

NEWSLETTER 5 – MARCH 2015

ISA FORUM: VIENNA 10–14 JULY 2016

The Third ISA Forum will be convened in Vienna, Austria, on 10–14 July 2016, on the general theme of 'The Futures We Want: Global Sociology and the Struggles for a Better World.'

This theme was chosen by the ISA Executive with a view to encouraging 'a forward-orientation in empirical, theoretical, and normative research to tackle the problems and opportunities that often cut across borders'.

WG 02 will be hosting 12 sessions, plus another four sessions jointly with other ISA RCs), listed below. We urge all our members to participate.

Please note that, for our sessions as for all others, the deadline for submission of abstracts is: **30 September 2015 24:00 GMT**. Abstracts (max. 300 words) must be submitted in English, French or Spanish.

Please note further that abstracts should **NOT** be emailed to the session organizer(s), they can **ONLY** be submitted online via the Confex website: <https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/forum2016/cfp.cgi>

WG 02 SESSIONS IN VIENNA

The following is a list of the WG 02 session topics. Further details – including the names of session organizers and a description of the intended scope of the session – are provided in the Appendix below, and on the Confex website indicated above.

- Between Nation and Empire: Liminal Modernities and Collective Imaginaries of Security and Insecurity
- Rethinking the 'Global' in Global and Transnational Approaches in Historical Sociology
- Sociocultural Evolution in the Long Run
- Author Meets Readers: Robert van Krieken's *Celebrity Society*
- How Does Historical Sociology See Europe? – Is Historical Sociology

- Eurocentric? Critical and Normative Visions of Nation Building, Euroscepticism and Transnationalism
- Modernity: One and Many, Enduring and Changing
 - Twenty-Five Years after Fajnzylber's 'Empty Box': A New Matrix in Latin America?
 - Author Meets Critics: Manuela Boatca's *Global Inequalities Beyond Occidentalism*
 - Modernity, Contingency and Development in Contemporary Sociology. Should We Carry on Theorising?
 - Socio-Ecological Violences, Resistances, and Struggles: Historical-Comparative Analyses
 - In What Ways Can Comparative–Historical Sociology Help to Improve the Workings of the Modern World?

Joint sessions

- Contextualising Cases and Types through Qualitative Multi-Level-Analysis. *Joint session with RC 20 Comparative Sociology and RC33 Logic and Methodology in Sociology (host committee)*
- Contextualising Inter- and Multinational Survey Research. Discussing Regional Perspectives on Effects and Outcomes of Global Trends. *Joint session with RC 20 Comparative Sociology and RC33 Logic and Methodology in Sociology (host committee)*
- The Complex Discursivity of Global Futures in the Making: Analysing Transnational Orders of Discourse. *Joint session with RC33 Logic and Methodology in Sociology (host committee) and RC14 Sociology of Communication, Knowledge and Culture*
- Looking at Past and Present Inequalities for a Less Unequal Future. *Joint session with RC07 Futures Research (host committee)*

and, last but not least,

- **WG 02 Business Meeting**

'COMMON SESSIONS' IN VIENNA

Working Group 02, along with all the other ISA Research Committees, Working Groups and Thematic Groups, has been invited to propose a leading scholar in their area as a plenary speaker for the Common Sessions.

Markus Schulz, the Vice-President for Research, writes that

...the purpose of the Common Sessions is to foster dialogue among RCs, WGs, and TGs by jointly focusing on the common theme of the Forum, on forward-oriented modes of sociology to tackle the huge challenges of our time, on the future visions of different social actors, and

their struggles for a better world. It will be an opportunity for each RC/WG/TG to showcase work done in its respective area and exchange the latest insights and inspirations across different research units.

The speakers will have a choice on how to address the common theme from the perspective of their respective unit. For example, they could provide a summary of the current state-of-the-art; an overview of how the major paradigms within the field operationalise, deal with, or ignore futures; a historical narrative of how futures have been treated within the field as it developed over time; a discussion of an important trend or scenarios in the field; or they could focus on a substantive empirical issue, or theoretical or methodological problem.

Rapporteurs will be taking notes and provide summaries. If budget allows, videos of the common sessions will be recorded so that colleagues who are unable to attend may watch a particular talk at another time. Short versions of the papers (max. 15 pages or 3500 words each) will be published as Proceedings. Presidents are asked to nominate their proposed speaker in consultation with the Board to isa@isa-sociology.org and to help ensure that the Speaker's paper title, brief abstract, and keywords are entered into the submission system by 30 September 2015.

All members of WG 02 are therefore invited to consider who we might nominate. Please send your suggestions to WG 02 President Stephen Mennell (Stephen.Mennell@ucd.ie) **not later than 31 August 2015**, in order to allow time for the Board of WG 02 to consider the nominations.

UPGRADE OF WORKING GROUP 02 TO RESEARCH COMMITTEE STATUS

On 7 March 2015, the President, Vice-President and Secretary/Treasurer of WG 02 wrote to ISA Vice-President Markus Schulz to request that WG 02 'Historical and Comparative Sociology' be upgraded from the status of Working Group to that of Research Committee, under the new title of 'Historical Sociology'.

In their letter, they drew attention to the similarity in the titles of WG 02 Historical and Comparative Sociology and RC20 Comparative Sociology, between which there is also an overlap in membership. They reported that discussions had been held with the President and Board of RC 20 as well as our own Board and membership in and around the Yokohama World Congress to explore the possibility of merging RC20 and WG 02.

However, the outcome of these discussions was to conclude that the similari-

ty in the titles 'Comparative Sociology' and 'Historical and Comparative Sociology' has proved to be somewhat deceptive, as both parties recognise. In practice, the intellectual concerns of the two groups are substantially different. To avoid further confusion, our Board, in consultation with our membership, decided to drop the word 'comparative' from our title, and to seek upgrading to the status of Research Committee under the title 'Historical Sociology'. We think such a Research Committee is well-founded in covering 'a particular branch of sociology'. In its origins sociology in large part was historical sociology, and such research has continued to play a central role in the modern discipline. For us it would significantly enhance the ISA's scholarly activities to remedy the absence of a section devoted explicitly to historical sociology.

Our request for upgrading will go before the ISA Executive at its next meeting in March 2016, so we shall hear their decision after that.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

Social character and historical processes:
a conference in honour of Stephen Menell

On 7–8 January 2016, the School of Sociology, UCD, will hold a conference to honour the major contribution that Stephen Menell has made to the discipline of sociology. Stephen, who is now Emeritus, was a Professor at UCD from 1993 to 2009 and during those 16 years made a remarkable contribution to the academic and social life of the School. More recently he has spent almost a decade overseeing the publication of Norbert Elias's Collected Works.

This conference aims to recognise and reflect on his important work, which includes numerous books and articles. In line with his prodigious output, the conference, as well as including sessions on all aspects of the work of Elias, will have panels on America and on food and eating.

It is hoped that there will be no conference fee. And while we will provide assistance, participants will be expected to cover their own travel and accommodation costs.

If you are interested in attending the conference and/or wish to give a paper please contact either Steven Loyal (Steven.Loyal@ucd.ie) or Tom Inglis (Tom.Inglis@ucd.ie) as soon as possible.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Special issue:

Human Figurations 4(2): Reflections on Global Power Relations

The contents are:

- Katie Liston: Editor's Introduction
- Stephen Mennell: 'Explaining American hypocrisy'
- Bruce Mazlish: 'Rejected modernity'
- Michael Mann: '*Incoherent Empire* revisited: against interventionism'
- André Saramago: 'Problems of orientation and control: Marx, Elias and the involvement–detachment balance in figurational sociology'

Probably the least expected essay is my own, on American hypocrisy in international relations. Unexpected, because we figurationists are noted for our preoccupation with 'problems of involvement and detachment' and a general avoidance of direct political controversy – which indeed is the topic of André Saramago's paper. But Elias always allowed for the possibility of 'secondary re-involvement' following a 'detour via detachment'. Here I discuss the origins of the conflict in Ukraine, using Eliasian ideas: the established–outsiders model, hegemonic fevers, and the duality of normative codes in nation states. I have always believed that Elias's work was politically highly relevant, even if he tended to describe his aim less directly as 'improving the human means of orientation'.

Bruce Mazlish focuses attention on the consequences, notably in the Middle East, of rejecting 'modernity'.

Michael Mann revisits his 2004 book *Incoherent Empire*, written in the run-up to and immediately after the catastrophic American invasion of Iraq. While few lessons seem yet to have been learnt, Mann gives a good Machiavellian argument for why they need to be.

The special issue can be found at:

http://quod.lib.umich.edu/h/humfig/11217607.0004.2*?rgn=full+text

Stephen Mennell

Edited volume:

Said Arjomand (ed.): *The Arab Revolution of 2011: A Comparative Perspective*, 2015

Comparative analysis of the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings.

How do we make sense of the Arab revolution of 2011? What were its successes, its failures, and significance in world history? *The Arab Revolution of 2011* brings together a broad range of perspectives to explain the causes, processes, and consequences of the revolution of 2011 and its critical implications for the future. The contributors, in this major addition to the sociology of revolutions, step back from the earlier euphoria of the Arab Spring to provide a sober analysis of what is still an ongoing process of upheaval in the Middle East. The essays address the role of national armies and foreign military intervention, the character and structure of old regimes as determinants of peaceful or violent political transformation, the constitutional placement of Islam in post-revolutionary regimes, and the possibilities of supplanting authoritarianism with democracy. The revolution of 2011 is also examined within a broad historical perspective, comparing the dynamics of revolution and counterrevolution in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya with such epochal events as the European revolution of 1848 and Russia in 1917.

<http://www.sunypress.edu/p-5978-the-arab-revolution-of-2011.aspx>

Edited volume:

Breno Bringel, José Maurício Domingues: *Global Modernity and Social Contestation*, *Sage Studies in International Sociology*, 2015

How can we link contemporary social processes – which have typically been theorized in terms of the concept of modernity – with contemporary social movements, conflicts, and mobilizations which aim at social change? This text:

- links the social theory of modernity to critical theory and to recent class and citizenship politics as well as to identity politics
- uses concrete social processes to illustrate theoretical discussion with relevant empirical studies and applies theoretical analysis to different interactions, tensions and possibilities to provide an integrated understanding of global modernity and social contestation
- includes contributions from distinguished international scholars working in sociological theory and modernity, as well as social movement studies and political contestation, with a strong emphasis on

global issues

This is a key resource for research in both social theory and the sociology of modernity, as well as social movements and social contestation, and readers interested in globalization and global studies.

<http://www.uk.sagepub.com/books/Book243295?subject=N00&rows=50&sortBy=defaultPubDate%20desc&fs=1>

Monograph:

Manuela Boatcă, *Global Inequalities Beyond Occidentalism*, Ashgate 2015

Based on theoretical developments in research on world-systems analysis, transnational migration, postcolonial and decolonial perspectives, whilst considering continuities of inequality patterns in the context of colonial and postcolonial realities, *Global Inequalities Beyond Occidentalism* proposes an original framework for the study of the long-term reproduction of inequalities under global capitalism. With attention to the critical assessment of both Marxist and Weberian perspectives, this book examines the wider implications of transferring classical approaches to inequality to a twenty-first-century context, calling for a reconceptualisation of inequality that is both theoretically informed and methodologically consistent, and able to cater for the implications of shifts from national and Western structures to global structures. Engaging with approaches to the study of class, gender, racial and ethnic inequalities at the global level, this innovative work adopts a relational perspective in the study of social inequalities that is able to reveal how historical interdependencies between world regions have translated as processes of inequality production and reproduction. As such, it will be of interest to scholars of sociology, political and social theory and anthropology concerned with questions of globalisation and inequality.

<http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409442790>

APPENDIX: FURTHER DETAILS OF WG 02 SESSIONS IN VIENNA, 2016

Between Nation and Empire: Liminal Modernities and Collective Imaginaries of Security and Insecurity

Session Organiser: Lucian Dumitrescu, Romania; dulust@gmail.com

Parting ways with Fredrik Barth's perspective, we work from the assumption that collective identities should not be approached as dyadic structures but rather as triadic ones, meaning that between self and other lies the liminal character. Whilst collective identities refer to specific ways employed by societies to depict their own self, collective imaginaries describe the relationship between society's self and its outer environment. In this case, liminality chiefly illustrate peripheral societies that have vacillated among different power centres and thus have been subjected to multifarious 'othering processes' that left a mark on their collective imaginaries. The focus of our section will be on exploring intellectual traditions or schools of thought crystallised in societies endowed with low capacity states that carried out unfinished nation-building processes and, thus, run into troubles in their attempt to stabilise collective identities. We welcome contributions that bring to the fore the occurrence, evolution, discontinuities and the reframing of civilisational discourses in economically retarded societies that have sought recognition as a certain type of being from their 'significant others'. Beside theoretical contributions that describe the way the civilisational thesis has been used either to dispute or to reinforce the in-betweenness of liminal societies, we also welcome empirical studies that grasp the influence of civilisational discourses on collective imaginaries. Obviously, we are also interested in those contributions that manage to examine the development of the civilisational thesis over long periods of time.

Rethinking the 'Global' in Global and Transnational Approaches in Historical Sociology

Session Organiser: Keerati Chenpitayaton, New School;
ChenK708@newschool.edu

Surging interests in global and transnational approaches in sociology have currently demanded our attention to rethink the 'global' as a distinct object of social scientific inquiry. Existing scholarships that touch upon the 'global' such as Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems analysis and John Meyer's world-society theory have not gone far enough to tackle the ontological premises of the concept and some other possibilities, as they are heavily influenced by the realist strand of international relations and some strong Eurocentric presuppositions. Furthermore, globalisation, the catchword of the 1990s, has muddled up the situation, as the theories emerging to grapple with the nature, causes, and consequences of the contemporary phenomena have become highly fragmented along the diverse ideological lines. How

can the 'global' be understood as a separate sphere of social scientific inquiry? What constitutes the 'global'? How can we understand global-local linkages, connections and flows, as well as convergence, divergence, and hybridisation? How can our understandings have some policy implications and help save the world? This regular paper session calls for abstracts of the complete research papers or work-in-progress projects that broadly engage with the 'global' and these questions. We welcome both empirical and theoretical papers or projects. We solicit abstracts that focus on different time periods in world history (contemporary, modern, early modern, archaic, etc.) and different parts of the world (localities, countries, regions, continents, trans-regional and trans-continental spheres, etc.) in separation or in comparison. Our session accepts the maximum of five papers or projects for presentation.

Sociocultural Evolution in the Long Run

Session Organiser: Christopher Chase-Dunn, University of California-Riverside; chriscd@ucr.edu

This session calls for papers that address issues related to the scientific study of sociocultural evolution. The session is open to various theoretical frameworks, perspectives and methodologies. Papers relevant to the long-term study of world history, the spatial bounding of interaction networks, the causes of the emergence of complexity and hierarchy, the evolution of sociocultural institutions, the roles of conflict and cooperation in development, and the study of settlement systems and empires are also welcome. Historians, archaeologists, ethnographers, political scientists, geographers, economists, linguists and computational social scientists are welcome.

Author Meets Readers: Robert van Krieken's *Celebrity Society*

Session Organiser: Stephen Mennel, UCD, Stephen.Mennel@ucd.ie

In his book *Celebrity Society*, published in 2012, Robert van Krieken draws on Elias's analysis of court society to understand the dynamics of celebrity in the contemporary world. He argues that just as Elias showed how court society functioned as a distinctive social form, we should use a similar kind of analysis of the production of habitus and specific types of social relations to analysis 'celebrity society'. He suggests that we should in fact see celebrity society as the extension of, or heir to, court society, with the process and dynamics analysed by Elias transformed by the development of the mass media and new forms of communication. He offers the concept of 'celebrity society' as a more sociological alternative to the widely-used term 'celebrity culture'.

This session calls for readings of this endeavour to develop Elias's analysis of court society in a new and innovative direction, aiming to cast new light on an aspect of contemporary society that is frequently commented on, draw-

ing on the insights provided by Elias's Court Society, and to discuss how this analysis might be developed further. Of course it is also open to critical analysis of van Krieken's account, identifying weaknesses or inaccuracies in the analysis, and possible alternative explanations.

How Does Historical Sociology See Europe? – Is Historical Sociology Eurocentric? Critical and Normative Visions of Nation Building, Euroscepticism and Transnationalism

Session Organiser: Florence Delmotte, Université Saint-Louis;
florence.delmotte@usaintlouis.be

From precursors Marx and Tocqueville up to contemporaries like Bartolini (*Restructuring Europe*, 2005) via classics (Weber, Geertz and Elias, Tilly, Wallerstein or Anderson), long-term historical sociology of the modern political has always had much to do with Europe. Isn't the nation state born in Europe after all?

In the twentieth century, historical sociologists, be they comparativists or not, have been seeking to move away from an evolutionism legated by nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' social theorists Marx and Comte, as well as Spencer or Durkheim. However, historical sociology, even when closer to idiographic approaches rather than to nomothetic sociology, is still often suspected of (at least unintentional) Eurocentrism.

This session proposes to take this challenge seriously by questioning the visions of Europe that stems from classic and contemporary socio-historical analyses. It aims at tackling three issues:

Do comparisons between nation(s) state(s) building processes and building processes of a European political entity entail specific normative visions of Europe?

How can historical sociology help to understand resistances to European integration (e.g. Euroscepticism)?

Does historical and political sociology of the EU propose critical views on trans-nationalisation processes at work after 1945?

The session is also open to theoretical issues as such:

Can/should historical sociology of Europe avoid/integrate comparison?

Does the legacy of classics in contemporary figures of historical sociology entail particular visions about the future of European societies? Finally, what can we learn from the entangled relations between historical sociology, history of Europe and political philosophy?

Modernity: One and Many, Enduring and Changing

Session Organiser: Jiří Šubrt, Charles University; jiri.subrt@ff.cuni.cz

The unity and diversity of modern societies, in structural and historical regards, has been a controversial theme and remains crucial to the understanding of present trends. Modernisation theory, in retrospect often construed as more unilinear than it really was, had to admit diverse paths to modernity. The 1990s saw a shift to pluralist approaches, with emphasis on durably divergent patterns of culture and society; but this happened when globalising processes were also reinforcing the case for unity. Connections between global contexts (economic, political and cultural) and the multiplicity of spatio-temporal patterns (national, regional, civilisational) are still under-researched and under-theorised.

There are also areas of modern history, such as the record of societies dominated by the Soviet model and the variety of their roads beyond communism, that have been neglected in theoretical debates on modernity. Another case is the field of colonial modernities. Postcolonial scholars have drawn attention to the neglect of colonial encounters in the sociological tradition, but their main concern has been to use this criticism as a starting-point for a general questioning of Eurocentric thought; less interest has been taken in the comparative study of these experiences.

We welcome papers on the subjects mentioned above. More generally speaking, the proposed session would include papers approaching the problematic of modern unity and diversity from theoretical, comparative and empirical points of view.

Twenty-Five Years after Fajnzylber's 'Empty Box': A New Matrix in Latin America?

Session Organiser: José Itzigsohn, Brown University; jitzigsohn@yahoo.com

Nearly 25 years ago, Chilean economist Fernando Fajnzylber indicated that Latin America as a whole has been characterised by the lack of successful development strategies effectively combining social equity, democracy and economic growth. In the second decade of the 21st century, the Social Sciences are engaged in rethinking the relationship between politics, social stratification and inequality. Over time, there have been successive panaceas (from market liberalisation to selective state regulation) that are purported to provide easy guidelines for addressing Fajnzylber's 'empty box'. Instead, their adoption produced mixed outcomes, from the erosion of some forms of inequalities to the persistence and further entrenchment of others.

The session is oriented towards rethinking the relationship between politics, social stratification and inequality in Latin America, organised around three main themes. (1) Historical Patterns of Inequality in Latin America. Rather than

assuming that there is a simple, virtuous formula by which equity, property rights, markets and democracy tend to reinforce one another, we identify the various forms of interaction whose results indicate that less virtuous combinations have prevailed; (2) Populism, Clientelism and Inequality: We engage in critical debate and empirical evaluation on whether or not the state-centred policies of the twentieth century reproduced/reinforced existing patterns of inequality. (3) Policies and Inequality. We reassess the impact of the rise and decline of both 'neoliberal' and 'progressive' policy regimes, their impact on changes in patterns of inequality; and the viability of democratic political projects that can simultaneously address issues of economic growth and social equity.

Author Meets Critics: Manuela Boatca's *Global Inequalities Beyond Occidentalism*

Session Organiser: Patricio Korzeniewicz, University of Maryland, College Park; email: korzen@umd.edu

Discussants: Kathya Araujo, Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, Chile, email: kathya.araujo@gmail.com, Raewyn Connell, University of Sydney, Australia, email: raewyn.connell@sydney.edu.au, Sujata PATEL, University of Hyderabad, India, email: patel.sujata09@gmail.com

Manuela Boatca's 2015 book, *Global Inequalities Beyond Occidentalism*, represents an important contribution to the study of social inequality. The book not only grounds current debates on inequality on broader theoretical approaches to the study of capitalism (as represented for example, by Karl Marx and Max Weber), but challenges mainstream interpretations of inequality that fail to consider dimensions such as gender and social geographies as constitutive of social stratification on a global scale. This makes Boatca's contribution extremely valuable to both social science analysis and broader public concerns around the issue of past and contemporary trends in inequality. This session will provide an opportunity for key scholars in the study of inequality to critically assess Manuela Boatca's contribution and engage an informed audience about how to continue advancing the field in the future.

Modernity, Contingency and Development in Contemporary Sociology: Should We Carry on Theorising?

Session Organiser: Jose Mauricio Domingues, IESP-UERJ, Brazil; jmdomingues@iesp.uerj.br

Sociology appeared and developed mainly as a means to deal with modernity – however it was named. Moreover processes that were unfolding were identified, beyond what could be synchronically defined, in the long run. Rationalisation, commodification, individualisation, bureaucratisation, secularisation, have played a huge role in the history of sociology and of the self-

conception of modernity. Should we carry on theorising it? Do these concepts have a role to play in a diachronic analytical outlook? Or to sociology is left simply to take the world as it is, without asking any longer about the generation, reiteration and overcoming of the world in which we live? Starting from empirical works or historical analysis, the goal of this session is to put this kind of discussion back on the agenda. The very idea of theory is put forward thereby in direct way in the angle taken by the session.

Socio-Ecological Violences, Resistances, and Struggles: Historical-Comparative Analyses

Session Organiser: José Esteban Castro, Newcastle University, UK;
esteban.castro@ncl.ac.uk

A classical definition of violence is that it would be the rupture of an order. In most, if not all, human societies, violence has been a central mechanism not just for the rupture, but also for the reconstitution and restructuring, as well as for prompting the emergence of new socio-natural orders. Violence has material, cultural, intellectual, symbolic, emotional, dimension, among other.

In this session with invite papers that aim to understand and explain the role of violence in the destruction, restructuring, and emergence of socio-natural orders:

- a) in processes leading to the destruction of the living conditions of human communities (e.g. lethal pollution of air, land, water, food; forced displacement of populations; etc.);
- b) in the production and reproduction of socio-ecological inequality and injustice, and
- c) in processes of resistance and struggle that contribute to the substantive democratisation of socio-ecological orders.

The papers must adopt a historical-comparative perspective, placing emphasis on processes and mechanisms but also bringing into the analysis the social actors involved. We welcome papers that adopt inter- and transdisciplinary (dialogue with non-academic knowledges) approaches. The papers can be submitted in English or Spanish.

In What Ways Can Comparative–Historical Sociology Help to Improve the Workings of the Modern World?

Session Organiser: Stephen Mennell, University College Dublin;
stephen.mennell@ucd.ie

In its origins, sociology was comparative–historical sociology. It no longer is. In the modern neo-liberal university, money flows to present-centred (or ‘hodiecentric’) research, which politicians, policy-makers and administrators

believe to be useful – a belief in which a large proportion of mainstream sociologists find it advantageous to share. Both sides may also share the common belief that, because the modern/postmodern/digital/globalised world is changing and so new in character, studying the past is irrelevant: as Henry Ford put it so pithily at a pivotal stage in industrialisation, ‘History is bunk’. Contemporary data-accumulating research is not without value, but it is not sufficient: contributions are invited reflecting on how sound comparative–historical knowledge of human society has the capacity to improve the human means of orientation and possibly to improve political decision-making.

A few well-known quotations may help to bring this question into focus:

‘To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child’. (Cicero)

‘People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors.’ (Edmund Burke)

‘Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.’ (George Santayana)

And finally, Tony Blair, the British politician responsible for some of the most catastrophic decisions of the early twentieth century, once said – with the advantage of hindsight on his career – that he wished he had read history rather than law at Oxford.

Joint sessions

Contextualising Cases and Types through Qualitative Multi-Level-Analysis

Joint session with RC 20 Comparative Sociology and RC33 Logic and Methodology in Sociology (host committee)

Session Organiser: Anja Weiss, University of Duisburg-Essen; anja.weiss@uni-due.de

‘Struggles for a better world’ have been analysed on all social levels: in the form of revolutions by comparative sociologists, in the form of organisational change and collective mobilisation or as individual mobility and identity formation. For all of these topics multi-level analyses are desirable: Taking change in schools as an example, reforms agreed upon on state level need to be put into practice in individual school organisations, taking into account the social milieus of pupils and organisational milieus of teachers.

In methodological terms, multi-level analyses are a complex matter. In the quantitative paradigm nested data with a high degree of colinearity and small numbers on the lowest level can be a problem. Qualitative research methods, on the other hand, rarely conceptualise analyses as multi-level.

Nevertheless, extensive debates about the selection of comparative cases, the framing and contextualisation of cases and the construction of a variety of types point in exactly that direction.

The session is inviting methodological papers and empirical studies which reflect on qualitative multi-level design:

- How can different levels of inquiry be theoretically conceptualised and theoretically related to each other?
- How can cases and types be contextualised by other levels of research?
- What kind(s) of internal heterogeneities are acceptable; when is multi-level analysis a necessity?
- How to avoid methodological nationalism in sampling and analysis?
- Can lower-level cases be placed in more than one higher-level context?
- How does multi-level analysis foster validity and generalisability?

Contextualising Inter- and Multinational Survey Research. Discussing Regional Perspectives on Effects and Outcomes of Global Trends *Joint session with RC 20 Comparative Sociology and RC33 Logic and Methodology in Sociology (host committee)*

Session Organiser: Dimitri Prandner, University of Salzburg; dimitri.prandner@sbg.ac.at

Technological advances and societal changes experienced in the last decade led to a number of new possibilities and challenges for survey research on a global scale. It becomes seemingly easier than ever before to organise and administer an international or at least multi-national research project. But how are regional concepts and traditions affecting the design, implementation and outcome of global studies and how are global studies affecting these steps within the survey process used in regional studies? Using this as a starting point the panel invites all researchers that are interested to participate in the discussion about the challenges survey research faces in such a setting. We want to specifically address the following points:

How and at which points do the global trends in survey research and usage intersect with and/or influence established and often long standing regional traditions and concepts?

Which theoretical and methodical challenges emerge for regional survey research, as there is an evident shift towards more globalised perspective? How

are those challenges met?

How can the results from both global and regional survey research be put into context with each other? Which pitfalls and opportunities have to be addressed?

Contributions can both address theoretical ideas and concepts in regards to survey research as well as practical experiences of realised research projects. However, the proposed papers should indeed address how the global or regional scopes found in a project are reflected on in the methodological background and if necessary even put into relation with each other.

The Complex Discursivity of Global Futures in the Making: Analysing Transnational Orders of Discourse

Joint session with RC33 Logic and Methodology in Sociology (host committee) and RC14 Sociology of Communication, Knowledge and Culture
 Session Organiser: Reiner Keller, Universität Augsburg; reiner.keller@phil.uni-augsburg.de

Global and transnational civil society, the proliferation of arenas and organisations involved in the definition of 'world problems', the burgeoning economic power of the BRIC-states as well as general recognition of a 'post-colonial constellation' together constitute a new and challenging reconfiguration of transnational or global orders of discourse. The joint session addresses sociological tools for analysing the complex discursivity of such sites of discourse, communication, and knowledge production. This complexity is a result of the hybrid constellations of the actors and knowledge claims involved, interconnections of heterogeneous arenas of dialogue and negotiation, diverse cultural rationalities of factuality, evidence, and legitimation, and also of translation between epistemic cultures and languages from around the world. In order to address these challenges, the session focuses on the reach of sociological tools for analysing transnational and global discourses as knowledge-making activities which will profoundly shape the future. It intends to strengthen genuinely sociological methodologies of discourse research – a task which, according to sociologist Adele Clarke, is at the center of our discipline today. The session welcomes contributions which refer to theories, methodologies, and methods of discourse research designed especially for sociological research as well as presentations of empirical research that are related to these questions.

Looking at Past and Present Inequalities for a Less Unequal Future

Joint session with RC07 Futures Research (host committee)

Session Organiser: Elisa Reis. Federal University of Rio de Janeiro; epreis1@gmail.com

Equality and social justice have always been in the agenda of sociology. Meanings attributed to them remain the subject of philosophical and ideological debates. Yet these two values are deeply rooted in the practice of our discipline. We look at the social distribution of material and symbolic goods aiming to make them more efficient, more productive, more just - i.e., to a large extent, we trust sociology may concur to better developments in the future. At the same time, research on social inequality has been circumscribed by the focus on the nation-state. Studies of global inequality overwhelmingly consist of comparisons of wealth and income between nations. Yet neither a focus on patterns of global stratification nor towards spatial relations across national boundaries follow from such studies. Nor has the innovative potential of feminist theorists' demands for full-fledged incorporation of gender inequalities and supra- and subnational inequality contexts substantially transformed the analytical framework of studies of social inequalities. New conceptualisations largely leave structural inequalities of gender, race, and ethnicity untouched and, in the process, maintain the nation-state framework to which the classical dimensions of class and status were tailored. The session will therefore inquire how sociologists have conceptualised equality, how they explain historical patterns of inequality, and what questioning the nation-state framework and consideration of structural gender, racial and ethnic disparities do to our efforts to promote more just patterns of distribution in the future. Theoretical and empirical approaches to such questions and critical analysis are welcomed.