

International Sociological Association
RC 20
Comparative Sociology

December 2010 Newsletter

Oxford: 17 December, 2010

Dear colleagues,

It is with great sorrow that we have learned that two major members of our RC, Mattei Dogan and David Sciulli, passed away last Fall. Mattei was of course a world expert in Comparative Sociology and the founding father of RC 20 as well as numerous other research bodies. In 2001, he created and endowed the Foundation Mattei Dogan, which is now a major force in international social science. I can testify that until the very end of his life, he was still hard working on two manuscripts as well as numerous projects (such as online anthologies and the autobiographical dictionary of eminent social scientists). Mattei has been placed in grave between Balzac and Gérard de Nerval in the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris – a city he had discovered as a student by the end of the 1940s and which he loved so much. May he lie there in peace.

David Sciulli, the editor-in-chief of Comparative Sociology had joined the board of RC 20 further to the last elections. I never had the chance to meet him personally but we had been regularly in touch, notably prior to his trip to Oslo last year, and within the framework of the preparation of a special issue for Comparative sociology – a journal to which he was so dedicated! David was a great professional in our field and he will be sadly missed. You will find hereafter two tributes by our Vice-Presidents, Henry Teune and Masamichi Sasaki, about Mattei and David respectively.

I would like to thank all those who sent condolence messages. Let me add that Saskia Sassen interestingly suggested that we should try to set up a Mattei Dogan fellowship. On his side, Max Haller proposed the organisation of a yearly scientific seminar in Paris, around the time of Mattei's passing away, on a changing theme related to Mattei's main areas of interest. I, of course, wholeheartedly welcome such suggestions and remain open to other ones you might think of. For the time being everything is in the hands of lawyers and I will see what can be concretely envisaged at the occasion of the next meeting of the Administrative Board of the Mattei Dogan Foundation.

A few words on the Göteborg World Congress. I was fairly satisfied with the organisation. Our RC sessions were reasonably well attended despite the fact that they were located in a rather remote place. As participants to the business meeting are already aware, it has been confirmed that one of our major projects in the near future will be the organisation of a conference on the state of the art of Comparative Sociology, from both a theoretical and a methodological perspective, with the intention to produce a collective volume. Hanno Scholtz, our new Executive Secretary, summarises the project hereunder. I was hoping that we might be able to organise this conference in 2011, but it is more likely to take place during

the following year. More on this in the next newsletter. Publishers are conscious of the fact that there is a lack of up-to-date introductions to our sub-field and we think it fundamental for our RC to be on the frontline (Masamishi Sasaki's Encyclopedia of Comparative Sociology being another important current initiative). On the same line, you will also find a call from a distinguished member of the board, Fredrik Engelstad, who is looking for a successor as editor of the Comparative Social Research yearbook, and finally some publicity about a few recent publications.

I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

*Jean-Pascal Daloz
RC 20 Chair*

Mattei Dogan (1920-2010) Personal Memories

Mattei Dogan and I connected in 1972 through the formation of the Committee on Social Ecology of the International Sociological Association. He recruited me to do various things for that Committee and, ever since, I have been an active member of ISA. Later, it was the International Political Science Association. We saw each other on a personal basis nearly every year at the international sociological or political science World Congresses as well as other meetings. He was part of why I went to so many of them.

Mattei was devoted to international, comparative, interdisciplinary research. He pushed social ecological research to prominence in sociology with spillovers in political science. That was only one of many ideas he brought to international social science. He established journals, promoted research agenda, organized meetings, and helped many colleagues. One of his major projects was the World of Giant Cities project of the early 1980s, a precursor to the global cities research that became institutionalized in the social sciences in the late 1990s. I was also involved in the formation of his foundation and getting the Dogan Prize established in sociology. His goal was to transcend national constraints through international recognition of social scientists.

Too many projects were never too many for Mattei. He was always promoting, organizing, and publishing, each with the clear purpose of improving social science. I never observed any personal interest or needs that distracted him from that.

International meetings without Mattei will be different for me. He always had some problem or idea that he brought to my attention. I tried to persuade him to do things, usually unsuccessfully. He became a world-class modern era social scientist and for that he is honored by his colleagues. International, now global, social science is his legacy.

Henry Teune

In Memoriam—David Sciulli

It is with great regret that I inform you that Comparative Sociology's editor-in-chief, David Sciulli (Ph.D., Columbia University, 1983) , Professor of Sociology at Texas A & M University, passed away on September 17, 2010, aged 60. He was a good friend and colleague to all of us at Brill and among the sociological community. Following my editorship, he dedicated himself to high scholarly standards and the production of a first-rate journal. He was also a Councillor for the International Institute of Sociology (IIS) when I was its president from 1997~2001. David was a prolific writer whose contributions to the field of sociology are renowned and well respected. As author, co-author, and editor of over forty-five books and articles about the historical social impact and interaction of culture, professions, law and political theory, David served on the board of the International Sociological Association (ISA) and was editor-in-chief not only of Comparative Sociology, but also of Brill's International Studies in Sociology and Social Anthropology series. His passing is a great loss to us all.

Masamichi Sasaki
(Founding and Acting Editor of Comparative Sociology)

RC Project

Comparative sociology: An introduction to central debates

In 2012 it will be 25 years since Melvin Kohn in his function as president of the ASA organized the volume „Comparative Sociology“. One may say that this volume marked a climax of the standing of comparative sociology as a sub-discipline within sociology. The reputation of the subjects had been nurtured by works of the 1960s to 1980s, of authors as Barrington Moore, Theda Skocpol, Mattei Dogan, Neil Smelser, Eric Wolf, and others – works that tackled big questions using methodologies and access to comparative material that dated back to Mill, Marx, Durkheim and Weber, but had not been used that systematically before. At the same time, the critique of the elder form of comparisons had already begun. It was especially Charles Tilly's critique of the early 1990s which daunted the old comparativists.

But from another perspective, comparative perspectives within sociology became ubiquitous. From being a specialized, distinctive camp within sociology, with the availability of comparative data sets and electronic communications comparisons became a common toolkit used within subfields which are far more organized by their respective research questions than by the common methodology. The fact that comparative methodologies are far from being coherent, spanning from process tracing over comparative qualitative interviews to comparative micro data analyses, multi-level designs and panel studies adds another diversity within the field.

This multitude of diversities led to two interrelated characteristics of today's comparative sociology. The first, obvious to everyone teaching comparative sociology, is the fact that there are no newer introductions to comparative sociology – characteristically, important text collections which have been edited in the last decade mostly combined texts from the preceding decades but (almost) no newer texts. This picture is very different from that of comparative politics, the neighboring sub-discipline which continued some of the topics that were once parts of comparative sociology. Likewise, and despite the fact that there is nothing as ‚comparative economics‘, economists, emphasizing the comparability of

incentive mechanisms in different contexts, have gained importance in these fields. Main debates in sociology do stronger emphasize the differences in social mechanisms between societies or are even disinterested in such mechanisms, being satisfied with the description of phenomena.

Despite these pressures, the subfield comparative sociology which follows the lines of tradition back to and beyond Kohn is well and alive, as the activities of the related professional sections show, especially ISA and ASA, or the comparative journals in the field, e.g. *Comparative Sociology*, the *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, or *Comparative Studies in Society and History*.

But the second particularity of today's comparative sociology is that there are a lot of other comparative activities which have partly lost contact with these debates. An inspection of what are comparative studies within sociology today yields debates on globalization, welfare states, democratization, inequality, female labor participation, social capital, values and attitudes, class, social stratification and mobility, well-being, and others. They are familiar to everyone who follows the cross-sectional sociology journals such as *ASR*, *AJS*, *BJS*, *Sociology*, or the *Kölner Zeitschrift*. Without systematic notice from comparative sociology, all of these debates have become, at least partly, comparative in their nature. Nevertheless, they are far from forming a common debate, being instead embedded in other, partly interdisciplinary, contexts. Are there 'comparative studies' evolving which are no longer tied to sociological thinking? Or do the different comparative studies which have been developed in sociology still have things in common which allow to speak of comparative sociology, at least in the form of common perspectives, if not in that of common debates?

Our RC project intends to provide a new type of textbook. It will be explicitly debate-oriented, including answers to a number of questions which are common for all debates. Examples are as follows: We have noted a cluster of linked references on your topic X given below. What are the linked questions which are covered in this debate? What results have been obtained so far, and which are the specific contributions of the texts and authors given? How far do the scholars in this debate perceive themselves as being comparative sociologists? Which methodologies are used to tackle the comparative character in this debate? The debates which should be taken into consideration are as follows: 1. Globalization, 2. Democratization, 3. Welfare state, 4. Social movements in comparative perspective, 5. Values and attitudes, 6. Social inequalities and poverty, 7. Class, 8. Stratification and mobility, 9. Gender inequalities, 10. The construction of identities, 11. Social capital, and 12. Well-being. For the book, they should be accompanied by chapters on qualitative interviews, measurement issues, multi-level and macro-comparative methods, comparative case studies, and explanations in comparative social science.

The book will be directed towards graduate students and give a good base for an introductory course in a MA program, filling the existing gap in the field of up-to-date introductions to the subject. But at the same time, our project intends to bring the researches in the different comparative debates in sociology into an interaction with another and with the colleagues of the comparative sociology tradition. A conference to be held in Switzerland in 2012 will be the place to connect the different contributions. Talks to establish co-operations with the RC 02 Economy and Society and with the World Society Foundation have begun; the chances for financing by the Swiss National Science Foundation are good.

Hanno Scholtz
(Leipzig/Berne, December 2010)

Comparative Social Research – Yearbook

The position is now open for a new series editor of the yearbook *Comparative Social Research*. Each volume of the yearbook is concentrated around a specific theme, ranging from Regional cultures to Systems of conscription. After fifteen years, the present series editor feels that there is time for a change, both of the editorship and the milieu of the editorial board. *Comparative Social Research* is published by the highly professional Emerald publishing group.

For more information, consult

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/products/books/series.htm?id=0195-6310>

for the history of the Yearbook 1978-1997:

<http://www.samfunnsforskning.no/nor/Tidsskrifter/Comparative-Social-Research2/History-of-CSR>

and for volumes 17 to 26:

<http://www.samfunnsforskning.no/nor/Tidsskrifter/Comparative-Social-Research2/Previous-volumes>

Further communication should be directed to the present series editor, Professor Fredrik Engelstad of the University of Oslo. E-mail: fen@sosgeo.uio.no

Recent or Forthcoming publications by RC 20 members

Calvo, Esteban, Fabio M. Bertranou, and Evelina Bertranou. 2010. "Are Old-age Pension System Reforms Moving Away from Individual Retirement Accounts in Latin America?" *Journal of Social Policy*, 39(2):223-234.

Hall, Thomas D. 2010. The Silk Road: A Review Essay on *Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present*, by Christopher I. Beckwith (Princeton University Press, 2009). *Cliodynamics: the Journal of Theoretical and Mathematical History* 1:1:103-115.

on line at: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/67z5m9d3>

Chase-Dunn, Christopher, Thomas D. Hall, Richard Niemeyer, Alexis Alvarez, Hiroko Inoue, Kirk Lawrence, and Anders Carlson. 2010. "Middlemen and Marcher States in Central Asia and East/West Empire Synchrony." *Social Evolution and History* 9:1(March):52-79.

Jualynne E. Dodson "U.S. African American Denominations in Cuba" en *El protestantismo en la isla de Cuba*. Compendio histórico desde sus orígenes hasta principios del siglo XXI, auspiciada por la Cátedra de Filosofía e Historia del Seminario Evangélico de Teología y la Editorial Caminos del Centro Memorial Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Occasional Papers: Ruth Simms Hamilton Fellowship Awards' Symposium. East Lansing, MI: African Atlantic Research Team - School of New World Thought.

Emmanuel C. Ejiogu, *The Roots of Political Instability in Nigeria: Political Evolution and Development in the Niger Basin*, Ashgate, January 2011.

⇒ [Next newsletter in June 2011](#)