoted to the crisis of journalism has been one-sidedly focused on technology and economics. Consequently, commentators weighing in on the crisis have been gloomy in their predictions for democratic, professional journalism in a digital future.

Through studies from different theoretical traditions and using various methodologies,

contributors to the new volume argue the opposite. From rich ethnographic studies to survey and close textual analysis, authors uncover professional ideals and narratives that offer creative pathways to sustain professional journalism in new forms.

The Journalist in the 21st Century

Spotlight, winner of the 2016 Academy Award for Best Picture, tells the story of investigative journalists for the *Boston Globe* who investigate sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests, which was known to the church and never prosecuted. The film's portrayal of reporters' lives 15 years ago feel far in the past. *Spotlight* depicts the moment just before Twitter and even before smartphones enter the newsroom and change journalists' practices in ways highlighted in several chapters of *The Crisis of Journalism Reconsidered*.

Spotlight could make viewers nostalgic for a last, great moment of journalism. Yet, *The Crisis of Journalism Reconsidered* challenges us to see that the journalistic values that motivated Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein to investigate Watergate in the 1970s and animated the *Boston Globe* reporters in the early 2000s are the same professional commitments that endure today. Indeed, the professional commitments of journalism give vocabulary and moral weight to the responses to new technologies and financial realities.

Journalists today are committed to objectivity, to rendering the news of the day free from bias. And journalists strive to produce news stories with depth; the profession still celebrates journalists who do. As studies in *The Crisis of Journalism Reconsidered* show, journalists interpret and evaluate blogging, Twitter, and other new tools according to how well they support the professional ideals of journalism, or undermine them.

In their own way, each author presents how recent technological change and the economic upheaval it has produced are understood according to longstanding cultural codes of professional journalism and democracy. It is this cultural framework that actually transforms these "objective" changes into a crisis of journalism. Only because journalism is meant to be objective, unbiased, timely, and accurate are we concerned that new technology and financial realities threaten the news.

It is these very enduring moral codes that hold the key to the future of journalism. The objective rendering of information, even when the reporting is critical toward the state and other powerful institutions, remains the lodestar of journalism. Anxieties about the "crisis" of journalism, authors in the new volume show, offer the opportunity for journalists, readers, and scholars to recommit to enduring moral codes, and sustain them in new ways.

In his chapter, "The crisis in news: Can you whistle a happy tune," preeminent social historian of the news Michael Schudson predicts: "Printed newspapers will in time, possibly a very short time, largely disappear." For many news watchers, that prediction causes great concern. However, the studies in *The Crisis of Journalism Reconsidered* offer a different vision of the future of the news. Newspapers may largely disappear, but professional journalism endures, perhaps even stronger than ever.

Guillermina Jasso (New York University) delivered the 2016 Karl F. Schuessler Lecture in Social Science Methodology at Indiana University, Bloomington, on Friday, 22 April. Prof. Schuessler (1916-2005), whose long and distinguished career was based at Indiana University (PhD, 1947; faculty, 1947-1985; department chair, 1961-1969; founder of the Institute of Social Research, 1963), made many contributions to sociology and sociological methodology and served the discipline as editor of *American Sociological Review* (1969-1971) and *Sociological Methodology* (1977-1979). The title of Jasso's talk was "Inputs and Outcomes, Theory and Empirics, and Causality."

New Articles and Books

Browne., C., & Susen, S. (2014). Austerity and Its Antitheses: Practical Negations of Capitalist Legitimacy. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 113(2), 217-230.

[Link to article.](#)

Jasso, G. (2015). Thinking, Saying, Doing in the World of Distributive Justice. *Social Justice Research*, 28, 435-478.

[Link to article.](#)

Jasso, G. K. Y. Törnblom, and C. Sabbagh. (2016). Distributive Justice. In C. Sabbagh and M. Schmitt (eds.), *Handbook of Social Justice Theory and Research* (pp. 201-218) New York, NY: Springer.

[Link to book.](#)

Kalberg, S. (2016). *The Social Thought of Max Weber*. Los Angeles: Sage.

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Luc Boltanski, J. R., and S. Susen. (2014). The Fragility of Reality: Luc Boltanski in Conversation with Juliette Rennes and Simon Susen (S. Susen, Trans.). In B. S. Turner (Ed.), *The Spirit of Luc Boltanski: Essays on the 'Pragmatic Sociology of Critique* (pp. 591-610). London: Anthem Press.

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Morgan, M. (2016). *Pragmatic Humanism: On the Nature and Value of Sociological Knowledge* . Abingdon, Oxon & New York: Routledge.

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Stoetzler, M. (2016). Antisemitism and the British Labour Party. *History & Policy*.

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Stoetzler, M. (2016). From interacting systems to a system of divisions: The concept of society and the “mutual constitution” of intersecting social divisions. *European Journal of Social Theory* (Online First Version).

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[Link to book.](#)

Susen, S. (2014). Towards a Dialogue between Pierre Bourdieu's "Critical Sociology" and Luc Boltanski's "Pragmatic Sociology of Critique" (S. Susen, Trans.). In S. Susen & B. S. Turner (Eds.), *The Spirit of Luc Boltanski: Essays on the 'Pragmatic Sociology of Critique*. (pp. 313-348). London: Anthem Press.

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Susen, S. (2013a). Bourdieusian Reflections on Language: Unavoidable Conditions of the Real Speech Situation. *Social Epistemology*, 27(3-4), 199-246.

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Susen, S. (2013b). The Place of Space in Social and Cultural Theory. In A. Elliot (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Social and Cultural Theory* (pp. 333-357). London: Routledge.

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Susen, S. (2013c). A Reply to My Critics: The Critical Spirit of Bourdieusian Language'. *Social Epistemology*, 27(3-4), 323-393.

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Susen, S. (2014a). 15 Theses on Power. *Philosophy and Society*, 25(3), 7-28.

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