

WG02 2010

NEWSLETTER (VOL. 4/2010)

*Newsletter of the International Sociological Association's
Working Group # 02 on Historical and Comparative Sociology*

In this issue:

This is the last issue of my term as Newsletter Editor. It has been a privilege to serve this group. In the four annual issues of this Newsletter, I have tried to include material relevant and interesting to our community but also to sociology at large. It is possible that this Newsletter will be superseded by an electronic website or weblog. If this is the case, then this is also the last issue of a Newsletter published by our working group in this specific format.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed their pieces to the Newsletter and all those who have emailed me their news and other announcements. As you can see, our group has succeeded in being promoted to the status of a Working Group. Congratulations to all the members who have contributed to this achievement with their labor – and in particular to our Past President, Willfried Spohn, for all his hard work and dedication to TG02/WG02.

Stephen Mennell (University College Dublin, stephen.mennell@ucd.ie) is currently the Acting President with our Past President, Willfried Spohn, serving as Acting Vice-President. The elections for the 2010-14 Board will take place soon, as I am told.

In this issue, you can read an obituary for the late Shmuel Eisenstadt, who has been among the pioneers of historical sociology, courtesy of Prof. Devorah Kalekin-Fishman. It is a heart-felt commentary that speaks volumes about the discrepancies between academic politics and intellectual ability.

You will also find brief reports from some of the TG02 sessions at the last World Congress of Sociology. Plus, there is a fascinating short essay by David Terry (Communications, San Jose St. University) about globalization, heterotopia and the view from *Areopagos*, the hill facing the Athens' Acropolis.

Victor Roudometof
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Newsletter Editor

Studying a Rock: Globalization, Heterotopia and Desire Lines¹

Based on ethnographic research at the Areopagos (Mars Hill) in Athens, Greece, this essay seeks to enact a performative poetics of global intersubjectivity. Emphasizing the spatiality of social being and the materiality of discourse, I argue that heterogeneous encounters at charged heterotopic spaces such as the Areopagos offer ways of theorizing belonging that do not assume their interdependent parts have any one necessary thing in common. The simultaneous heterogeneity of the rock offers a way to rethink globalization as producing and being produced by what I call “co-incidences”: events of coming together in space about which the question of causality must remain suspended.

Space is more than the empty container or static background in which time’s performances unfold, space is not the absence of stories, but a charged encounter of what Doreen Massey calls “the simultaneity of stories-so-far” (*For*

Space 9). The encounter of simultaneous stories in/as space is always also, to some degree, a chance meeting. One story can never be said to completely cause the others because the stories are “so far” fragmentary approximations. The simultaneous “so far” narratives that comprise spatiality are connected in the specificity of their encounter, but the complete conditions and character of a given encounter can never be completely determined. The connectedness of multiple intersecting “so far” stories is most often felt in moments that exceed the intentions of any given social actor: moments of accidental rupture that make one aware of the simultaneous “meanwhile”/ “so far” stories unfolding in/as a given space. Such moments create what I call “co-incidence.”

By using the hyphen in “co-incidence,” I intended to invoke both a spatial sense of being “together” and an indeterminate sense of being so, at least in part, “by chance.” Moments of co-incidence give pause to overarching linear narratives and make visible the multiplicity of stories unfolding in a given moment while preserving the dynamic process of those unfolding “so-far” narratives. Co-incidences are

¹ Based on excerpts from Terry, David P. “Global Co-incidence: ‘Ontos’ Poetics of the Worldwide.” *Text and Performance Quarterly*. 30 (2010): 335-355

moments of “by chanceness” that give pause to many things done “on purpose” and render visible the often hidden fact of shared spatial becoming without flattening it into a single narrative.

Just So Happening

I often run into interference when naming the site of my research. To Greeks, “the Areopagos” long ago ceased to be identified with the hill next to the Acropolis which I have been studying for the past several years and has come to signify the modern Supreme Court building located several miles away. In the U.S., the rock’s Latinate signifier, “Mars Hill,” is more often associated with one of several hundred Evangelical ministries or the towns in Maine, North Carolina, or Mississippi that bear the same name. If I say that I am studying “a rock,” I am often misunderstood as saying “Iraq.” This mis-hearing is particularly awkward because it is often followed by a look of disappointment when the listener realizes that I am not doing work that is so relevant to “current events”: “Oh, you don’t mean the country the U.S. Military is currently occupying you mean, *a* rock. Oh, that’s . . . interesting.” When I discuss the

various religious significances of “the rock,” some colleagues think I mean “The Dome of the Rock” in Jerusalem. Others think I am referring to The Rock: professional wrestler turned action film star.

This sort of slippage in meaning is often treated as an obstacle to be overcome: the ephemerality of *epistemological* connections between virtual chains of signification. My encounters on and with the Areopagos have, however, taught me that such slippage is also a potentially fruitful *ontological* product of the “material manifestation” of discourse (Blair 19). I “just so happen” to use one set of sounds and not another to refer to the rock. That set of sounds, in the specificity of its “just so” materiality, also “just so happens” to refer to other things. This interplay between the “just so happening” of discourse and its “just so” articulation creates the meta-semiotic conditions of possibility not only for being misunderstood, but also for understanding being understood differently. The tangled web of (mis)hearings create a “stage” in Jose Muñoz’s double sense of the term as not only a “temporal hiccup,” an awkwardness that one hopes to pass

through as quickly as possible, but also a spatial platform that is full of charged potentiality (15).

Globalization Through Heterotopia

For six months in 2007-2008 I walked to the top of the Areopagos hundreds of times. I stood on the rock through a rare Athenian snowstorm. I took naps in the coveted shade on hot summer days. I accidentally stained a small section of the rock with the oil from a can of tuna. I watched tens of thousands of people come past. I talked to thousands of them, some for a few minutes, others for hours, still others almost every day over a period of months. Some I will never see or hear from again; one of them sent me a text message while I was typing this paragraph. I met drug dealers and nuns, political theorists and documentary photographers, classical historians and stockbrokers, recent immigrants from the other side of the world and octogenarian Athenians who had spent their entire lives within three miles of the rock. I talked gender politics with pick-up artists, theories of salvation with ministers, investment strategies with shipping magnates. I explained my project to each of them with the precise language stipulated by the IRB and asked for permission to use

their words, attached to pseudonyms, in this document. I took pictures. I let other people take pictures of me. I shared chocolate bars and loaves of bread. I danced, laughed, sang and argued. I enjoyed late summer nights when it was all but impossible to find a place to sit. I hunched by myself for hours on cold January days, nestled in an alcove that protected me from the bitter winds that kept other visitors away. Four to ten hours a day over a period of six months I lived on and with the rock.

This method is, in some respects, ethnographic, but the complexity of the site belies any attempt to define a single ethnos. I chose the rock less as something to think *about* than as co-incident space to think *from*. The Areopagos is a fruitful place from which to re-think what it means or might mean to belong in a global world because it offers a condensed cross-section of many different global flows; many different meanings and activities co-incident there. In its multiplicity of uses, the Areopagos defies an easy distinction between abstract space and concrete place; it falls into the category of “other” spaces that Foucault has called “heterotopias” (69). Heterotopias

are “other” places that exist in unreal - surreal relationship to the places around them. Much like a body on stage, a heterotopia is not only always being itself, but also always pretending to be itself; in Schechnerian terms it is a “not real. . . not not real” place (*Between* 113). Although the rock is easily located as a real place in the center of downtown Athens, it is also an imagined place for a host of historical, religious, personal, and political reasons. Many different places “just so happen” to be together in the same “just so” heterotopic material site.

The Areopagos is intended to mean many different things. Mass tourists come to the rock for views of the Acropolis, one of the most recognizable sites of Western antiquity. Religious pilgrims of various Christian sects come to the rock to pay homage to the site of St. Paul’s conversion of Dionysus the Areopagite, the first Athenian Christian. Many of them re-enact Paul’s sermon, sing hymns, and pray publicly for courage in their own quests to spread the gospel. Tour guides tell groups of hostellers that this was where the Persians of history and the Amazons of myth respectively camped before attacking the heavily fortified

Acropolis. Lecturers tell study-abroad students that in the final section of Aeschylus’s rendering of the cursed house of Atreus, Orestes is tried on the rock for matricide.

The officially sanctioned cultural narratives of canonical drama, military, legal and religious history give the rock narrative shape(s) and solidify its status as a monument: an important rock separated from the rest of the terrain by virtue of its significance. The performances of historical remembering make the Areopagos not just another node in the city, but a special place set aside and imbued with meaning. They make the rock a “place” in Yi-Fu Tuan’s sense of a “pause in space” (6). The strategic work of these place-making narratives, however, also enables many unofficial tactical space-making responses. The presence of the official historical narratives protects the rock from commercial development, but, unlike most of the important monuments in Athens, the Areopagos is only loosely managed by the Ministry of Culture. It requires no admission ticket and is open twenty-four hours a day. It is thus a popular drinking spot for teenagers, budget conscious backpackers, the un- or under-employed and

recent immigrants to Greece, most of whom cannot afford to sit at the overpriced cafes that line the streets below.

The Areopagos offers a fruitful place from which to re-imagine globalization because it is a heterotopia of “meanwhiles”: *It helps figure globalization not as the temporal epoch following the Cold War, but as an increased awareness of “meanwhile” spatiality.* To be global at the heterotopia of the Areopagos is not to be any one thing in particular, but to be particularly aware of heterogeneous intersectionality. Elsbeth Probyn has called this mode of co-being an “outside belonging.” Even more so than the summer Montreal balconies from which Probyn draws her sense of “outside belongings,” the Areopagos, almost always features a heterogeneous mix of behaviors that cannot be said to have any one particular thing in common with each other yet exist in partial articulation to each other. For me, as for Probyn, “this experience inspires a mode of thinking about how people get along, how various forms of belonging are articulated, how individuals conjugate difference into manners of being, and how desires to become are

played out in everyday circumstances” (5). My conception of co-incidence extends Probyn’s “outside belonging” to a space of greater heterogeneity. In the heterotopia of the Areopagos, different ethnoi are able to get along with each other not through recognition of an abstract common humanity, but through the mutual experience of the spatial knots through which they are already bound together in co-incidental joining: “a cohabitation that goes beyond the limited concept of tolerance” (5). What would it mean, the Areopagos helps to ask, to not just tolerate cultural differences, but to perform, however momentarily, their mutual dependence? How might diverse social actors encounter each other not through differences that must be transcended but through the fullness of shared “just so” co-incidences? How might the “just so happening” makeshift belonging familiar to youth hostellers extend to the increased heterogeneity of multiple demographics at the Areopagos? How might these encounters help to re-place the abstract, a-contextual commonalities of “humanism” with a co-incidental conception of belonging?

Desire Lines: Productive Slipping

Because of its slick, polished surface, I originally thought that the Areopagos was made of marble. While reading a guide book entry, however, I discover that the rock on which I was sitting was, in fact, mostly limestone. I made note of my mistake when searching for small talk with a geologist who happened to be walking down the slope with me a few days later. The conversation hadn't been particularly engaging up to that point, but he seemed pleased at the opportunity to use his area of expertise. "Well," he explained, "your initial impression wasn't totally mistaken: You see, limestone plus heat plus pressure more or less equals marble." I thanked him profusely for sharing this tidbit with me and assured him that he had helped me in my research more than he would ever know. As we parted ways, he flashed what I read as a genuine smile and I did my best to return the favor.

The Areopagos bears the markings of millions upon millions of unofficial steps, but the result is not a series of ever more defined counter-paths as might emerge on, say, a college quad. Landscape architects refer to the unofficial paths that people take when

cutting corners rather than taking officially sanctioned routes as "desire lines" (Ahmed 19). These unsanctioned desire lines show where the material fact of a place and the wants and needs of those who frequent it have exceeded the intentional scripts with which it was constructed. On the Areopagos, "desire lines" produce a change in the chemical composition of the stone which, ironically, makes future steps increasingly difficult to take. There undoubtedly were periods when some parts of the rock were much more slippery than others, but those spots were subsequently avoided in favor of more sure ground; this, in turn, put more heat and pressure on the "safe" spots, rendering them less stable for future feet. The cumulative effect of the heat and pressure of countless unsanctioned movements is that bodies on the rock now slide into each other in unpredictable patterns; look to each other for help in determining the least treacherous next step; and smile at each other in moments of shared unbalanced, co-incidental awkwardness.

Nowhere is this slipperiness more fruitfully utilized than in the climb to romantic make-out spots. Approaches to these steep and slippery spots

frequently cause high-heel-wearing women to slip and catch themselves on the arms of their more sure-footed male companions. The slip-and-catch is often accompanied by nervous giggling on her part and calm deep-toned reassurance/condescension on his. Like classically gendered ballet dancers, he becomes the grounded masculine stability that supports her unstable and ephemeral femininity. In addition to the ways in which these actions fit into the “stylized repetition of acts” (Butler 171) that constitute the performativities of gender and heteronormative coupling, the moment animates the rock itself as a social actor. The couple may have been brought to the rock by desires one could locate within their respective subjectivities, but they are, in a literal sense, “brought together” by a slippery agency that lies in the rock itself.

Her slipping in to his arms both is and is not part of the plan. This creates what Bakhtin calls a discursive “loophole”: it allows the couple both to intend and not intend their togetherness and thereby “retain for [themselves] the possibility of altering the ultimate final meaning” of their actions (233). For the performativity of “romance” to be felicitous, the encounter must, to some

degree, happen by chance. Were he to trip her, it would be assault. Were she to jump in his arms, she might seem too forward. The moment can emerge as felicitously “romantic” because the agent is not one of the two subjects that are soon to “become one,” but the slippery rock on which they “just so happen” to find themselves. This coincidental framing creates an “aesthetic of the un-begun,” or an “aesthetic of a yet-to-be-determined beginning” (Terry 33). The work of romantic coupling is felicitous in this instance because its agency is beyond the intentionality of either member of the couple. The “background” of performative romance is not, or at least not only, a nameless faceless “discourse” of gender and sexuality; it is the “just so” generative force of a performative stone which is itself produced by the “just so happening” of the countless bodies that have pressed against it before. What seems to be a dialectic relationship between lovers is, in fact, a “trilectic” interplay with the materiality of the rock. Such “thirthing” is central to what Edward Soja, among others, has called the “spatial imagination” (11).

My own desire is not to further reify the problematic normative gender

performativities played out in this scenario, but to use the co-incident logic that the scenario illustrates as a way to re-imagine what it means, or might mean, to belong in a “global” world. I want to speak from the coincidences of divergent mobile bodies on the rock about what it means to belong in a world in which fewer and fewer people are “from” one place in particular and even fewer stay put in the places which they are, in theory, “from.” The scene between lovers above functions as a metonym for my project as a whole: I imagine this essay not as dialogic conversation between writer and reader, but as a trilectic interplay between writer, reader, and the rock as a slippery, charged space imbued with material agency. As I write these words I see myself as, in part, continuing work that the rock has already set in motion.

The rock “is a Janus faced thing: it wants to *be about* something, to be a sign, and it wants to *be* something, a thing in itself, a site of beauty” (States 3, *Emphasis added*). It is an epistemological sign that stands in for the complexities of globalization, and an ontological “thing in itself” that offers an alternative poetics of the

global. In Barthes’ terms, my writing seeks to move from “studium. . . that wide field of unconcerned desire, of various interest, of inconsequential taste” of abstract conceptions of the global to the “punctum. . . that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)” of a concrete but necessarily complex global intersection. While for Barthes the categories studium and punctum are specific to the photograph, I adapt them here to help mark a distinction between the Areopagos as a variously meaningful social place which is an instantiation of larger forces, “studium,” and the Areopagos as a thing-in-itself, “punctum” (27). I am driven by a desire to understand what it means or might mean to be global, but also by an affective connection to the stubbornness of the referent—the rockness of the rock and the physical fact of the meanings and bodies that co-incide on it. The rock is thus not merely a logical extension or exemplar of the larger forces of globalization but an accidental “prick,” or slip that re-frames and re-poeticises those forces.

The rock allows me to talk about the problem of belonging in an age of globalization without claiming to rise

above it. The “stubbornness” of the rock's materiality contains and is exceeded by multiple meanings and embodied actions. Its gravity pulls disparate things together into meaningful entanglements. In a sense, of course, I co-create these meanings and am answerable for them. I am not, however, the sole agent responsible for their production. While any number of other places could be “significant” as answers to my questions about global belonging, the ways in which the Areopagos multiplies and exceeds signification help to dis/re-place the agency of writing and to open the text up to co-incident surprise.

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Shmuel Eisenstadt Dies at 87 ¹

Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt had the career of a world leader in sociology. One of the most widely published scholars, he was awarded the highest honors that could be bestowed on a sociologist and was regularly invited to be a keynote speaker at international congresses to the very last years of his long and busy lifetime. His list of accomplishments almost has the flavor of a Weberian ideal type. For Israelis in general and for Israeli sociologists in particular, Professor Eisenstadt was not an abstract type. His influence went far beyond what we can understand from the prizes.

As a stocky young man with a shock of red hair, Shmuel Eisenstadt studied with Martin Buber at the Hebrew University where sociology was taught as subsidiary to philosophy. After completing his dissertation at Harvard

with Talcott Parsons, he returned to Israel and set up the first Department of Sociology and Anthropology in the country. He also founded the Israel Sociological Society and served as its first president. Eisenstadt made sociology accessible to native speakers by writing in Hebrew. His introduction to sociology was required reading in introductory courses of sociology for at least twenty years. It is safe to say that until the 1990s, his word was law in the world of Israeli sociologists.

My memories of Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt are a conglomeration of impressions from fleeting personal encounters and reservations about his writings to a very late friendship. Let me start with the end. Eisenstadt was invited to be among the first contributors to *Sociopedia.isa* and he agreed to write an entry on “multiple modernities”. Although he was notified at the outset that every entry should be no longer than 6000-7000 words, the paper that he sent was more than three times as long. As Associate Editor, I agreed to try to edit the entry to a viable length, but only on the condition that Professor Eisenstadt would not know who had done it. My fear was that he

¹ This is a shortened version of an article that appeared in *ISA Global Dialogue, Volume 1*, Number 1, September 2010.

would be insulted by having to give up more than half of what he had written, and especially angry to know that an Israeli had done the hatchet work. Much to my surprise, he was in fact pleased by the edited version. As a result I came out of hiding and we corresponded frequently. It turned out that Professor Eisenstadt was a reader of the *International Sociology Review of Books*, and found it very useful. He read the other *Sociopedia* entries which I could send him. He also suggested that Sage publish monographs to accompany the entries in *Sociopedia*. Indeed, he was eager to expand his own entry into a monograph. It may very well be that the entry written for *Sociopedia.isa* was, if not the last, one of the last pieces of work that he produced.

The correspondent who was tolerant of and highly interested in different approaches to sociology was not the person I remembered. In the first heady decades of the new state, teams of Professor Eisenstadt's graduate students were contracted to study the efficiency of the government bureaucracy, the adaptation of newcomers to unfamiliar milieus, immigrants' absorption into unfamiliar kinds of work, the success of

immigrant children in schools, and so on. Miraculously, their research findings tallied with the declared political goals of the ruling coalition governments and provided an acceptable scientific basis for guiding government policy, as well as for reading government intentions as consistently constructive and beneficial. Strict adherence to the assumptions and methods of structural functionalism was expected of all who enrolled in the department then. A colleague remembers that in listening to Professor Eisenstadt's lectures she and most of her peers were enticed with the idealistic Zionist arguments elegantly phrased in the language of sociology. In her class, the only one who tried to put forward another view was Baruch Kimmerling (1939-2007), whose work on Israeli society later diverged sharply from structural-functionalist orthodoxy. A professor from Germany remembers that when he came to the Hebrew University as a foreign student to carry out a doctoral study of the development of Israel's religious parties, Professor Eisenstadt told him to forget the "non-sensical phenomenological approach" of his research design because that "is not sociology." For a long time,

Professor Eisenstadt's approach became *the* science of sociology in all Israeli universities. Students who completed their doctoral studies under his direct or indirect tutelage, were the natural candidates for positions in the departments of sociology of the universities founded in the 1960s. For many years, furthermore, his opinion on the work of a sociologist determined that person's professional future.

My own first acquaintance with Professor Eisenstadt was while I was junior editor of a modest journal published in Haifa from 1978 to 1983, *Mahberot l'Mehkar ul'Vikoret* [Notebooks of Research and Critique]. This journal promoted an alternative theoretical viewpoint, highlighting the political implications of the structural-functionalism disseminated at the Hebrew University. As keynote speaker at the annual meeting of the Israel Sociological Society, Professor Eisenstadt denounced the interpretations presented in the *Notebooks* as a misreading of reality and a complete misunderstanding of sociology. Of course, this presentation provoked a great deal of discussion, much of it irate. For the journal's editorial team it was an unpleasant run-

in and for one or two of those associated with it, it meant not getting tenure. But this was not the end of the story. Professor Eisenstadt never deserted his convictions that structural functionalism was the only viable way to understand sociology. But he, too, realized in subsequent years, that there had indeed been some failures in government policy. And in the mid-1980s he openly admitted, again in a keynote speech at the ISS annual conference, that "*we* were wrong in many of our analyses."

As my recent, and sadly abruptly ended, contacts with him showed, the professionalism and the personality of Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt cannot be summed up by citing the honors he collected or by referring to the arguments in which he was embroiled. Throughout his 87 years, Eisenstadt was a sociologist driven by curiosity and gifted with untiring energy that enabled him to keep studying difficult social problems until he felt he had reached a core solution. More, he was endowed with open-mindedness and the intellectual generosity that enabled him to recognize and retract errors that he discovered in his own work.

September 2, 2010 was indeed a sad morning when his secretary had to notify friends that he had passed away in the Shaarei Tzedek Hospital. Her letter ends with a gesture that all of us

share: Professor Eisenstadt will be sorely missed.

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**Reports on the TG02 Sessions at the
XVII World Congress of Sociology,
Gothenburg, Sweden.**

TG 02 organized together with RC 09 “Social Transformations and Sociology of development” and RC 07 “Future Studies” a joint session with the topic “*Futures after the Crisis: Theoretical, Historical and Comparative Perspective*”. Markus Schulz chaired the session and Willfried Spohn was the discussant. The first paper from Ulrike Schuerkens was entitled: “Crisis and Transformations: A Theoretical Overview” and gave an overview of the topic in theoretical terms so that the following papers could be put in a more general framework. The paper of Ed Webster that followed, compared worker responses to the economic crisis in Germany and South Africa and argued that the relation of capital and labor in both countries is very different with weak labor unions in SA and stronger ones in Germany. The third paper from E. Zaccai gave an overview of the importance of environmental factors in the crisis. The last paper of P. Flaschel and S. Luchtenberg discussed the “flexisecurity concept” in Western capitalist societies. Despite the different topics of the papers, the discussant could find some common aspects explaining crises situations so that the following discussion with the audience of some 25 scholars was really interesting and stimulating. The goal of this session was to present some papers that could afterwards be included in an edited book that Ulrike Schuerkens is preparing on the topic of the session.

TG 02 organized another joint session with RC 09 “Social Transformations and Sociology of Development” with the title “*Global Economic crisis, varieties of*

capitalism, social inequality – Theoretical, historical and comparative perspectives”.

The session was interesting because of five good papers that had however few common points so that W. Spohn suggested at the end of the session that the session abstracts of future joint sessions should be more precise in order to permit a clear outline of presentations around a common topic. The audience was composed of some 20 scholars. The paper that Ulrike Schuerkens presented on “Crisis and Remittances” will be included in an updated version in the edited book she is preparing.

Ulrike M.M. Schuerkens

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Members’ New Publications

Globalization and Transformations of Social Inequality, Edited by Ulrike Schuerkens. London: Routledge, 2010. 296 pages. Hardback: 978 - 0 - 415 - 87482 - 3

Social inequality is a worldwide phenomenon. Globalization has exacerbated and alleviated inequality over the past twenty five years. This volume offers analytical and comparative insights from current case studies of social inequality in more than ten countries within all the major regions of the world. Contributors provide an assessment of the overall social globalization phenomenon in the global world as well as an outlook on transformations of global social inequality in the future. This book will be a timely addition for students and scholars of globalization studies, social inequality, sociology, and cultural and social anthropology.

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Change *Gérard Djallal Heuzé* 11. Economic Globalization and the Empowerment of Local Entrepreneurs in Nigeria *Adeyinka Oladayo Bankole* 12. Poverty in Senegal: Theoretical Approaches and the Manifestation of Poverty in People's Living Conditions *François -Xavier de Perthuis de Laillevault and Ulrike Schuerkens*. Contributors. Index.

Decolonizing European Sociology: Transdisciplinary Approaches. Edited by Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (University of Manchester, UK,) Manuela Boatca, (Catholic University of Eichstätt- Ingolstadt, Germany) and Sérgio Costa (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany). Aldeshot: Ashgate, May 2010 284 pages, Hardback 978-0-7546-7872-4

Decolonizing European Sociology builds on the work challenging the androcentric, colonial and ethnocentric perspectives eminent in mainstream European sociology by identifying and describing the processes at work in its current critical transformation. Divided into sections organized around key sociological concepts and themes, this book considers the self-definition and basic concepts of sociology through an assessment of the new theoretical developments.

Contents: Introduction: decolonising European sociology: different paths towards a pending project, *Manuela Boatca, Sergio Costa and Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez*; Part I Unsettling Foundations: Postcolonial sociology: a research agenda, *Manuela Boatca and Sergio Costa*; Sociology after postcolonialism: provincialized cosmopolitanisms and connected sociologies, *Gurminder K. Bhambra*; Decolonising postcolonial rhetoric, *Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez*. Part II Pluralising Modernity: Different roads to modernity and their consequences: a sketch, *Gøran Therborn*; New modernities: what's new?, *Jan Nederveen Pieterse*; European self-presentations and narratives challenged by Islam: secular modernity in question, *Nilófer Gøle*. Part III Questioning Politics of Difference: Eurocentrism, sociology, secularity, *Gregor McLennan*; Wounded subjects: sexual exceptionalism and the moral panic on 'migrant homophobia' in Germany, *Jin Haritaworn*; The perpetual redrawing of cultural boundaries: Central Europe in the light of today's realities, *Immanuel Wallerstein*. Part IV Border-Thinking: Integration as postcolonial immigrants and people of colour: a German case study, *Kien Nghi Ha*; The coloniality of power and ethnic affinity in migration policy: the Spanish case, *Sandra Gil Araújo*; Not all the women want to be white: decolonizing beauty studies, *Shirley Anne Tate*. Part V Looking South: South of every North, *Franco Cassano*; From the postmodern to the postcolonial – and beyond both, *Boaventura de Sousa Santos*; Critical geopolitics and the decolonization of area studies, *Heriberto Cairo*; Index.

Orthodox Christianity in 21st Century Greece: The Role of Religion in Culture, Ethnicity and Politics. Edited by Victor Roudometof (University of Cyprus) & Vasilios N. Makrides (University of Erfurt, Germany), Forward by Grace Davie. London: Ashgate, 2010, 274 pages, Hardback ISBN: 978-0-7546-6696-7

This volume offers a comprehensive treatment of the role Orthodox Christianity plays in 21st century Greece from social scientific and cultural-historical perspectives. It breaks new ground by examining in depth the multifaceted changes that took place in the relationship between Orthodox Christianity and politics, ethnicity, gender, and popular culture. It consists of 11 chapters and it is divided into parts: One part is addressing the relationship between Orthodox Christianity and contemporary Modern Greek culture while another part is addressing the connections between Orthodoxy, on the one hand, and ethnicity and contemporary politics, on the other hand. Its objective is to allow scholars to gain a better knowledge of an Eastern Orthodox country that has never experienced communism – and hence to offer a point of comparison vis-à-vis the post-communist Orthodox societies of Eastern Europe. In this manner, scholars can differentiate the institutional and cultural characteristics of Eastern Orthodoxy from those features related to the post-communist legacy. Many of the volume's chapters were originally presented at the panels on Greek Orthodoxy, organized for the 2005 Congress of the International Society for the Sociology of Religion (ISSR, Zagreb, Croatia).

Contents: Foreword, *Grace Davie*; Preface; Introduction: Tradition, transition and change in Greek Orthodoxy at the dawn of the 21st century, *Vasilios N. Makrides and Victor Roudometof*; Part I Orthodox Christianity, Greek Ethnicity and Politics: The evolution of Greek Orthodoxy in the context of world historical globalization, *Victor Roudometof*; An intriguing true-false paradox: the entanglement of modernization and intolerance in the Orthodox Church of Greece, *Anastassios Anastassiadis*; Scandals, secret agents, and corruption: the Orthodox Church of Greece during the 2005 crisis – its relation to the state and modernization, *Vasilios N. Makrides*; Domesticating Islam and Muslim immigrants: political and church responses to constructing a central mosque in Athens, *Dia Anagnostou and Ruby Gropas*; Non-Orthodox minorities in contemporary Greece: legal status and concomitant debates between church, state, and the international community, *Prodromos Yannas*. Part II Orthodox Christianity and Greek Culture: 'The traditional modern': rethinking the position of contemporary Greek women to orthodoxy, *Eleni Sotiriu*; The mosque that was not there: ethnographic elaborations on Orthodox conceptions of sacrifice, *Dimitris Antoniou*; Religion and welfare in Greece: a new, or renewed, role for the church?, *Effie Fokas*; Faith and trust: tracking patterns of religious and civic commitment in Greece and Europe. An empirical approach, *Theoni Stathopoulou*; Sacred words in a secular beat: the Free Monks phenomenon at the intersection of religion, youth and popular culture, *Lina Molokotos-Liederman*; Index.

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