EDITOR’S MESSAGE

As Europe gradually re-establishes itself as a new and vibrant entity, the European Sociological Association (ESA)’s mission is more pertinent today than ever. ESA is becoming a major means for communicating with sociologists of Europe.

European Sociologist is vital in this communication process. It contains details of the developing structure of the organisation, news of an evolving net of research networks, information on conferences, seminars and mid-terms, opportunities for receiving funding and prizes, and more.

This issue represents a “new look” for European Sociologist commensurate with its potential impact. It is a full 24 pages in colour, packed with news items and pieces essential for European sociologists. We have introduced several new features: a focus on national association, a look into the workings of a Research Network, detailed announcements on future interim meetings, a close-up on books on Europe, and more. For the first time, we have a personal interview with one of Europe’s great sociologists. We hope to continue with these series, and introduce more features in the future: on European research collaborations, on other national associations and on different European sociologists. Suggestions are more than welcome. My hope is that this volume of European Sociologist will make both interesting reading and provide useful and important information to benefit junior and senior sociologists alike.

As the new Editor, I would love to receive feedback, particularly as Letters to the Editor, which we could publish in forthcoming editions. Please address all correspondence to: msshalva@mssc.huji.ac.il

European Sociologist is available online at http://www.europeansociology.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=blogcategory&id=17&Itemid=95

The link enables readers to have an electronic archive of past and current bulletins, as well as quick insights into members’ news, groups and events, advertising and contact information.
The European Sociological Association has been active in a number of ways over the last six months.

In the course of representing sociology at a European level, we have been asked to write a strategy paper mapping European Social Science and Humanities as part of our participation in the multi-disciplinary “Initiative for Science in Europe” (ISE) entitled “A Vision for Science in Europe”. The aim is to involve the National Associations of Sociology in this initiative with a joint meeting at some point in the coming year, possibly in Stockholm. Giovanna Procacci and Carlo Ruzza are engaged in producing this important document.

The theme and the venue for the next ESA conference has been set in Lisbon and the last Executive Committee meeting was held there in order to give people a chance to inspect the venue. The University of Lisbon and the neighbouring ISCTE University Institute make an impressive combined location. There are many lecture theatres and seminar rooms within easy walking distance. The charming old town of Lisbon is only a bus ride away and there are many delightful restaurants and hotels in the old town or near the campus.

We have extensively discussed the conference programme and are looking forward to providing you with a rich variety of speakers and debates. One of the themes to be highlighted is the role of sociology in Europe, something that we hope will generate on-going discussion.

In November and December last year I visited Ukraine. In November I was guest speaker at the Sociological Association of Ukraine annual meeting, invited by the President, Professor Vil’ Bakirov. Although the Sociological Association of Ukraine has suffered some controversy in the last years through divided political loyalties, it is now once more united through the 2007 meeting at the University of Kharkiv. The V.N.Karazin University of Kharkiv has just celebrated its 200 year anniversary, making it one of the oldest Universities in the region (and the one with the largest Sociology Department). Even the Rector (Vil’ Bakirov) is a sociologist! The University boasts three Nobel Prize winners and a saint among its alumni.

This was followed in December by a visit to the Institute of Sociology at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences which held a meeting in honour of the memory of Professor Natalia Panina. Ukrainian sociology is enjoying a renaissance at the moment and there are a number of younger as well as older scholars who are developing research themes and teaching programmes within the profession. For example, Ukraine has joined the European Social Survey in 2006. Sociologists in Ukraine are keen to be involved in European meetings but the low value of the currency and lack of funds generally makes participation very difficult. Nevertheless, Ukrainian sociologists have been present at many of the ESA conferences and there is Ukrainian participation in the ESA doctoral summer school in Crete this year. The lowering of the ESA membership fees last year has made ESA participation more accessible for them.

Ukraine is eligible for funding under the new European Framework Programmes in the same way as other countries, so if you are interested in finding project partners in Ukraine, you can use the European Sociological Association as a source. Sociology is taught in a number of Universities across Ukraine, where scholars are grappling with a lack of resources. Yet many students are enrolled in sociology programmes and sociology is regarded as a prestigious subject. This is often the case in societies where great social upheavals are taking place – people study sociology in the hope of gaining a better understanding of the changes around them.

In January I visited Rwanda as part of a joint research and development project with Rwandan institutions. Rwanda is keen to build up the skills of its young scholars and postgraduates. Although only a very small number manage to get to University in this poor country, the people we encountered (to whom we were teaching research methods) were very enthusiastic and thirsty for knowledge.

Sociology can really help in the development of Rwanda because equipped with social research skills and basic sociological concepts and themes, students can find out what the needs of people are in the country and evaluate the programmes that are supposed to help them. The more that these kinds of activities can be carried out by Rwandans themselves, the less dependent they will become on expensive external expertise. The programme I have been involved in is to look at the barriers to participation in higher education and especially in science and technology programmes by girls.

“European Societies”, the journal of the European Sociological Association, edited by John Scott at the University of Plymouth continues to rise in the international journal rankings and has now expanded to include five issues a year. The number of subscribers continues to rise and it is now seen as an important platform for sociological research and discussion.
The 9th Conference of the European Sociological Association will be held in Lisbon between the 2nd and the 5th of September 2009. The theme of the conference, “European Society or European Societies?” calls for a broad discussion on the multiple dimensions of Europe’s unity and diversity.

The Conference is being organized by a consortium including three Portuguese university and research institutions, in the area of Lisbon, and the Portuguese Sociological Association (PSA). The Department of Sociology ISCTE, Lisbon University Institute, is the leading institution of the consortium, that includes also the Human and Social Sciences School of the New University of Lisbon (FCSH-UNL) and the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon (ICS-UL) - and the Portuguese Sociological Association (APS).

The Local Organizing Committee is composed by Cristina Lobo, Helena Carreiras, Anália Torres, José Manuel Viegas, Miguel Cabrita, Sónia Cardoso, Luísa Oliveira all from ISCTE, Luís Baptista and Miguel Chaves from FCSH-UNL, Karin Wall and José Machado Pais from ICS-UL.

All sessions (plenary and semi-plenary) and most services (registration, information desk and book exhibitions) will be held at ISCTE, located in the same campus. The campus area is very close to the city centre and the airport and is surrounded by a variety of hotels of different standards. It is served by the subway and by buses that allow easy connections between the hotels, the campus and the main touristic spots in the city. Preliminary information regarding the programme of the conference, including deadlines for registration and paper proposals, as well as accommodation and social activities will soon be made available through the Conference site (link via ESA website).

Portuguese sociologists are now a big community, considering the dimension of the country, with more than two thousand members affiliated to the Portuguese Sociological Association and a growing scientific community active in research and publication at national and international level.

We are very proud and eager to receive our colleagues hoping to have fruitful discussions and also enjoyable days. You are all very welcome to Lisbon!!
How do democratic and pluralistic societies cope with traumatic events in their past? What discursive strategies and taboos are employed in reconstructing wars, revolutions, torturing, mass killings and genocide in a way that makes their contradiction of basic human rights and values potentially invisible? The process of reconstructing history through narratives takes place in different domains of life and in a range of genres. Such narratives are frequently reproduced through political speeches, films, documentaries and schoolbooks. Moreover, they are also transmitted in the private spheres of families and across generations. This interdisciplinary volume analyzes in detail, for the first time, the traditional image(s) of the German Wehrmacht since 1945 and the debates in Austria and Germany surrounding two exhibitions about the war crimes of the Wehrmacht during World War II - exhibitions which have to be regarded as a major intervention in national historical narrative and ‘myths’ and which caused a huge range of political and media reactions, from scandals to critical reflection.

Order online at: www.palgrave.com
Publication and freedom of access to scientific knowledge is indispensable for progress and critique of research. The fact that the number of academic journals has increased in the past decades at an exponential rate is related to this phenomenon. It has also become big business and, some academics complain, an obstacle rather than a help in the diffusion of scientific knowledge. Journals are increasingly published by a decreasing number of publishers. The prices are high and access to any single article requires that the researcher either subscribes to at least one year's volume of the journal, or copies it in a library. Libraries are suffering from the burgeoning growth of costs of journal subscriptions.

The research community normally provides not only research, manuscripts and reviews without charge, but they themselves have to pay the publishers for the possibility to reach each others' work.

Open access to on-line publishing, where the authors and their funders pay for the cost of publishing and editing whereas readers get the articles free of charge, corresponds to the ideal of free circulation of scientific knowledge much better than traditional commercial journals.

Natural sciences have for some time preferred this format, but it is still rare in the humanities and social sciences.

The rector of the University of Helsinki, professor of philosophy likka Niiniluoto, has reacted to the situation, which he considers unfair and a constraint of academic freedom, by issuing a recommendation to publish in open access journals or alternatively to place a copy of their articles on journal in the University library depository, where they will be fully accessible to colleagues. This needs to be negotiated in the copyright contract with journals. The recommendation will become a binding rule within few years.

The Niiniluoto policy is the first of its kind and an example of a protest against the excessive dependence of scholars on market-based journals. Some universities have established their own publishing activities, and academics and scientific societies in different parts of the world have resumed their role as scientific publishers, which they have given away to some extent to commercial journals.

As the role of scientific societies, like ESA in Europe, is gaining importance in many ways, these associations should open the discussion on the issue of publications as well, and use their power in negotiations with publishers for the benefit of academic freedom and the progress of scientific knowledge.

Viewpoint
Free Circulation of Scientific Knowledge
by Pekka Sulkunen
(The Westermarck Society, Helsinki, Finland)
RESEARCH NETWORKS: HOW DO THEY WORK?

Research Networks are the backbone of the ESA, but how do they function? In the first in this series, Editor Shalva Weil turns to the President of an active Research Network to discover exactly what goes on...

Interview with Anne Ryen
President of the ESA Research Network No. 20 in Qualitative Methods

S.W.: Anne, Why a Research Network on Qualitative Methods?

The special thing with our Research Network topic is that it cuts across quite a number of the ESA RNs independent of your research problem. Whenever you do qualitative studies and when you are concerned with the quality of your qualitative study, that’s it!

Our main concern is how to do qualitative research of high quality irrespective of specific methods and research problems.

As you can tell from our name, we also focus on the different methods you may use in qualitative research, traditional as well as new ones. Meeting across European regions and language barriers is important. It represents an arena where we hopefully can learn about and also promote European schools, innovations and qualitative research practice.

S.W.: What is the history of this RN?

Giampietro Gobo and Rosalind Edwards were the ones who requested we become a RN, and we use to think of ourselves as a relatively new research network though the network was founded in Helsinki in 1999 with Giampietro Gobo of the University of Milan, as our founder; he is still a member of our board as Past-President.

We are also happy to tell you that including Helsinki we have organised sessions at every ESA conference in Murcia, Torun and Glasgow; midterms, initiatives programmes, events and activities elsewhere and have a network list of close to 400 names.

S.W.: Tell us about your Midterms...

The first years the midterms were organised at the RN President’s university, though later this practice became more flexible. In 2002 our midterm was organised and hosted by our President Thomas Eberle and Vice-President Christoph Maeder at St. Gallen, Switzerland, under the heading “Ethnographic Organizational Studies”. In 2004 RN President Hubert Knoblauch organised and hosted our midterm in Berlin, Germany, with the theme ‘The State of the Art of Qualitative Research in Europe’. This theme was linked up with a strategic move towards an ESF programme, about which we’ll tell you about below. Then in 2006 with President Shalva Weil of the Hebrew University in Israel, we had an invitation to co-organise our midterm with Paul Atkinson at Cardiff University, Wales, UK under the new theme “Advances in Qualitative Research Practice”. In 2008 during my own Presidency, we are indeed happy that RN Vice-President Krzysztof Konecki will host our coming midterm “Teaching Qualitative Methods” at Lodz University, Poland. I was the local organiser of another RN20 initiated event at my place, University of Agder, Norway, and I’ll tell you about this later.

S.W.: What about Membership?

This is an important subject. As a European Association, we try to engage people across European countries both as Presidents, board members and participants. Till now, this has meant an ever increasing number of board members, so time has come to think of how we can combine taking new members on board as well as to make sure we still can draw on the expertise and incredible resources that our present board members offer like valuable insight into an array of qualitative research methods, links to wide and important networks, institutions and publishers of great benefits to our RN, journals as editors, editorial members or referees, important programmes and projects and not to mention long time experiences in organising successful international conferences.

Our model with stability in board representation has been crucial in more ways. First, it has been a guarantee for quality and progress and second, it has given us a feeling of belonging. We have some incredible members who always make sure we coordinate places to stay, and this offers both formal and informal meetings that achieve a great mix of creative talk and fun so vital to the quality of any organisational work. As to people on our RN list, there is a constant increase in number. We regard them associate members because ESA membership is not a condition to be on our list.

S.W.: So what activities do you have?

Our network has initiated a variety of activities related to qualitative research and methods. Let me briefly present some examples.

Publications

After our Midterm conference at St.Gallen, Manfred Max (2003, January) wrote “The Broad and the Narrow in Ethnography on Organisations, Conference Essay” Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 4(1). Available at: http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/1-03/1-03tagung-bergman-e.htm [Date of Access: May 6, 2008].
After our midterm in Berlin 2004 Hubert Knoblauch, Christoph Maeder and Uwe Flick, edited a volume on qualitative research in Europe in FQS, to which many of our Research Network and Board members contributed. Available at http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-e/inhalt3-05-e.htm.


Collaborations

Our RN Board members initiated two European Science Foundation programmes. During Knoblauch’s Presidency, a successful initiative was made to develop a programme on Qualitative Research in Europe which materialised as the programme called Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences in Europe (EUROQUAL) running for 4 years from June 2006 to June 2010. On the ESF’s web we can read that: “There is a clear need for scholars throughout Europe to share, develop and promote high-level methodological expertise. There is an equally pressing need for capacity-building within the European social sciences. The proposal addresses these needs through two closely linked activities: expert interdisciplinary and cross-national workshops and associated training events”. More information can be found at: http://www.esf.org/activities/research-networking-programmes/social-sciences-sscs/current-esf-research-networking-programmes/qualitative-research-in-the-social-scienc-es-in-europe-euroqual/more-information.html. Paul Atkinson, UK, is Chair, and the 14 members’ steering committee includes Germany with Hubert Knoblauch, RN20 Past-President, and Norway by Anne Rbyn, RN20 present President.

Second, during Shalva Weil’s Presidency we arranged an ESF Explorative Workshop with David Silverman, Shalva Weil (Pres.) and Anne Ryn (Vice-P) as applicants. The workshop “Improving The Quality Of Qualitative Research” was arranged 25-28 June 2007, at University of Agder, Kristiansand, Norway. To cite from Shalva Weil’s scientific report: “The workshop was designed to bring together internationally recognized scholars to address the credibility gap in qualitative research. Of the 14 scientific presentations, seven were by RN20 board members. http://www.esf.org/fileadmin/be_user/ew_docs/06-193_Report.pdf. Anne Ryn is Guest editor of the online Qualitative Sociology Review (Krzysztof Konecki, our Vice-President is QSR Journal editor) for a special issue with reference to this workshop.

In addition, we are collaborating with the International Sociological Association (ISA) to arrange an interim conference in Naples. As member of the ISA RC33 Scientific Committee I have been responsible for the qualitative methods sessions and could draw on ESA RN20 with session organisers: Nina Baur (active network member), and the board members Giampietro Gobo, Krzysztof Konecki, Bernt Schnettler and myself making 7 QM sessions with a vast number of slots due to an extensive number of QM papers. This has increased the ISA RC33 QM part by 100%, now amounting to around 100 QM papers including invitations to non-RN20 researchers.

The programme can be viewed at: http://www/rc332008.unina.it/ Semi-plenaries, MTA and Newsletters

In the ESA conference at Glasgow, RN20 proposed Board member David Silverman as semi-plenary speaker, and Uwe Flick for Meet-the-Author. For Lodz, we have Hans-Georg Sseffner, Brian Roberts, Anssi Perakyla, Johanna Ruusuvuori, and Andrzej Piotrowski as keynote speakers, and Meet The Author sessions with David Silverman, Ruth Wodak and Michael Krzyzanowski, and Giampietro Gobo. See http://www.soc-org.edu.pl/Conference2008/welcome.php . You are all welcome to join us.

In addition we also send out RN20 Newsletters soon to be accessible online in Qualitative Sociology Review until our ESA web-page will be established.

For further information, please access:
http://www.europeansociology.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=38&Itemid=29

European Sociologist - Summer 2008, Issue 27
The Research Stream on Racism and Antisemitism, which has been active since 2005, has been upgraded to a Research Network. It has become RN 31 Ethnic Relations, Racism and Antisemitism, coordinated by Robert Fine and Claudine Attias, thereby filling a gap in ESA thematic interests. Together with a number of sociologists working in different fields, such as the study of religious diversity, genocides, race and gender, nationalism, migration and citizenship, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and much more, this new RN will open up a wide and much debated domain in current sociology.

The new RN is already planning its mid-term: Sociology of Ethnic Relations, Racism and Antisemitism, to take place on Monday, 15 December 2008 in Paris. This mid-term conference aims at providing the opportunity to present ongoing research in the field of research of ethnic relations, racism and anti-Semitism. It is also the opportunity to strengthen links and communication among European academics researching common issues, outreaching new members, as well as to envisage collective research and publication. Papers for the mid-term will be accepted on:

• the links between racism and antisemitism, the precise nature of their relationship being part of the object of study of the network;
• the specificity of anti-Semitism as part of the European history and part of every European society from its origin up to the present;
• explore the field of study of various forms of racism in sociology alongside the field of study of anti-Semitism;
• social and political research which bridges the divide between racism and anti-Semitism in the sense of exploring their correspondences, continuities and contrasts;
• the construction of a universalistic understanding of society and the social that is always ready to question its own antisemitic, racist and xenophobic connotations;
• the imagination of a human society of tolerance in which race no longer plays a role;
• study of and resistance to the ethnicisation of social relations in contemporary Europe.

Contact: Robert.Fine@warwick.ac.uk; claudine.attias-donfut@cnav.fr

Some RNs are already holding their interim meetings this month. These include RN 10 Sociology of Education which held a mid-term entitled Modern education, structures, functions and outcomes: School organisation and educational opportunities in June in Poland, RN 11 Sociology of Emotions, RN 19 Sociology of Professions will hold their fifth interim meeting on Transforming national boundaries: a new ‘Professionalism’ in the Making? At the University of Aarhus, Denmark, and RN 24 Science and Technology on Women In Science And Technology in Zagreb, Croatia.
**RN2 Arts** is combining with **RN7 Culture and FDA – Faculty of Design and Art – IUAV University, Venice, DADI – Department of Art and Industrial Design – IUAV University, Venice** for a unique joint conference on Arts, Culture and Public Sphere: Expressive and Instrumental Values in Economic and Sociological Perspectives to take place in Venice (Italy), November 4-8, 2008. See: www.artculturevenice2008.org

Conference Research Framework: Arts and culture can no longer be considered uncritically as vehicles merely related to a ‘civilizing mission’ or to ‘economic development’. In the beginning, Social Sciences and Economic Studies identified the social context of the realms of art and culture, measured their impact and evaluated their management. Later, processes of expanding democratization exposed these realms to the criticism of the public sphere. Consequently, arts and culture became fields of social and economic contestation.

Beneath the increasing examination of these realms rests the growing international and trans-national circulation of people, capital, and culture – different forces that have inspired individuals and groups to challenge well-established authorities, mentalities and semantic codes and socio-economic development models. These processes turned the artistic and cultural fields in a lively crossroads for trans-disciplinary research, spanning areas of inquiry once viewed as unrelated.

For further details, contact: Contact: Theabold@gmx.de

**RN 3 Biographies** will hold their midterm at the Gallery of the Pauza Foundation, Florianska 18/5, Cracow in Poland on 12-14 December 2008 on **Performing Biographies, Memory and The Art Of Interpretation**.

There will be sessions on: Post-communist biographical space and memory; Gender and the Holocaust: Body Memor; Collective Biographical Memory and Identity Context; Group biographies and individual memories: Correspondence, confirmation and/or conflict in the production of family, and other group, biographies; Dealing with Unpleasant Past: Taboos and Normalization; Visual images about the Past in Biographies.

For further details, contact: Contact: Theabold@gmx.de

**RN 5 Consumption** is organizing its interim meeting 2008 in Hotel Vuoranta, Helsinki 27-30 August 2008, the venue for the founding meeting of the Network in June 1993. It is located on the coast of the Baltic Sea, only about 10 km from Helsinki, on Materiality, meaning, power.

The conference will focus upon the importance of theoretical reflection in the context of concrete research on consumption. Papers with empirical as well as theoretical starting points concerning all areas of consumption, from material topics such as food to cultural and spiritual experiences, are invited.

For more information please contact Conference Secretary Varpu Rantala, varpu.rantala@helsinki.fi

**RN6 Critical Political Economy** are organizing a workshop on **European Political Economy and Society in the World** on September 12-14, 2008 at Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, United Kingdom

Look at their site:

This workshop aims to face the full implications of Wolf’s conclusions. Papers will address at least one of the following interrelated themes:

- World economic order dynamics (such as neo-liberal governance concepts and finance-led capital accumulation) that impact on the enlarged EU, its varieties of capitalism and state-civil society complexes in transition.
- The political-economy implications of EU’s external policies (such as the European Neighbourhood Policy) as formulated in the context of post-Washington consensus development policy, ‘post-9/11’ security policy, the alleged ‘Asian challenge’ by China and India, and the ‘residual weight’ Europe’s post-colonial history.
- Critical interventions on the question of ‘Euro-centrism’ in political economy that might a) help us highlight the manner in which ‘the subaltern’ form part of the constitution of European political economy and society, ‘Europe’s’ position in the world and attendant contradictions and b) help us ‘provincialise Europe’ and ‘put European political economy(ies) and society(ies) in their place’ in the world economic order, and then not only in relation to the United States.

In the post-disciplinary spirit of the CPE-RN, the invitation is extended to all with an interest in political economy research, whatever their professional disciplinary affiliation. The workshop aims to attract a diverse range of junior and senior researchers.

Contact: mryner@brookes.ac.uk
RN 18 Media

The interim meeting will be held on Media In Europe - European Media: European Network Conflicts on October 17th and 18th, 2008. The venue will be Lisbon, and the meeting will be hosted by the Department of Communication Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universidade Nova de Lisboa. The meeting will give special emphasis to sociological, inter- and transnational studies of:

- European public spheres and citizenships
- European Network Society Conflicts
- Audiovisual Media Services (AMS) and consumers
- New Technologies and industrial policy

Brief abstracts of papers (200 words) must be sent to Prof. Ludes and Prof. Panagiotopoulou by June 15 to the University of Lisbon.

RN 19 Qualitative Methods

Teaching Qualitative Methods, Lodz University, Poland. Keynote speakers include: Anssi Perakyla, Johanna Ruusuvuori, Andrzej Piotrowski and Brian Roberts.

Meet the authors: David Silverman and Giampietro Gobo. See the interview with Anne Ryen on page 6 for more details.

RN 20 Qualitative Methods

are organising a midterm from Sept. 15-17, 2008 on Teaching Qualitative Methods.

Conference venue:

Lodz University, Poland.

Keynote speakers include: Anssi Perakyla, Johanna Ruusuvuori, Andrzej Piotrowski and Brian Roberts.

Meet the authors: David Silverman and Giampietro Gobo. See the interview with Anne Ryen on page 6 for more details.

RN 21 Social Movements

Cinefogo NoE are organising a Mid-Term Workshop that will take place in Trento (Italy) on October 10th and 11th 2008.

The workshop aims at bringing together scholars for a discussion on recent developments in social movement theory and research.

The workshop affords an important opportunity to advance understanding of social movement approaches through intensive debate among participants.

It will address topical aspects of on-going reflection on social movements, like the impact of social movements on public policy, political procedures and political cultures in different contexts, as well as on individual activists.

It will also address broad questions on the effects of social movements on current conceptions of democracy, the contribution of SMOs to public deliberation and in issues of coalition formation and networking in local and transnational spaces.

Papers will focus on:

- the outcomes of social movements
- transnational coalitions
- social movements and public deliberation
- local networking and activism

Abstracts should be submitted (max 300 words) by 5 July 2008 by email to: emanuela.bozzini@soc.unitn.it

Student Riots
RN 30 Youth & Generation in co-operation with Estonian Youth Institute is organising a mid-term on Youth and Youth Sociology in Europe in Roosta Holiday Village (http://www.roosta.ee/?go=index&lang=eng), which is located in the north-west part of Estonia, 1.5 hours drive from Tallinn, Estonia 8.-11.1. 2009.

The midterm will assess how social theory keeps sociology and social sciences together? And, in particular, how does it do that in practice?

The heterogeneity of the national streams of sociology stems not only from differences in the studied social structures but also from the infusion of varying theoretical traditions. Moreover, even the diversity among thematic fields and sub-disciplines within national communities of sociologists can be considered from a similar perspective. Social theory’s unity and diversification among these sociological or social scientific (sub)disciplines, its state-of-the-art, and new developments are thematic interests of the conference.

Since the 1980s Europe has gone through tremendous social, ideological, political and cultural changes. The collapse of socialism and the dominance of neoliberal ideology in political discourse and practice has changed the political scenery. Liberal policies of governments of several European countries has worsened the living conditions of young people and lead to youth uprisings and protests e.g. in France.

European sociology, including youth sociology, is also changing or at least it should change in order to be able to better understand Europe as a cultural, political and social entity the parts of which are interdependent. This conference will encourage discussion of the demands made by changing societies on youth sociology.

Keynote speakers of the conference are: Claire Wallace, Professor of Sociology, University of Aberdeen, President of European Sociological Association, on Youth and European citizenship
Gary Pollock, Department of Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University, on Youth transitions and their family-household contexts

Contact Vesa Puuronen (vesa.puuronen@uku.fi). For practical arrangements, please contact Marti Taru, managing director of Estonian Youth Institute (marti@iiss.ee).

If you wish to establish a Research Network, please contact Consuelo Corradi, E-mail Address: corradic@tin.it

Guidelines can be found at: http://www.europeansociology.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18&Itemid=37

Various impressions of Innsbruck
The Swiss Sociological Association (SSA) has three over-arching goals: to promote Sociology in general, to promote sociological research, the teaching of sociology and the distribution of sociological knowledge, and to take care of the problems of sociology as a professional practice.

The SSA was founded as late as 1955 in Bern as the Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Soziologie (Société suisse de sociologie). Switzerland, due to its generally traditional orientation, was for a long time reluctant to accept a new sociological way of looking at society. But today sociology is well established and taught at all the important Swiss universities. However, sociology as a learning curriculum is only available at the university level. Neither gymnasiums, nor vocational schools, nor universities of applied sciences, offer qualifying courses in sociology.

The founding assembly of the SSA chose Professor Roger Girod from Geneva as its first president. The choice of a French-speaking colleague for this important presidency was symbolically significant, since Switzerland is a linguistically and culturally diverse country. The challenge of uniting colleagues from the German and the French sociological traditions in an era in which English has become the lingua franca in sociology too, remains a challenge today and for the future. But since Switzerland is a nation united voluntarily by its par-ticipants, rather than an ethnic or linguistic entity, there is also a rich tradition available to deal with these kind of issues.

The SSA prospered ever since it became active as a group, and today has about five hundred individual members and fifteen institutional members. In 1975, the first volume of the Swiss Journal of Sociology (Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Soziologie / Revue Suisse de Sociologie) was published. Today this peer-reviewed journal is one of the social-science gems of Switzerland and publishes articles in three languages (English, French and German).

Over the years, the SSA became one of the big and important scientific associations in Switzerland and today it is also part of the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Science (SAHS). Furthermore, the SSA is the main shareholder of the Seismo Publishing House in Zurich, which produces roughly twenty sociological books a year and three scientific journals, in addition. Seismo-Publishers have a reputation for producing top quality books in content and design. In order to document or discuss important issues concerning the discipline, the SSA also publishes a Bulletin twice a year for its members. The last issue (No. 132) treated the question whether the SSA needs and wants “ethical guidelines for sociological research.” The next one (forth-coming, October 2008) will have a look at the landscape of sociology teaching after the Bologna-reform of the educational system in Switzerland. The “Bulletin” can also be downloaded at the website of the SSA (see below). But unfortunately there is no version in English available.

Every other year, the SSA organizes an international congress on a chosen topic. For example, in 2003, the topic was “Triumph and Misery of Neo-liberalism”; in 2005, it was “Switzerland as a Special Case”; in 2007, the subject was “War”. The next SSA congress will take place in Geneva in September 2009. Together with the smaller scientific events organized by the twelve active research committees, this adds up to a thematically, socially and intellectually rich sociological community in the country. If you want to get a glimpse of the workings of the SSA, you can look at: http://www.sagw.ch/soziologie
EUROPEAN SOCIOLOGISTS

IN THE LIMELIGHT

FOCUS ON ONE OF FRANCE’S FOREMOST SOCIOLOGISTS-
Prof. DANIEL BERTAUX

In this exclusive interview, « European Sociologist »
Editor, Shalva Weil talks to Daniel Bertaux
about his life, his ideas and the future.

S.W.: Daniel, you are a French sociologist, but one of a kind: trained in mathematics and engineering sciences, rather than in philosophy. You are more cosmopolitan than many, you speak English fluently and, as you told me, some other languages, too, which is not so frequent among French sociologists; you have worked with...

D.B.: Not really "with", but besides

S.W.: With or besides great sociologists like Bourdieu, Boudon, Touraine and Castel, but you say you do not belong to any theoretical school. You sound more Marxist than many, but you use life stories and family case histories in most of your research projects. Can you explain?

D.B.: First, about theoretical schools. I believe in the metaphor of the Elephant (please see cartoon on the next page): societies look like elephants, in the sense that, depending from which side you look at them, you get a very different picture. Little boys in a remote village who would each catch a short glimpse of an elephant hidden in some travelling circus tent through holes scattered around the tent, would then quarrel endlessly about how The Elephant really looks like. And of course, each would be both right and wrong: right in describing what they have seen with their own eyes; and wrong in generalising, that is in reducing the whole elephant to the single facet they saw. Wrong in appropriating for themselves the whole objective truth and denying others any share of it. The problem with sociology is that nobody has ever seen a society in its totality, so that sociologists keep quarrelling...

Once you have understood the relevance of the Elephant metaphor for sociology you know what you have to do: to learn about each new theory, for each one has its own grain of truth. And a small dose of critical comparison cum grano salis helps digest theoretical blocks. Then back to observation. Life is short. The dynamics of contemporary societies are so much richer than what any school of thought could hope to account for... My real teachers have been societies and their social-historical dynamics. I have travelled. I lived in Paris most of my life but I also resided in Berkeley and Princeton, at the Institute for Advanced Study; I spent winter months teaching in Montreal or Québec, and summer weeks teaching in Warsaw at George Soros’ Central European University.

I also taught in Sweden, Barcelona and in several other European places. I travelled two months in Russia in March-April 1968, up to Akademgorodok near Novossibirsk, meeting sociologists during the very brief springtime of Soviet sociology. As soon as it became possible to develop sociological projects in Russia, in the early 1990’s, I came back and set up a research team to collect dozens case histories of Soviet families, covering three generations, to try and understand how lineages and kin had lived the last seventy years of “communist” regime. This taste for other societies probably started with the travel grant of $6,000 I received from the Fondation Singer-Polignac when I was 25 years old.

After this exhilarating experience, it was really difficult to take up again my job of research engineer. I began studying sociology - and political economy, demography, social psychology - in my spare time, and eventually I got a degree from the Sorbonne. Raymond Aron was one of my professors. I went to see him to ask whether I should switch to sociology. He strongly advised me against it: I had a well-paid and stable job, while in sociology there was practically no future.

As a research engineer in artificial intelligence I was trying to teach computers to recognize rectangular objects against the background of random drawings. It was a task that the Director had suggested me to take up, and which I found intellectually exciting. Then one day I learned, quite by chance, that he was selling my research reports to the Pentagon, of course for the sake of the whole research lab. The Pentagon had in fact dozens of research labs in the US, Germany, Japan, Britain and other places trying to solve exactly the same riddle.

The explanation was that the US Air Force fighting “VietCong” had drones - fully automatised planes - taking series of aerial pictures of North Vietnam, several thousands each day, to locate potential targets for the B52.

Shalva Weil talks to Daniel Bertaux
However, by the time their ground personnel deciphering photographs had identified one with lines of trucks heading South, several days had past; it was too late to send the bombers “do their job”. Pentagon personnel thought that with adequate software, their computers could immediately select the 10 % or 1 % of aerial pictures where a rectangular outline could be detected. Then human personnel could look only at these ones and decide if it was a truck or the roof of a rectangular house, knowing that one does not usually build houses in the midst of a road. That very evening I came home and told Isabelle I wanted to quit, no matter what. She was completely supportive, although she was still studying and we had a three-year old daughter. I was in a state of shock. Later on I heard that perhaps as many as half of all engineers, all specialties included, worked directly or indirectly for the military. The proportions were even higher in Soviet Union and the USA.

I applied for a full-time research job at the CNRS, and got it. They took me because of my high training in mathematics; they thought I would make sociology more scientific (laughs). Of course what I had in mind was to move into a job where I could express my humanist orientation. The CNRS is a peculiar institution that provides full-time research jobs in forty scientific disciplines. A kind of permanent sabbatical (laughs). You can keep your job if you are creative enough and come out with new findings. They give you a rather low salary and much freedom in the choice of research topic, but very scarce means to do empirical research in practice: you have to look for funds yourself. Nobody has power over you actually - all in practice: you have to look for funds yourself. Nobody has power over you actually - all in practice: you have to look for funds yourself.

The metaphor of the Elephant

fast enough... and they thus create a wide feeling of empathy towards students and even identification with them. But the head of the Paris police, Maurice Grimaud, is a very wise man: he succeeds in keeping control over the police’s spontaneous savagery and in preventing the first “accidental” killing. Many students get hurt but none gets killed, so that the deep and fully shared joyful emotion of that giant happening never turns into tragedy or rage. There was a feeling of euphoria during the whole month of May. Somebody wrote on a wall déjà dix jours de bonheur, ten days of happiness already. This sentence, which I have never seen quoted anywhere, expressed how I felt. How we felt. Sociology speaking, what I understood then - I felt it deeply before analysing it - is the very intimate connexion between the contents of, on one side, hierarchical or “vertical” relations, and horizontal or “lateral” ones, on the other.

D.B.: I was not on the barricades, if this is what you mean. I was a young husband with an even younger wife who was pregnant; we already had a daughter, who was now four. But I had students to whom I was teaching quantitative methods; at first I followed them into the streets, then into the Sorbonne, which had just been “liberated” by police forces and became the centre of everything: huge non-stop general assemblies, dazibao everywhere on the walls of the Sorbonne inner mall; self-organised groups taking up this or that task... In a matter of days, not only universities and high schools all over the country were occupied by students, but industrial factories as well, which personnel, workers and employees alike, did occupy - wages were still very low while profits were soaring; and hospitals, railway stations, administrations of the French State (imagine!), even banks and the Banque de France itself! Ten million people on strike, in a country of fifteen salaried employees! The largest strike in France ever! The only institutions that de Gaulle still controlled was the police, perhaps the Armed Forces - but rank-and-file soldiers were just young men doing their military service, and hating it; officers were not sure of their “loyalty to authority”; and the television. But nobody looked at TV anymore, except the frightened bourgeois who got out only to buy quantities of sugar and oil, which they stocked in their cupboards. The whole city of Paris seemed to belong wholly to the students.

S.W.: What do you mean?

D.B.: in everyday life, which is under the hegemony of hierarchical relations, the relations with neighbours, co-workers, people you meet casually in the streets and in the city in a variety of roles - e.g. selling newspapers - are at best indifferent, functional, instrumental. With most co-workers there is perhaps some hidden suspicion, competition, rivalry, envy, mistrust, covert or even open dislike. I always looked for more personal, warmer relations, but I often felt I was the odd guy; others seemed to be content with the situation (I did not realise how much I behaved exactly like all others, being seemingly always very busy with what I had to do and looking like I did not care about them).

Then suddenly, hierarchical relations became totally inoperative. Anybody who tried to manifest authority was instantly mocked and ridiculed. All decisions had to be first discussed democratically, then accepted by a show of
hands. To use Poutine's expressive term, “vertical of power” had suddenly vanished in thin air; and at the same time, lateral relations became warm, convivial, fraternal; everybody wanted to help one’s neighbour, nobody dared to turn down a call for help. You lent your car, you lent your apartment; -you could think of no reasonable reason to turn down such a demand - and of course it was returned to you; nobody tried to “exploit” anybody, he would have been shamed. Suddenly, people seemed to have forgotten their self-centred attitude and basic mistrust towards others; they relied on each other and, curiously, began to behave as moral persons, as if their real personality was at long last coming into the open. You could start a conversation with anybody in the street, in a café, anywhere. It had become completely natural.

But then, when de Gaulle made his famous speech and regained control -with the backing of top generals - the “vertical of power” was back, suddenly. Simultaneously, - this is what has struck me so strongly - lateral relations returned to their previous form: who is that guy, what does he or she actually wants from me? Do you see the point, Shalva? I know it is hard to believe, but this has been my experience.

D.W.: Did you write anything about this?

D.B.: Yes. Years later, a British historian, Ronald Fraser, decided to write an “oral history” book about the student movements of 1986 in Western countries. He gathered around him a group of scholars who were into oral history or life stories. There was no funding; we all volunteered. We collected life stories of activists, both leaders and rank-and-file, in the US, France, Italy, Germany, Ireland and Britain, and wrote oral histories of the movement in our respective countries. Fraser melted them into a narrative of that transnational movement which, I believe, is the only narrative of its kind (Ronald Fraser et al, 1968. A Student Generation in Revolt, Pantheon Books, New York, 1988).

D.W.: Did you find anything new, sociologically speaking?

D.B.: I believe we did. Life stories allowed us to reconstruct the variety of paths which led youths, most often from lower middle class background, to get involved in the movement. In these Bildungsroman histories we found the same process coming up again and again: not a process of political consciousness-raising by older leaders, but first of all a deep moral indignation which, quite often, seemed to come from some deep humanist commitment. It is this deep feeling which pushed such youth to develop a critical spirit, a deep resentment towards the very unfair “things”, in their eyes that is, towards the organised social order. But they felt like loners in the midst of conformist contented bodies. When they discovered, either on campus or already in high school, that there were some youth who felt the same way they immediately joined the movement with great enthusiasm; as if they had come home at last. Exemplary of this process is to me the story of how Mario Savio, a rather shy person, joined the rather dangerous campaign for Civil Rights in the South in the summer of 1964; later on, back on the Berkeley campus, he became one of the leaders of the Free Speech Movement.

In sum, in complete opposition to the interpretation of social movements in terms of rational choice, I believe a moral component is at their root. It is the emotional engine of activism. Reasons of the heart, not reasons of the mind. Perhaps I am too impressed by what my father did, but...

D.W.: What was that?

D.B.: As a young intellectual specialising in German literature, he wrote his PhD on Hölderlin. He knew what was coming in Germany from 1933 onwards. After the (shameful) collapse of the French Armed Forces, he went back to his job as young university professor in Toulouse; but he also decided to start an underground Resistance movement. It was really a crazy thing to do; it was very early in the war, and there were no chances they would not be caught. According to rational choice theory, he should have kept a low profile, as most of his colleagues did. He was aware of what he was doing, and he could perfectly calculate the risks; but he nevertheless did it. “Because somebody had to do it”, he said much later; “somebody had to stand up”.

D.W.: Did they get caught?

D.B.: Of course. They were among the first in that Southern region of France to contact ‘London’ and to receive a load of arms by parachute. Two weeks later they were all arrested; somebody talked. They spent the rest of the war in a French camp near Toulouse because that region was at the time in the so-called “zone libre”. When one year later the Germans occupied the whole Southern part of France, Gestapo people came to the University to fetch him; his name was on their lists from pre-war times. But the doorman at the university told them: “Oh, Ber- taux ? He has been arrested long ago and sent to a camp”. They did not insist, it was lunch time. This man saved his life...

The moral factor, convictions or “reasons of the heart” as I call them, is why I never believed we had reached “the end of history” when Fukuyama claimed “we” had. “Bush for ever”, that would be the end of history? People say Western youths have become very conformist, that they care only about money and sex, their own comfort and satisfaction. Social-democratic political parties and even the green movement cannot lure them. But whose fault is it? Why are so many young adults joining NGOs to contribute to development of less developed areas?

D.W.: Is this why you have been so keen on promoting life stories as a sociological method?

D.B.: Partly, but it is also for other reasons too. As early as 1964 I had been fascinated by the four Mexican life stories that Oscar Lewis had collected through “hundreds of interviewing”., which he published in what was to become the worldwide best-seller The Children of Sanchez (1961). After reading the French translation of this book, Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre stated that perhaps the days of literature were over; if illiterate people could express themselves with such strength and emotion, and a tape-recorder and typewriter were enough to get their words in print and make them available worldwide, who would still read novels to learn about how other people lived? It was a bit naive of course; they had not realised - and neither did I - that both Lewis and his wife had done a very arful work in transcribing spoken words - and, I am sure, a lot of non-verbal communication - into written text.

But that book changed my life; I decided I wanted to become a “sociologist”. I was so ignorant of social sciences that I could not even differentiate between ethnography and sociology (laughs). Of course when I began studying sociology at the Sorbonne, reading Durkheim, Parsons, Lazarsfeld and the like, I was quite disappointed...

When I joined Bourdieu’s centre, he had just published with his alter ego Jean-Claude Passeron The Craft of Sociology, which soon became the Bible of my generation. It develops a wholly structuralist perspective for sociology. It gives a rendering of society where people are just puppets of socio-structural relations. “Structures” - to which one should add now semantic structures - were in fact the only actors left, the only “subjects” in the whole landscape. It is nevertheless a very remarkable book. I adopted its views with enthusiasm because my training in physics had prepared me to receive them; “the concrete is concrete because it is the synthesis of multiple determinations, therefore unity of the diversity”. This is Marx, quoted by Bourdieu and Passeron. “Determinations” was perfect for me at the time!

Many other young colleagues, who had a different training than mine, shared the general belief that a really scientific perspective had at last been found for sociological research. A
theoretical school was born, complete with a “cult” book, a program for fifty years, a charismatic leader...But I did not join.

D.B.: Bourdieu had his first group of disciples who had been with him for some time. They were proud of their status of talking directly to the master, and prevented others joining. I decided to do my own research by myself, doing secondary analysis of the remarkable social mobility survey that the INSEE, the National Institute of Social Statistics, had completed. I published a paper on “social mobility” that was well received. The head of a rival research centre sent young colleagues to fetch me. I told Bourdieu I was considering leaving. He said something strange: “I have no quarrel with you. You have been loyal”. Loyal? I could not make sense of that; but anyway, I left.

D.B.: It took me years to understand, but my mind is particularly slow on some issues. ‘Loyalty’ is not a scientific word, which is why its meaning was lost to me. It belongs to the vocabulary of politics, where what you ask from your allies is loyalty; the opposite is betrayal. Bourdieu was starting an all-out academic “war” against his arch-rivals, Touraine and Boudon; a “war”, something akin to the famous chariot race in Ben-Hur.

I left the centre after two years, having learned the structuralist perspective. In conservative periods where social-historical dynamics are mostly of the reproductive type, including those of capital’s enlarged re-production, a structuralist perspective - or better, a structuralist-constructivist one - makes much more sociological sense than the opposite, in which only serialised “individuals” are supposed to act. But it was time for me to move on.

D.B.: I moved to the research centre led by Bourdieu, who was developing, with Bourricaud, the “methodological individualism” view I have just mentioned. Not that I was attracted by their perspective; but Bourdieu had liked my social mobility paper and was perhaps happy to steal a promising young scholar from his arch-rival Bourdieu. I went on studying social mobility on my own during the seventies, regularly meeting the social mobility crowd: John Goldthorpe, Bob Hauser, and other Europeans.

But I felt the thoroughly methodological orientation of the group was much too narrow. There were very few efforts too discuss substantive matters. Survey research drastically limits sociological imagination: the phenomena that you cannot actually observe empirically with a survey, you are not allowed to talk about. You are not even supposed to focus your thoughts on them, since that would be purely speculative. After a while, you forget about them, they cease to exist for you, they disappear from your mental map. But everybody else - I mean lay people - is perfectly aware they are there. It becomes ridiculous. For instance the crucial role that women play in family life in shaping the life paths of their children, of their younger siblings and at times their nieces and nephews and their own husbands: this does not exist for the survey researcher. Women themselves disappeared for decades from the social mobility literature. It was even impossible to discuss the possibilities of developing new empirical methods to observe these kinds of phenomena....

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S.W.: Where did you go?

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mathematical background. I almost lost my job; and it is only the full support of colleagues from the researchers’ union which saved me.

This is when I understood I needed to find allies in other countries; sociologists who would share my humanist orientation. I organised sessions on life stories at the World Congress in Uppsala in the summer of 1978; quite surprisingly, the room was packed. I made links with scholars from many countries: Glen Elder, Franco Ferrarotti, Paul Thompson the oral historian, and Hungarian sociologists. After such an unexpected success, it became much harder to deprive me of my job. The book, Biography and Society (the publisher found the title) put my name on the world map, as well as the chapter on small bakers and bakery workers that I published in Bechhofer and Elliott’s The petite bourgeoisie (Mac Millan 1981). But by that time the wind had turned drastically in France: interest in Marxism had dropped radically. And it even dropped further when, quite unexpectedly, the socialist candidate, Francois Mitterand, won the presidential election of 1981. Is that not curious?

During the eighties and nineties, I led several research projects, including a European one on what people do in deprived areas of large cities to keep their head above water and escape sliding into poverty and exclusion. We worked with family case histories and case studies on seven highly contrasted Western European major cities. I wanted to do two things: to show that these people were much more active than usually thought; and to compare national Welfare States but, by looking at them “from below”.

D.W.: Did you find anything new?

D.B.: I think so. We were able to show that the more a Welfare State helps individuals and whole families who are in dire situations, the more active - and not the more passive, as is often believed - these people get. Such is the case in Sweden. The (in)famous “poverty traps” do not exist, or only for the tiny minority who really prefers to live off Welfare allowances. Most people are ready to work hard; very few are happy raising their children in poor conditions. Upper classes and economists think that poor people (on Welfare) are born lazy, and have abandoned in favour of better places and where immigrant families have moved in: the famous “banlieues”. The roots of social problems lie elsewhere: in the so-called “labour market”, that is, in the behaviour of employers as individuals and a social class. Wages tend to decrease, the rate of industrial accidents is quite high -seven times higher than in Sweden - and discrimination towards young Arabs and Blacks is the systemic norm, not the exception. But employers get away with it because laws against racism are not applied, workers unions are weak - especially because unemployment is rather high - and post-colonial attitudes are still prevailing in the “white” adult population. And the situation will probably get worse because we now have an ultra-liberal President whose models are Reagan, Thatcher, Bush and Berlusconi. His popularity has rapidly dropped to an all-time low, but political elections are past and he can now do what he wants for the next five years.

D.W.: And what have you been doing lately?

D.B.: I have been working hard on an English version of my French book on life stories. The focus is not on method as such, but on a core issue: if sociology is serious about the “pragmatic turn” it is taking worldwide, that is, a new focus on what people actually do, then it needs methods that are able to get fair, rich descriptions of their courses of action, and of the personal situations and wider contexts in which they have to inscribe these courses of action. Most of what people do is not instant behaviour, but drawing plans, projects, and trying to lead them to completion; and it usually takes months or years to achieve one’s goals. Now, how do we observe courses of action that last that long? Not by observing them directly, although it may help; but by asking actors to describe them for us afterwards. Such descriptions are bound to be in the narrative form, because there is no other way to describe them.
How can you “explain” how you have set up your own business, how you have found a first job and held it in the midst of high unemployment, how you have succeeded in buying a house, how you have reached the education level you were aiming at - or help your child doing it - how you got rid of a given addiction, how you got out of depression, how you eventually found the job you were looking for, how you retrain and changed your life? By retracing the steps and situations you have been through; by describing the resources - including your own “subjective resources” - and connections you succeeded in mobilising; in short, by a narrative.

S.W.: Does this mean you have become a narrativist?

D.B.: Surely not, if by “narrativist” you mean somebody who is interested only in narratives, not in what they tell about real life out there. To me narratives are ways to describe courses of action, and from there to move on to a better understanding of the social-historical contexts - such the French artisanal bakery. The point is to discover constraints and opportunities characteristic of a given context, the unwritten rules of social games which actors have to “play”.

Social contexts - meaning by this occupational, economic, cultural, political, or hobby contexts, or “social worlds” in Anselm Strauss’s terms - are what empirical sociologists, or perhaps socio-anthropologists, are trying to understand. Social contexts are not visible. You cannot take a picture of them. Statistics, a rapid study of inner law and regulations, some knowledge of formal power relations, will help sketch their outer shape. But it is what people do when trying to develop their courses of action which will allow one to visualise hitherto invisible barriers - such as the glass walls of everyday sexism and racism.

The same holds for hitherto invisible resources, such as unexpected help from persons who, for one reason or another, happen to remember their altruistic side. It strikes me that this is more frequently the case with women than with men. And the same for hitherto unwritten rules of social games. I know of no other method which may capture richer sociological materials as life stories in one catch. It is just that you have to sort them out.

S.W.: How do you do that?

D.B.: By combining well-trained perception and some ability to imagine the “inner workings” of contexts; by compiling “life stories” which do not need to be completed, but are restricted to the part of life experiences that have to deal with the context or situation you are trying to decipher, and sociological culture. Michael Burawoy is an example for me, although he never collected life stories: he combines a good understanding of some classics, Marx in particular, with an almost heroic effort to go to the heart of the matter by becoming part of the context. The result of the combination of this trait and his intellectual skills is amazing. Nobody sitting in an armchair reading Marx or Durkheim, or even Franz Fanon, could have understood a tenth of what he understood. But nobody going to work in a factory without having learned to perceive “structures” and social logics beyond everyday interactions, would have understood half of what Burawoy understood.

S.W.: A last question: do you believe people tell the truth when they tell their life story?

D.B.: At least as much as when they answer questions in a standard questionnaire! It is in fact much easier to lie in the latter case than when you have to tell a consistent story made up itself of consistent stories.

This whole thing of “people tell you only what they want you to hear”, “people do not tell the objective truth”, “the whole thing is subjective”, is simply ridiculous. Of course people don’t tell all the truth, they tend especially to skip scenes or actions which to them have a connotation of shame. Of course they don’t tell only the truth, they tend to reconstruct what happened so as to project a rather positive image of what they did and of what was done to them. Of course their narratives are “wholly subjective” - what else? - but that does not mean they are not at the very same time objective! By the way, what could be a wholly objective story? Historians know perfectly well that the histories they write objectively are mere interpretations of what really happened; new interpretations will always enrich and partially contradict previous ones. The real issue is whether they have got the facts right or not. What happened? When was that and where? Who did it, with whom, in which circumstances, with which outcome? Facts are often enough to reconstruct motives. The description of motives is admittedly less reliable, but always quite interesting. But facts, the sequence of events and actions, are like the black ink drawings of a landscape, while the rest - motives of actions, meanings of interactions, feelings, emotions, - are like adding watercolours to drawing. Next time you will use different colours, and the light will be different by the way: but everybody will instantly recognize the landscape. If some wise guy tells me that of course life stories are all made up - I have seen it in print, many times - I’ll ask him to prove it: how does he know? Does he have any evidence to show? Or is it just a belief, as scientific as the belief in the devil?

A team of four French sociologists, Battagliola et al, re-interviewed in narrative form a subsample of persons who had filed in a biographical questionnaire the year before, where they had to list the main events of their occupational, residential and family life. Then they compared the two sets of data, the life story narrative and the questionnaire. What they found out was that the life story was more objective than the information filed in the mail questionnaire: yes more objective, because the same events were mentioned in the same order, but on top of that people explained why they had changed from one job to another, from one city to another, and possibly from one partner to another. New “factors” appeared then, such as the illness of a partner’s mother - which forced a geographical and occupational move of the family - or strong personal reasons which they had felt frustrated not to be able to explain when answering the mail questionnaire: sometimes they had scribbled them in the margins! So the picture became more complete.

S.W.: Daniel Bertaux, thank you for this frank, enlightening and fascinating interview. European sociology has been enriched by you and your contributions.
Here are the names of the committee members, who come from a range of European countries:

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Please send your proposals to Gisele Tchinda (gisele.tchinda-esa@pouchet.cnrs.fr), ESA Office.
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The winner will be awarded a prize of 1000 euro and participation at the ESA 2009 conference in Lisbon, including travel (max 350 euro), accommodation and registration fee, as well as honorary ESA membership for two years, including the journal European Societies.

Criteria for selection: the quality of the article. Only early career sociologists with a maximum of five years from receiving the PhD are eligible.

The selection jury consists of the ESA Post-Graduate Research Committee, the Chair for Publications, the General Editor of European Societies, and the chief of the Editorial Board. The decision will be taken before the May 2009 Executive meeting as the jury will have to provide the Executive with written motivation for the prize. The jury reserves the right not to select a winner.

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The length of the paper is maximum 6000 words including references.

Style should follow roughly the European Societies instructions. The language of the article is the language in which the paper was presented in Lisbon.

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**ESA Summer School 2009: Lisbon**

*Announcement*

As always, there will be a Summer School for PhD students before the ESA Conference. In 2009, the Summer School will take place at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa between July 29 - August 1st 2009. More information will appear on the ESA website in August, with instructions for applications. The application deadline is February 28 2009. 25 students will be selected.
The ESA’s PhD Summer School: This year in Crete!
By Sokratis Koniordos

Among ESA’s aims is to help galvanize the new generation of European sociologists. For this purpose it organises an annual PhD summer school. Each summer school is organised around a theme, and PhD candidates have the opportunity to listen to a set of participating experts in the field and discuss with them, present their own work too, and meet other young sociologists from different parts of Europe.

This year the ESA’s PhD summer school is co-organized with the 6th Framework Programme Network of Excellence CINEFOGO, and the Dept. of Sociology, University of Crete. The school will convene in University of Crete grounds, in the town of Rethimno, in the island of Crete, in Greece, from July 13 to July 18, 2008 and this year’s topic is “Sociology and the Quality of Life”.

The ESA subsidizes students travel (up to € 300 per student), and enrolls the PhD students selected as its members for a two-year period, which includes a subscription to the journal European Societies. Student accommodation and subsistence and invited lecturers expenses are covered by the co-organizers.

This year’s guest lecturers are Professors Tony Fahey, Jan Delhey, Maria Koussis, Chiara Saraceno, Ruut Veenhoven, and Claire Wallace and Sokratis Koniordos from the ESA. They will deliver lectures, listen to student presentations and give the 35 students selected to participate their suggestions on their projects.

The 35 participating young sociologist were selected out of 120 very good applications, which meant that the selection process was very competitive indeed. The selected PhD students come from diverse parts of Europe, and beyond, and we trust that they will have an enjoyable learning experience in Crete.
Fifth Worldwide Competition for Junior Sociologists

The International Sociological Association (ISA) announces the organization of the Fifth Worldwide Competition for Junior Sociologists engaged in social research. The winners will be invited to participate in the XVII World Congress of Sociology which will take place in Göteborg, Sweden, July 2010. The winners’ papers will be considered for publication in English, subject to editorial decision and revision, in the ISA’s journal International Sociology, or in another ISA publication.

Junior Scholars must have obtained his/her first Master’s degree (or an equivalent graduate diploma) in sociology or in a related discipline, less than 10 years prior to May 1st, 2009.

Candidates must send an original paper of up to 600 words that has not been previously published anywhere. The phenomena examined may be social, economic, political, cultural or of any other kind, but their interpretation or analysis must show a sociological orientation (for instance, through the identification of social processes underlying the phenomena under scrutiny, critique of commonsense interpretations or of well established theories, etc.).

Papers may be written in one of the following languages: English, French, Spanish as well as Arabic, Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Russian.

An electronic version (.doc or .pdf) should be e-mailed as an attachment to chauvel@sciences-po.fr (indicate “junior competition” in the subject of your message) and two paper copies of equal typographical quality should be sent to the following address:

5th ISA Worldwide Competition for Junior Sociologists

Attention: Louis Chauvel, Department of Sociology Sciences-Po University Paris 27 rue Saint Guillaume 75007 Paris, France


For further information, see: http://www.isa-sociology.org/wcys/index.htm
PhD-students’ workshop on “Ageing Societies and the Welfare State”

On December 11-12, 2008, RN (1) on Ageing in Europe will host its first PhD-students’ workshop in co-operation with the Network for European Social Policy Analysis (ESPanet). It will take place at the VU University, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

A range of connections between ageing societies and the welfare state will be discussed. One focus of debate will be the influence of the ageing of societies on the welfare state; another will be the influence of welfare states on the ageing of societies. Theoretical as well as empirical issues will be featured.

PhD-students in sociology and political science are invited to submit abstracts related to the topic of “Ageing Societies and the Welfare State”. The contributions may be qualitative, quantitative, or conceptual. Country-comparative studies are especially welcome. Abstracts with a maximum of 200 words should be submitted before September 30, 2008. The participants will need to submit a complete version of their papers by the end of November 2008.

If you have any questions, you can contact Kathrin Komp at k.komp@fsw.vu.nl

For further information, see: http://english.fsw.vu.nl/ageingsocieties

Eight Doctoral Scholarships and One Post-doc Position Available

The DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft / German Research Foundation) has granted a Graduiertenkolleg (research training group) to the Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences at the University of Cologne starting October 1, 2008.

The research group on “Social order and life chances in cross-national comparison” (SOCLIFE), will combine survey research with theoretically derived macro-level hypotheses. The application deadline is July 15, 2008. Eight Ph.d scholarships and one post-doc position are available for three years.

More information on SOCLIFE can be obtained online: http://www.wiso.uni-koeln.de/cgs/soclife

Michael Young Prize 2009

The Economic and Social Research Council in partnership with the Young Foundation have now opened the call for the Michael Young Prize 2009, which gives early career scholars up to £6,000 for research publicity, expert help with circulating the results of research, communications networking and PR support, one year’s full membership with the British Sociological Association (BSA) and subscription to a BSA journal of choice.

Eligibility: The prize is open to all early career social science researchers whether or not they are currently affiliated to a UK university. Eligible early career researchers are those in the first five years of their research career who have completed a piece of original research within the last three years. All eligible applicants must be currently resident in the UK. Applicants must have experience of conducting research at postgraduate level (and beyond) and may hold a postgraduate qualification. Applicants may be employed at an NGO, in government or the private sector, for example.

Deadline: July 1st 2008.

For more information, visit: http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/young
**Discussion List**

Cooperation and discussion have always been vital to successful academic life. E-mail discussion lists allow this to happen in a new way, not just for “traditional” computer users, but for academics from all disciplines. Many academics find they are working in a specialized area and that there are few colleagues with whom they can discuss their work in depth. With an e-mail discussion list they can collaborate on projects and publications, announce conferences, arrange meetings and share news and views.

**Submitting material for the Newsletter**

European Sociologist is the newsletter of the European Sociological Association, which aims at disseminating information to the widest possible audience. Material appearing in other newsletters or the publications of national associations, university departments may be duplicated in the Newsletter.

If you have material which you would like to see included, or an article or feature you would like to submit, please send it to the Editor, Dr. Shalva Weil at mshalva@msec.huji.ac.il.

European Sociologist is not a journal and hence does not publish academic articles, but all other types of material of relevance to sociologists working on or in Europe will be considered: articles, opinion pieces, features, comments, letters to the Editor, announcements of research initiatives, conferences or seminars.

We work directly from electronic media, so please send material in a Word file via e-mail.

**ESA Secretariat**

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**The newsletter charges for commercial advertisements only. The current fees are:**

**For an advert:**
For non-profit organisations:
* 200 EUR for a full page (and smaller adverts pro rata)
* 100 EUR for half a page (and so on).

For commercial organisations (such as publishing houses):
* 400 EUR for a full page
* 200 EUR for a half page

**For inserts:**
For non-profit organisations:
* 250 EUR

For commercial organisations:
* 450 EUR

Scientific publication announcements from ESA-Members will of course stay free of charge!

**ESA Webpage**

Check out our new homepage and keep yourself online with the latest ESA-Information:
http://www.europeansociology.org