In the coming weeks we will descend upon Prague en masse for the European Sociological Association’s 12th Conference with its focus on Differences, Inequalities and the Sociological Imagination. Whilst many of us spend our summers preparing our papers for this, Europe’s largest meeting of sociologists, the conference itself has been has taken a great deal of effort from the Local Organising Committee, ESA’s President and the members of the Executive Committee. In fact, the conference week – August 25th to 28th, 2015 – represents the culmination of some two years of hard work and planning.

Organising such a large conference is no small task. Alongside all of the complexities of finding appropriate facilities to host 2000+ participants, the organisers must plan out dozens of plenary, mid-day and special sessions along with hundreds of workshops whilst ensuring that there are no clashes in individual timetables. Further still, one cannot organise a conference without a social programme or offering one’s guests the possibility of excursions to sample some of the delights of the region. Tomáš Kostelecký, the Chair of the Local Organising Committee, and his team have approached these unenviable tasks with enthusiasm. I am sure that their efforts will result in another successful ESA Conference!

Fitting with the conference theme, much of the content of this issue of European Sociologist relates to the events that will take place in Prague. Indeed, alongside Carmen Leccardi’s President’s Message and a Viewpoint article on The Case for a Philosophical Sociology by Daniel Chernilo, this issue includes a welcome note from the Local Organizing Committee in Prague, introductions to each candidate nominated in ESA’s Presidential and Executive Committee elections and short overviews of the planned programmes of each of the four presidential candidates. In addition to the above, this issue concludes with an overview of the British Sociological Association’s activities in the National Associations section and obituaries by Anthony Giddens and Hans-Peter Müller celebrate the life and works of Professor Ulrich Beck who sadly passed away on January 1st this year.

Finally, I would like to thank our President, Carmen Leccardi, and the members of the outgoing Executive Committee for all of their hard work. It has been a pleasure working with you all over the past two years.

Peter Holley  
August 2015

1 In addition to commemorating Professor Ulrich Beck’s many outstanding contributions to European sociology in this issue of European Sociologist, a special session titled In Memory of Ulrich Beck will take place during the Prague conference on Wednesday August 26th between 12:45 and 13:45.
The Prague Conference, the 12th in ESA’s history and also probably the largest (over 3,000 attendees are expected), is about to begin. On this occasion a new President, and new governing bodies will be elected. It is therefore time for those passing on the torch to take stock of the last two years.

In these years the President and Executive Committee have not only worked to make the Association more efficient, but also to stress the importance of our discipline and its work at a particularly critical time for the continent and for the global geopolitical scenario. The most serious economic crisis since 1929, with devastating social consequences, that is only now starting to lose its bite; the tragedy of immigration, in particular across the Mediterranean, with its increasing human and social costs, and the lengthy Greek crisis have all contributed to making the political profile of the continent we live in increasingly fragile, and undermining the principle of solidarity which should be one of the key principles of the European Union. In previous newsletters I focused mainly on the challenges that this scenario throws down to sociology today, and on the gap between the significance of the reflections produced by our scientific community on these issues and the failure of the European institutions responsible for research and funding to acknowledge their relevance for our collective present and future. I do not want to dwell on these issues again - the Conference that is due to open in Prague will be a good opportunity to explore these topics further.

What I would like to focus on here are the most significant developments of this term - and a few projects that merit future attention. The first important change for the Association was the move of the Paris office to a new location in 2015. We have moved from premises shared with another association, in these years generously made available free of charge by the CNRS, to a real headquarters for ESA: a small but efficient office in the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l’Homme in Paris. Thanks to the precious help of Michel Wieviorka, current administrator of the FMSH, and since July of this year, Chairman of its board of directors, the ESA has been given the opportunity to rent this new space for a symbolic fee. The importance of this change lies not only in improving the organization capabilities of the Association and its staff. It also regards the opportunities that the FMSH offers both in terms of intercontinental scientific exchanges - further reinforcing ESA’s international profile - and place of high level debate and discussion on the key issues facing social sciences today.

Thanks to this new office, among other things the ESA can finally hope to achieve something that its governing bodies have been talking about for a few years now, but which has not been feasible to date due to its unsuitable premises. What I am talking about here is the opportunity to appoint a managerial figure based in Paris to handle to day-to-day running of the Association as well as to the general organization of its biennial conferences. The fact that there was no General Secretary during this term, due to the resignation for health reasons of our colleague Vincenzo Cicchelli, together with the problems encountered in finding someone to take his place, have made this all the more pressing. I am pleased to report that the Association’s positive financial situation - mainly a result of the success of the 2013 ESA Conference, also in financial terms - will help make this project possible in the future.

The legacy of the current Executive Committee also includes the revamped website. Entrusted to a Polish company, the new site (which should be operational by August 2015) will make communications more streamlined and comprehensive, and offer members more services.

Another significant development, which I would like to moot as a possible new tradition for the ESA, is a mid-term conference organised jointly by ESA and one of the National Associations. In this term of office, a few months later than originally planned, the conference was held in June 2015 at the Federico II University of Naples, one of the oldest universities in Europe - by chance, the conference was held during the celebrations for its 791st anniversary. Entitled ‘From Memories to the Future. Collective Memories and Horizons of Expectations in Contemporary Europe’, the conference was co-organised by ESA and the Italian Sociological Association (AIS) in collaboration with various Italian universities, the University of Paris Ouest Nanterre and the University of Exeter. In scientific terms it was a great success, both due to the highly topical subject matter and the qualified attendance (including a considerable number of early career scholars). In short, it is undoubtedly an initiative worth repeating, in other areas, addressing different themes and involving other National Associations as it represented a key opportunity for networking and constructing shared conceptual platforms.

I cannot conclude without mentioning the issue of the statutes and possible changes to them. 2015 has seen considerable email correspondence between the current Chair of the Research Networks Council and member of the Executive Committee, Ruth McDonald, and the various RNs, regarding changes in the rules that govern the association. After carefully evaluating the criticism advanced by many RNs of the statutes previously submitted for approval (2013), but not actually approved, a proposed new version of the statutes has been drawn up, published on the site and sent personally by email to all members this month. All ESA members have been invited to submit their comments,
criticism and suggestions in this regard before the Prague Conference. The aim is to construct a shared version of the statutes that can then be approved during the General Assembly in Prague. Here I would like in particular to draw attention to a new section of the proposed statutes. I refer to the ‘Statement of Ethical Principles’ that ESA members are required to respect in their scientific work. The proposed Principles (enclosed with the statutes) bring the ESA in line with the major current scientific associations. ESA members are also invited to express their opinions on these Principles.

As regards next ESA elections, thanks to the detailed documentation presented in this issue of the newsletter those who wish to examine the biopanoramas of the candidates for both the Executive Committee and the Presidency, and analyse the programmes of the latters, can do so (this information is also present on the ESA website, with the exception of the presidential candidates’ programmes). You can vote using the online voting system (the instructions are on the site) if you are not able to attend the Conference, or at the voting desk, near the Conference registration desk, directly in Prague.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to let you know that our petition calling for greater recognition of the role played by sociology and the social sciences in Europe has already been signed by more than 7,000 people. If you have not already done so, please sign the petition and pass it on (you can find it here).

See you soon!

Carmen Leccardi
August 2015


Click here for more information on the EJCPS or to submit a manuscript.

Turning to ESA’s other journal, European Societies, Michalis Lianos (editor), reports that works are currently underway to significantly shorten the submission-to-decision and decision-to-publication times. The journal has recently introduced among other changes new authorship guidelines to protect junior colleagues and researchers on fixed term contracts. It also has a new policy of attracting more articles from under-represented national sociological communities. In the current issue, besides our interesting articles, you will find a highly informative detailed report on the national sociological associations in Europe. There are forthcoming special issues on “Charting the European Social Space”, “Religion in the Public Domain”, “Welfare Systems and Female Labour Force” and – possibly – “Understanding key challenges to European societies in the 21st century: Evidence from the European Social Survey”.

Click here for more information on European Societies or to submit a manuscript.
The Case for a Philosophical Sociology

In this short intervention, I offer a plea for sociology’s reengagement with philosophy. To be sure, the extent to which their ties have severed over the past few decades will vary in different national or regional contexts. As far as I know, the case is more pronounced in English-speaking sociologies than in Spanish-, German- or French-speaking ones. Also, the field that is commonly demarcated as ‘the epistemology of social sciences’ remains one way in which both traditions still interact – although one suspects that social scientists pay far more attention to it than philosophers do.

I call this invitation ‘philosophical sociology’ and define it as the attempt to unpack the (mostly implicit) conceptions of the human, humanity and human nature that underpin our conceptions of social life. The main intellectual source for the idea of philosophical sociology comes of course from philosophical anthropology. Originally associated with the names of Max Scheler (2009) and Ernst Cassirer (1977) in the 1920s and 1930s, the tradition of philosophical anthropology was explicitly devoted to the development of a general understanding of ‘what is a human being’. For my purposes, the most important intervention in this field comes from a short book by Karl Löwith (1993). First published in 1932, Löwith’s Max Weber and Karl Marx starts by stating what for us is now the obvious: Weber and Marx shared an interest in the rise and contemporary workings of modern capitalism and offered radically different interpretations of it. Their scientific originality, their ‘sociologies’, is apparent in how their historical and conceptual sophistication wholly transformed our understanding of capitalism. But Löwith argues that these explicit sociologies of capitalism are in fact underpinned by a common philosophical concern that is the ultimate motif of their work: what it means to be human under the alienating conditions of modern capitalism. Löwith contends that Weber and Marx were ‘essentially sociologists, namely, philosophical sociologists’ because ‘both provide – Marx directly and Weber indirectly – a critical analysis of modern man within bourgeois society in terms of bourgeois-capitalist economy, based on the recognition that the ‘economy’ has become human ‘destiny’ (Löwith 1993: 48, my italics).

As philosophical anthropology continued to develop after World War II, the notion that emerged was that a dual scientific and philosophical approach to understanding the human results from, and must be preserved, because of the duality of the human condition itself: humans are partly natural bodies that are controlled by their urges, emotions and organic adaptation to the world and they are also partly conscious beings that are defined by their intellectual, aesthetic and indeed moral insights (Gehlen 1980, Plessner 1970). A key motif of this philosophical anthropology is the claim that no substantive idea of human nature was ever going to capture the essential features of what makes us humans; human beings are fundamentally indeterminate with regards to organic adaptation and this is what makes social institutions and cultural practices essential to human live.

A second insight for the idea of philosophical sociology comes from Max Weber’s lecture on Science as a Vocation (1970). Weber contends there that sociology can make a contribution to public debates by unpacking the various practical and indeed normative implications of different policy options. I translate this insight into the suggestion that normative debates in society – from abortion to euthanasia via migration and welfare reforms – are actually underpinned by ideas of the human that are never fully articulated out. All societies have normative ideas and most sociologists will accept that a good account of social life will have to be able to say something meaningful about how these ideas are actualised; why and how some are preferred over others. Unpacking these ideas of the human is important because normative debates are never fully disconnected from what human beings themselves consider right or wrong, fair or unfair. In the societies we live in, humans have turned themselves into the ultimate arbiters of normativity itself. By means of its expert empirical knowledge, sociology can cast a critical eye on what is exactly being advocated, both in normatively and in practice, in particular instances.

To reclaim the importance of understanding the relationships between our preconceptions of the human and our explicit theories of society does not entail a return to an anthropocentric ‘epistemological obstacle’: thou shall not explain society through the action of individuals (Luhmann 2012). It is instead an invitation to reconsider the idea that social life itself is predicated on the fact that human beings are capable of such collective existence. Humans are beings who have a continuity.

1 I don’t know enough about others linguistic contexts to pass judgement, but if colleagues are happy to share their experiences, I would be extremely interested.
of consciousness so that they see themselves as themselves throughout their life; beings who negotiate a multiplicity of sometimes contradictory identities and recognise each other as members of the same species, and they are also beings who can create and interpret cultural artefacts. Crucially, humans are beings who can deploy a sense of self-transcendence so that they are able to look at the world from somebody else’s point of view and thus conceive new social institutions (Archer 2000, Arendt 1978, Parsons 1978).

But in mainstream contemporary sociology we are missing these insights all too easily. Its social constructionist variant mistakenly treats the social and the human as a zero-sum game, so that bloated notions of the social leave no space for a philosophical enquiry about preconceptions of the human. Conversely, in the ‘combative’ variant as advocated by Bourdieu (1994), conceptions of justice, legitimacy, fairness or democracy need not be included as part of the social world because conflict, power and struggles are deemed to give a full ontology of the social (Honneth 1986). The fundamental reason for these shortcomings lies in the deficient philosophical underpinnings of both: whilst radical constructionism pays no attention to any form of anthropological reflection, Bourdieu’s sociology uses a highly reductionist conception of human nature that cares only for power and strategic bargaining. Indeed, this form of irrationalism has been available within sociology for several decades (Bendix 1970); other candidates being more or less essentialist ideas of ‘identity’ and ‘authenticity’ that figure so highly in postcolonial and intersectional approaches (Connell 2007, Mignolo 2005). This is sociology’s very own self-fulfilling dystopia: although most sociologists do care about normative questions (not least in relation to their own justifications as to why they are doing sociology at all), they feel no particular need to take normative ideas into account as part of they have to explain sociologically (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006).

The history of sociology is of course full of attempts at determining the problem of normative justifications. Even if religion does remain available in contemporary society, cosmological convictions now co-exist with a wide pool of competing justifications and that their (ir)rationality is hotly contested. We have also witnessed the appeal to teleological ideas of secular progress and their belief in the normative power of history: justifications for the rights and wrongs of past and present were to be assessed against the promises of a better future. And society itself has been posited as a source of normative integration. But being subject to permanent historical and cultural changes, society was equally weak for the task of providing stable normative justifications. The ambivalent normative appeal of the nation in modern times, and the need to defend minorities against the nation’s unsavoury wishes, illustrates well this point (Chernilo 2007).

As religion, history and society are all in trouble when trying to uphold normative justifications, we can still ask whether the defining anthropological features of our species can do this job – and this is a path philosophical sociology seeks to explore. Ideas of humanity are certainly socially construed and have themselves changed over time (Fuller 2011). But it seems to me that a key strength of philosophical sociology lies in its taking seriously the humans capacity to reflect on what makes them the kind of being that they actually are. Anthropological arguments remain the best option here because they allow us to consider, simultaneously, that normative arguments are only actualised in society, are to carry the free assent of individual themselves and yet their binding force remains attached to some stable features that all humans possess qua human beings. Indeed, this is precisely why we claim human rights ought to be respected under all circumstances and, on occasions, against society’s own will (Habermas 2010, Joas 2013).

For all their claims to originality and intimations that they seek to make sense of a new world that is still in the making, the new strand of post-humanist thinking belongs in the mode that I am describing (Braidoti 2013, Haraway 1991). This genre is constituted by its own combination of partly speculative and partly scientific arguments and echoes previous critiques of humanism. Indeed, its fundamental question remains exactly the same: how open to social manipulation human nature actually is, whether developments in contemporary technology have put an end to the human being as we know it and whether the very idea of humanity has ever been anything but an pernicious illusion. Inside mainstream social science, Bruno Latour (2013) has advanced similar claims about the definitive need for a whole new ontology that can do without the distinction between humans and nonhumans (although the philosophical result of his investigations is an even more reductionist ontology that allows only for the networks). I suggest that we turn their claim to novelty on their head – and not only because there is nothing less original than their claims to originality. The fundamental point that they miss is precisely that their very quest is paradigmatic of the all too human frustration with the irritating inevitability of the question what is to be human. When the post-humanist literature rejects the ‘foundationalism’ that underpins traditional ‘humanist’ ideas, they use this term now to indicate exactly the same that, in the 1960s, was deemed mere ‘bourgeois’ or ‘ideological’ humanism and, in the 1920s, it was treated as unwarranted ‘metaphysics’. What is really going on, however, is that their ontologies of the social are underpinned by too shallow a view of the human.

This anti-humanism is as conventional as it is flawed: it conflates ‘Humanism’ as the colonial ideology of the West with the legitimate enquiry about anthropological foundations of social life and, as it deconstructs the inconsistencies of the former, it has no difficulty in ubiquitously appealing to traditional humanist values (solidarity, emancipation, subjectivity) for its own justifications. Their explorations into the limits and exceptions to ‘Western anthropocentrism’ is potentially illuminating, but there is something deeply elitist when this is proclaimed ‘on behalf’ of the disposed of the world who, quite literally, are dying for the most simple humanist values and institutions that are being so arrogantly dismissed here: the right to work, basic human decency, equality before the law. In the old debate on humanism between Sartre (2007) and Heidegger (1993), all the

We must reconnect our sociological understandings of social life with philosophically informed ideas of the human, humanity and even human nature.
important lessons have been learnt the wrong way round: they misunderstand the deeply humanistic sensibilities of the former (however imperfect) and have instead become intoxicated by the smug self-congratulation of the latter (regardless of how misguided).

The fundamental point remains, therefore: the ‘Copernican revolution’ of humans stop putting themselves at the centre of the universe is itself a major human accomplishment (Bachelard 2002). If the current decentering of anthropocentrism is to become sociologically fruitful, we have to accept the fact that this decentering has a limit and is not wholly reversible: the science, law and philosophy that now reflect on the environment, animals and cyborgs remains the wholly human accomplishment of those members of our species that now show an increased sensibility towards them.

If what I have argued so far makes sense, it may already be clear that this is not a task that sociology can fulfill on its own. Given the historical, moral, scientific and indeed theological density of our conceptions of the human, for sociology to pursue this task it needs to reconnect to philosophy. A dual approach, both scientific and philosophical, is needed because this reflects best our human condition – and sociology’s highly sophisticated ability to empirically account for the ways and trends of contemporary society shall prove essential here. We must reconnect our sociological understandings of social life with philosophically informed ideas of the human, humanity and even human nature.

After a long history in which sociology tried to differentiate itself from philosophy in order to secure its scientific status, it is now again in need of philosophy. But the idea of philosophical sociology for which I advocate is neither a substitute for empirical sociological research nor a philosophical dissolution of sociology (Chernilo 2014). It rather suggests that the common anthropological traits that define us as members of the same species create the conditions for social life to unfold without this common humanity itself being able to act directly on society (Chernilo 2013). They are also the basis from which ideas of justice, self, dignity and the good life emerge. These are irreducible to material factors because their normative worth ultimately refers back and thus depends on our conceptions of what is to be human. Without disciplinary arrogance or parochialism, a re-engagement between sociology and philosophy can take the form of a mutual learning process among the different knowledge claims that underpin them both: the empirical vocation of sociology as it grapples with the complexities of contemporary society and the kind of unanswerable questions that we still associate with the best of the philosophical tradition. At stake here is the fact that as long as sociology continues to raise the big questions about life in society – the powers of agency, the relationships between nature and culture or the dialectics between domination and emancipation – these are all questions that also transcend: good sociological questions are always, in the last instance, also philosophical ones.

References


The last ESA conference in 2013 was centred on the theme of crisis. Conference attendants discussed the problems that individual people and whole societies have had to face during the acute and deep economic crisis and analysed the social and political consequences of those issues. Although macroeconomic indicators suggest there has been some improvement in Europe’s economic situation since 2013 (not in every country, however), no one observing the situation could seriously think that we are ‘back in good times’.

But Europe is facing even more challenges on top of its persistent economic problems and some of them exceed by far what we might previously have been able to imagine. How many social scientists can sincerely claim that, two years ago, they expected that there would be a large-scale military conflict in Europe, mutual economic sanctions between former partner countries, a serious discussion of the possible exit of some countries from the European Union, and the immigration of modern-day ‘boat people’ from Africa and the Middle East to Europe, or that EU member states would be seriously considering modifications to the Schengen Treaty or even questioning the principle of the freedom of movement of EU citizens within the European Union. There is no doubt that we are living in turbulent times and we need to understand what is going on around us. We really need to apply our sociological imagination and, in the words of C. Wright Mills, ‘to use information and to develop reason in order to achieve lucid summations of what is going on in the world and of what may be happening within’ ourselves.

Sociologists from all over the world have registered to attend the next ESA conference in Prague, where they will convene to discuss the many pressing issues of Europe and the world today. From 25 to 28 August 2015 the City of Prague will host a record number of conference participants, who will have the opportunity to meet in a place that traditionally served as a crossroads, a place where the ideas from East, West, North, and South came together. We hope that the four-day conference in Prague will be an intellectually enriching and very pleasant experience for all the participants.

Visit our website or follow us on Facebook and Twitter to stay informed about the latest news. Looking forward to seeing you in Prague!

On behalf of the Local Organising Committee:

Dr. Tomáš Kostelecký
Director
Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences
Chair of the Local Organising Committee

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The ESA 2015 Elections

The Nomination committee of ESA has had wide consultations and asked for proposals for candidates from ESA members, from ESA RNs, and from the National Sociological Associations in Europe. Based on these consultations a slate of 26 candidates (11 men and 15 women) for the Executive Committee has been made, taking into account country representation and field of research. Due to the withdrawal in July of two candidates for Presidency, the nominations committee had to reopen the call for nominations from July 15th to August 15th.

When we publish this information, we have a slate of four candidates (2 men and 2 women), from different countries and fields of research. It is in principle possible that, by August 15, new nominations could be added. In that case the list will be updated before the voting process starts.

All members of ESA in good standing (who have paid their membership fees by the time of the 12th ESA Conference in Prague, August 25-28, 2015) will vote for president of ESA and for members of the ESA Executive Committee for the next two years period.

Members may vote before the Conference or during the Conference (at the ESA voting desk near the registration on the first floor of the Faculty of Architecture) by using the online voting system for 1 (one) candidate for the President and a maximum of 10 (ten) candidates for the Executive Committee.

Members may also express their candidate preference by writing in the name (or names) of other ESA members in the list of candidates.

When the election starts, each voter will be emailed a message with a unique voting key. People who become ESA members after the beginning of the elections or during the conference in Prague will also be emailed a message with a unique voting key.

The voting starts on Monday, August 17, 2015 and ends on Thursday, August 27, 2015, at 12 o’clock (noon) at the 12th Conference of ESA to be held in Prague, Czech Republic.

An ESA voting desk will be open during the Prague conference (at the ESA voting desk near the registration on the first floor of the Faculty of Architecture - see the map at the end of the page) from Wednesday August 26th, 2015, at 9:30AM to Thursday August 27th, 2015, at 12 o’clock (noon).

Carmen Leccardi
Chair of the ESA Nominations Committee

Candidates for the Presidency

Airi-Alina Allaste
Estonia

Airi-Alina Allaste is a professor of sociology at Tallinn University. She studied sociology in Estonian Institute of Humanities and completed her PhD at the University of Helsinki. She has been the director of the Institute for International and Social Studies for the last 7 years and vice president of the Estonian Sociological Association for the last 4 years. In 2008 she was a Fulbright scholar and recently was a visiting professor at Griffith University (Australia) and Åbo Akademi (Finland).

She has served as a National Coordinator and Working Package Leader for various international projects including the EC 7th FP project Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement. She has also been responsible for organising several international conferences including NYRIS 12: Nordic Youth Research Symposium (Tallinn, Estonia, 2013).

She has published numerous peer reviewed articles and recently edited 5 books including ‘Back in the West’: Changing Lifestyles in Transforming Societies (Peter Lang, 2013).
Elena Danilova  Russia

Elena Danilova is Head of the Department of the Institute of Sociology at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. She graduated from the Faculty of Geography at Moscow State University (1982), specializing in Economic and Social Geography. Her doctoral dissertation (1997) was devoted to the study of social identities in post-Soviet Russia. Her academic interests focus on comparative studies of the cultural and institutional aspects of social transformations in the societies of Eastern Europe and China. She published series of articles in Russian and in international sociological journals, and she has edited and contributed to several books. She has experience of working as a member of ESA Executive committee and as ESAs Vice-President. Currently, Danilova chairs Research Network 36, Sociology of Transformations: West and East, which is developing successfully.

Hans-Peter Müller  Germany

Hans-Peter Müller is Professor of Sociology at Humboldt-University in Berlin (Germany). He studied economics and social sciences at the University of Augsburg, completed his PhD and Habilitation at the University of Heidelberg and has taught at Humboldt-University since 1992. Since then he has been editor-in-chief of the Berliner Journal für Soziologie. He has been J.F.K. Fellow at Harvard University (USA), Max-Weber Visiting Professor at NYU (USA) and has held visiting professorships at Budapest, Helsinki, Paris, Rome, Princeton and Berkeley. His research fields include social and political theory, social inequality, and political and cultural sociology. His recent publications (2014) include Max Weber-Handbuch: Leben-Werk-Wirkung with Steffen Sigmund (Stuttgart: Metzler) and Pierre Bourdieu: Eine systematische Einführung (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp). Müller loves discourse and debate as well as networking in the field of European sociology.

Frank Welz  Austria

Frank Welz (Austria) teaches sociology at Innsbruck University. After studying sociology, history, philosophy and psychology he received his PhD from Freiburg and his Habilitation (professor) from Innsbruck. He publishes on social theory and sociology of law, and currently is conducting research into governmentality and contemporary subjectivities. Between 2007 and 2011 he coordinated ESA Research Network 29, Social Theory. He organized the network’s midterm conference Social theory and the sociological discipline(s) at Innsbruck and coordinated further meetings in Lisbon, Prague, Geneva. He has served as ESA’s Vice-President between 2011 and 2013 and between 2013 and 2015 (e.g. coordinating ESA’s 2013 “Crisis, Critique and Change” conference program). He further served as Vice-President of the Austrian Sociological Association.
Candidates for the Executive Committee

Airi-Alina Allaste  Estonia

Airi-Alina Allaste is a professor of sociology at Tallinn University. She studied sociology in Estonian Institute of Humanities and completed her PhD at the University of Helsinki. She has been the director of the Institute for International and Social Studies for the last 7 years and vice president of the Estonian Sociological Association for the last 4 years. In 2008 she was a Fulbright scholar and recently was a visiting professor at Griffith University (Australia) and Åbo Akademi (Finland).

She has served as a National Coordinator and Working Package Leader for various international projects including the EC 7th FP project Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement. She has also been responsible for organising several international conferences including NYRIS 12: Nordic Youth Research Symposium (Tallinn, Estonia, 2013).

She has published numerous peer reviewed articles and recently edited 5 books including ‘Back in the West’: Changing Lifestyles in Transforming Societies (Peter Lang, 2013).

Nilay Çabuk Kaya  Turkey

Nilay Çabuk Kaya is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Ankara, Turkey. She is currently serving as vice-president of Turkish Sociological Association (TSA). She is also in the board of ESA Research Network 33, Women’s and Gender Studies, and is a Regional Representative for the Middle East and West Asia in the ISA Research Committee 32, Women in Society. She holds a BA an MA from Ege University, İzmir/Turkey and a PhD (1994) from the Durham University (UK).

Her research focuses on gender inequalities, gendered processes of work, women’s employment in factories, women’s empowerment, and domestic violence and femicide. She has worked as a consultant on various projects funded by national (TUBITAK) and international (WorldBank, UNDP, EU, IFC, EBDF) bodies, and has published in national and international journals.

Teresa Consoli  Italy

M. Teresa Consoli, Ph.D. in Sociology and M.S. in Social Policy and Planning form the London School of Economics (UK), is Professor of the Sociology of Law at the Department of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Catania (Italy). She teaches the Sociology of Law and Social Policy, and her teaching and research interests are concentrated on normative and comparative aspects of welfare systems. She has published books and articles on the role of street-level bureaucracies and welfare professions as well as on poverty and migration in Southern Europe.

At present, she is head of the Master’s degree course in the Planning of Social Policies at the University of Catania and Director of the University Research Centre, Laposs (Laboratory for Evaluation of Public Policies and Services to Persons).
Elena Danilova  Russia

Elena Danilova is Head of the Department of the Institute of Sociology at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. She graduated from the Faculty of Geography at Moscow State University (1982), specializing in Economic and Social Geography. Her doctoral dissertation (1997) was devoted to the study of social identities in post-Soviet Russia. Her academic interests focus on comparative studies of the cultural and institutional aspects of social transformations in the societies of Eastern Europe and China. She published series of articles in Russian and in international sociological journals, and she has edited and contributed to several books. She has experience of working as a member of ESA Executive committee and as ESA's Vice-President. Currently, Danilova chairs Research Network 36, Sociology of Transformations: West and East, which is developing successfully.

Kathrin Komp  Finland

Kathrin Komp is Assistant Professor in Sociology at the University of Helsinki (Finland). She specializes in country-comparative studies of population ageing, the life-course, welfare states, and the social effects of the 2008 economic crisis. To date she has more than 20 publications, among them several scientific articles and a textbook for students. She was a fellow of the “Future Leaders in Ageing Research”-programme 2011-2013, and received a Marie Curie grant in 2015. She is currently the chair of the European Sociological Association’s Research Network 1, Ageing in Europe.

Monica Massari  Italy

Monica Massari (PhD) is Associate Professor at the Department of Political Sciences, University of Naples “Federico II” (Italy) where she teaches Sociology. During the past few years she has been focusing on issues related to stereotypes, prejudices and new forms of racism at a European level and the dynamics of identity and recognition within multicultural societies, after several years spent in the analysis of organized crime and illegal markets in the context of globalization. Among her recent publications, Massari has published in edited books and journals. These include: At the Edge of Europe: the Phenomenon of Irregular Migration from Libya to Italy (Palgrave, 2015 forthcoming), Musulmane e moderne. Spunti di riflessione su donne, islam e costruzioni sociali della modernità in Europa (in Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia 3/2014), Uno come te. Europei e nuovi europei nei percorsi di integrazione (co-editor, Franco Angeli, 2014), The Sacra Corona Unità. Origins, Characteristics and Strategies (Springer, 2014), Guns in the Family. Mafia violence in Italy (Cambridge University Press, 2013), and Corpi in transito: prostituzione migrante, relazioni di genere e modelli culturali (Rubbettino, 2013).
Ruth McDonald  UK

I am Professor of Health Science Research and Policy in a UK university. My research is concerned with professions, organisations and public policy, mainly in health related fields. I am a former coordinator of my RN and during 2013 to 2015 I served as the Research Network (RN) representative on ESA’s Executive Committee.

I am keen to ensure that the RN voice is strongly represented at the executive meetings, but I also want to encourage more dialogue between the executive and RNs. I want to contribute to getting ESA work done in a way that makes life easier for ESA’s members. I was a hospital finance director before I became an academic and if I am elected I will volunteer to take on the role of ESA Treasurer when the current Treasurer steps down in summer 2015.

Lena Näre  Finland

Lena Näre is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Helsinki (Finland) and Editor-in-Chief of the Nordic Journal of Migration Research. She holds a DPhil in Migration Studies from the University of Sussex and a PhD in Sociology from the University of Helsinki. Her research focuses on social inequalities, migration, gender, labour and ethnographic methods. She is currently leading two research projects: one on migrant youth employment and the other on irregular migration and precarious work. Her work has been published in, for example, Sociology, Ethnic and Racial Studies, Men and Masculinities, and the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. She is board member of Nordic Migration Research.

Maria Nawojczyk  Poland

Maria Nawojczyk is associate professor at Department of Economic Sociology and Social Communication and Director of Research Center for Bridging Technology and Society at AGH University of Science and Technology in Krakow (Poland). She chaired of ESA’s Research Network 9, Economic Sociology, between 2011 and 2015, and has been an ESA member since 1995. Her research and teaching activities are concentrated in the fields of economic sociology, methodology and statistics, intercultural management, the sociology of work, the sociology of entrepreneurship, sociophysics, and the social and cultural aspects of new technologies.

Personal statement: When thinking about something that could briefly characterize me I realized that excited, curious, and “a fan of being on the road” would be appropriate expressions. The same goes for learning, teaching as well as traveling. Teaching new courses, doing field research among small entrepreneurs, writing articles on universalistic or particularistic attitudes in doing business in Europe, traveling through the heather covered hills of Scotland, or along winding coast of Adriatic Sea, or discovering Tatar villages on the east border of Poland. All of these activities have similar features and demands similar attitudes.
Eleni Nina-Pazarzi  
Greece

Eleni Nina-Pazarzi is Professor of Sociology at the Department of Business Administration, University of Piraeus (Greece). She is also a Member of Athens Bar Association and was President of TADKY between 1996 and 2002. She is project manager of the EU program “E@mediate”, Institutional and Academic Coordinator of EPEAEK “Gender Equality and Employment”, ARTEMIS – EQUAL and is the Coordinator/Main Researcher in European and National research programs. Nina-Pazarzi teaches courses in General Sociology, Industrial Sociology, Social Psychology and Industrial Relations in the EU, as well as courses on different aspects of Gender Equality, Maritime Sociology, Business Social Responsibility, Business Corporate Responsibility and Corporate Governance, Sociological and Psychological Theories of Financial Behavior, et cetera. She is the author or editor of 12 books and about 70 essays on Sociological Theory, Gender, the Sociology of Work, et cetera. She is the treasurer of ISA Research Committee 10, a Board Member of ESA Research Network 27, Vice-President of ELEGYP and in the past she has served as the President of the Hellenic Sociological Society and a Board Member of a number of professional associations.

Birgit Pfau-Effinger  
Germany

Professor of Sociology, University of Hamburg, Institute for Sociology
Research Director, Centre for Globalisation and Governance, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, University of Hamburg, Professor for Comparative Welfare State Research, University of Southern Denmark

Elisabetta Ruspini  
Italy

Elisabetta Ruspini is Senior Associate Professor in Sociology at the University of Milano-Bicocca (Italy). In 2013 she was declared suitable (ASN-Abilitazione Scientifica Nazionale) for a Full Professorship in Sociology. She has just been nominated president of the BSC Course STCL (Tourism Sciences and Local Community Studies) at the Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milano-Bicocca. She coordinates the Research Section “Studi di Genere” (Gender Studies) as part of the AIS (Associazione Italiana di Sociologia-Italian Sociological Association). She is a board member of the ESA Research Network 33, Women’s and Gender Studies. She is the main editor of the book series “Generi, Culture, Sessualità” (Gender, Cultures, Sexualities) published by FrancoAngeli, Milano. She has extensive teaching and research experience on gender issues. She has published a number of books, articles and contributed papers to national and international conferences in the fields of research on poverty and social exclusion, gender research, changing masculinities and femininities, and new forms of parenthood.
Helena Serra  Portugal

Helena Serra is Professor of Sociology at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, New University of Lisbon (Portugal). She has published on healthcare research and organizations, and given several keynote presentations at international conferences. She is member of the current ESA Executive Committee; a member of ESA Research Network 19, Sociology of Professions; and a Board Member of ESA Research Network 16, Sociology of Health and Illness. She is also President-elect of the ISA’s Research Committee 52, Sociology of Professional Groups. In addition to a book and several book chapters, her journal articles include “Medical Technocracies in Liver Transplantation: drawing boundaries in medical practices”, published in Health (2010).

Marta Soler-Gallart  Spain

Marta Soler-Gallart, PhD (Harvard), is Professor of Sociology and Director of CREA Research Centre at the University of Barcelona (Spain). She is Board member at the Catalan Sociological Association and Vice-Chair of the ESA Research Network 29, Social Theory. She is the Editor of “International Sociology” and belongs to the ORCID Board of Directors. Expert Evaluator and Ethical Reviewer for the Framework Programme of Research, European Commission. Currently, Main Researcher of the H2020 project SOLIDUS and Knowledge Management Coordinator of the FP7 project IMPACT-EV. She has published in journals such as Current Sociology and Qualitative Inquiry, and has co-authored a book with John Searle.

Paola Maria Torrioni  Italy

Paola Maria Torrioni is Assistant professor in Sociology of Cultural Processes at Department of Cultures, Politics and Society, University of Turin (Italy). She is expert in research focusing on family, youth transition from parental households, the transition to parenthood and socialization processes. In recent years she has participated in different EU Projects and networks (for instance “Monitoring Living Conditions and Quality of Life in Europe”, funded by EUROFOUND and the EQUAL-SOC Network of Excellence). She is involved in the EXCEPT Project, “Social Exclusion of Youth in Europe: Cumulative Disadvantage, Coping Strategies, Effective Policies and Transfer” funded by European Commission (Horizon2020 Programme). She has technical skills in quantitative and qualitative longitudinal analysis.
Manuel Fernández-Esquinas  Spain

Manuel Fernández-Esquinas is a Research Scientist at the Institute for Advanced Social Studies (IESA), an official centre of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC). He holds a PhD in Sociology and Political Sciences from the Complutense University of Madrid. He has been research fellow under the Spanish National R&D Plan and visiting scholar at Southbank University (UK), the University of Wollongong, Western Sydney University (Australia), Indiana University and the University of New Mexico (USA), among others.

He was the first director of the Applied Studies Unit at the IESA-CSIC, where he conducted numerous extensive studies on public opinion polls, public policy analysis, social problems and program evaluation. He has also worked as evaluator and consultant for the Spanish Ministry for Science and Innovation, several regional governments and international organizations such as OECD and APEC. He is currently one of the Spanish delegates to the OECD Committee for Science and Technology Policy.

In recent years he has worked on projects relating to research training, the social impact of public research organizations and decision-making processes in science policy. He has also worked on university-industry relationships, entrepreneurship, the effects of knowledge transfer on firm innovation and the emergence of new research organizations in innovation systems. He is particularly interested in the influence of social and cultural structures on innovation processes. Currently he is President of the Spanish Sociological Federation (FES - Federación Española de Sociología) and Director of the Spanish Journal of Sociology (RES).

Christian Fuchs  UK

Christian Fuchs is Professor at the University of Westminster and Director of the Centre for Social Media Research. He has been Chair of ESA’s Research Network 18, Sociology of Communications and Media Research, between 2011 and 2015. His research focuses on critical theory, critical political economy, social theory, media, culture and society, and the Internet and society. He is editor of the open access journal tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique and an editorial board member of the European Journal of Social Theory and Critical Sociology. He is author of books such as Internet and Society: Social Theory in the Information Age (2008), Social Media: A Critical Introduction (2014), and Reading Marx in the Information Age (2016).

His approach to the social sciences stresses the need for a critical theoretical and empirical sociology that critically understands contemporary societies’ power structures and for a critical public sociology that is a forum for the public engagement with and intellectual intervention into society’s contemporary political challenges.

Matthias Gross  Germany

Matthias Gross (Germany) is full professor in the Institute of Sociology at the University of Jena and, by joint appointment, the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research in Leipzig. His recent research focuses on the changing role of civil society, alternative energy systems, risk and ignorance, and experimental practices in science and society. He is a founding editor of the journal Nature + Culture. Publications include the books Ignorance and Surprise: Science, Society, and Ecological Design (MIT Press, 2010), Renewable Energies (with R. Mautz, Routledge, 2014), and the Routledge International Handbook of Ignorance Studies (edited with L. McGee, 2015). He is chair of ESA’s Research Network 12, Environment and Society.
Tomáš Kostelecký  
Czech Republic

Tomáš Kostelecký is the Director of the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences and a senior researcher in its Department of Local and Regional Studies. He is interested in the analysis of spatial aspects of human behaviour, local, regional, and comparative politics, socio-spatial inequalities and the social and political consequences of metropolisation and suburbanisation. He is the author of a number of books and regularly publishes work in domestic and international journals. Currently, he serves as the chair of the Local Organizing Committee of 12th Conference of the European Sociological Association in Prague.

Peter Ludes  
Germany

Peter Ludes has been Professor of Mass Communication at Jacobs University Bremen (Germany) since 2002. He studied Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology at Trier University, Germany (Dr. Phil. 1978) and, as Fulbright scholar, at Brandeis, USA (MA 1975, PhD 1983). He has held visiting positions in sociology at the University of Newfoundland (Canada) 1981/1982, University of Amsterdam (the Netherlands) in 1987, Harvard University (USA) in 1989. He was a member of the core group of the European Science Foundation programme on Changing Media – Changing Europe between 2001 and 2004; co-chair of ESA Research Network 18, Sociology of Communications and Media Research between 2008 and 2011. His research foci include digital media, the algorithmic turn and sociological theories.

Hans-Peter Müller  
Germany

Hans-Peter Müller is Professor of Sociology at Humboldt-University in Berlin (Germany). He studied economics and social sciences at the University of Augsburg, completed his PhD and Habilitation at the University of Heidelberg and has taught at Humboldt-University since 1992. Since then he has been editor-in-chief of the Berliner Journal für Soziologie. He has been J.F.K. Fellow at Harvard University (USA), Max-Weber Visiting Professor at NYU (USA) and has held visiting professorships at Budapest, Helsinki, Paris, Rome, Princeton and Berkeley. His research fields include social and political theory, social inequality, and political and cultural sociology. His recent publications (2014) include Max Weber-Handbuch: Leben-Werk-Wirkung with Steffen Sigmund (Stuttgart: Metzler) and Pierre Bourdieu: Eine systematische Einführung (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp). Müller loves discourse and debate as well as networking in the field of European sociology.
Cristian Norocel  Sweden

Dr. Ov Cristian Norocel is an affiliated Postdoctoral Researcher in the Centre for Research on Ethnic Relations and Nationalism (CEREN), Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki (Finland), and an adjunct Senior Lecturer at the Department of Political Science, Stockholm University (Sweden). His scholarly interests concern sociology writ large, from intersectional analyses of political radicalism and extremism, nationalism and ethnic minorities and citizenship issues, to feminist analyses of civic protests in the wake of economic crisis across Europe. Norocel is committed to intra- and trans-European synergies, as a scholar with a background in Eastern Europe, educated in Western Europe, and active in Northern Europe.

George Pleios  Greece

George Pleios (PhD in the Sociology of Culture and Mass Media) is Professor and Chair of the Department of Communication and Media Studies, University of Athens (Greece). He is Director of the Laboratory for Social Research in Mass Media at the same institution. He has been actively involved with the ESA as Vice-Chair of Research Network 18, Sociology of Communications and Media Research, and as a member of Research Network 29, Social Theory, he was the local organizer its 2012 mid-term conference in Athens. Pleios’ academic work includes six books, fifteen chapters in edited volumes, forty articles in international journals, and about 30 research projects as a Principal Investigator. His interests focus on the relation between mass media, ideology and society.

Ali Qadir  Finland

Dr. Ali Qadir is a researcher in the School of Social Sciences & Humanities at the University of Tampere, Finland, where he is Academic Coordinator for the Master’s Degree Programme in Global and Transnational Studies and a member of the Tampere Research Group for Cultural and Political Sociology (TCuPS). He has published in the areas of global sociology and the sociology of religion, and his latest co-edited volume was Domestication of Global Trends (Routledge, 2014). He is a founding Board Member of ESA Research Network 15, Global, Transnational & Cosmopolitan Sociology, and a member of Research Network 34, Sociology of Religion.

Csaba Szaló  Czech Republic

Csaba Szaló teaches sociology at Masaryk University, Brno (Czech Republic). He has enduring interest in social theory and cultural sociology. In recent years he has been working on transnational migration, urban memory and European identity politics. In the last decade he has been involved in the ESA’s Research Network 29, Social Theory, as board member, vice-coordinator and coordinator. He is currently a Chair at the Department of Sociology, Masaryk University
Gilles Verpraet  France

Gilles Verpraet is a CNRS Research Fellow and associate with the University Paris Ouest Nanterre (Sophiapol lab). He is a specialist on urban sociology and migration and the sociology of professions. He has developed international research on space and politics and on cosmopolitism and active citizenship.

He has been member of the board of ESA Research Network 29, Social Theory, between 2006 and 2010. In 2004 he organized the ESA meeting on “Social Theories in Europe, The relation between theories and experience” in Paris. He has also organized a conference “Social quality in Luda Governance” in Paris on September 22nd and 23rd, 2004; the session on “Welfare and multiscale politics” and a session titled “Cosmopolitism, Nationalism, Political Spaces” at the ISA World Congress on July 16th, 2014.


Candidate for the Chair of the National Associations

Sue Scott  UK

Professor Sue Scott is a sociologist who has researched and published widely in the areas of gender, sexuality, risk, the body and childhood. She is a past President of the British Sociological Association and a current Trustee. She is a Fellow of the UK Academy of Social Sciences. Sue has been a member of the ESA since 1992 and has attended all but 2 of its biannual conferences – representing the BSA at the Committee of National Associations during her period of office as BSA President. She has held academic posts at a number of UK Universities including Professorships at Stirling and Durham. From 2005 to 2009 she was Executive Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at Keele University and from 2009 to 2012 she was Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) at Glasgow Caledonian University. She currently holds an Honorary Professorship at the University of York, is an Honorary Professorial Fellow at the University of Edinburgh and is a Visiting Professor at the University of Helsinki. She is Co-Managing Editor of the online social science magazine Discover Society. Sue has a great deal of experience of chairing committees and groups and of representing organizations in a range of national and international contexts. If elected she would work with representatives of the National Associations to ensure that all views were openly heard, debated and represented to the Executive.
CANDIDATES FOR THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OF RESEARCH NETWORKS

Laura Horn  Denmark

I am Associate Professor in the Department of Society and Globalisation at Roskilde University (Denmark). My research is situated within Critical Political Economy, with a specific research focus on corporate power and regulation in Europe. I have also worked on social struggles and contestation in the context of the ongoing crisis in Europe. I have been on the board of Research Network 6, Critical Political Economy, since 2009 and since 2013 I have served as its Chair. I have been part of the network since it was established in 2005 at the ESA conference in Torun, Poland. As part of the Research Network board I have been following the developments of the governance of ESA closely, in particular with regard to the relationship between the Research Networks and the Executive Committee. Research Network 6 is one of the smaller networks, but we have been actively involved in the discussions of the statutes, and overall role of research networks and streams within the ESA.

I would very much like to contribute to the further success of the Research Networks within the ESA by being the Research Network Representative on the ESA Executive Committee. Ruth McDonald has already kindly provided me with an overview of her work so far – I think I would be a good candidate for this function.

Jo Moran-Ellis  UK

I am Professor of Sociology at the University of Sussex (UK). I have been actively involved with the ESA for 16 years, co-organising the first ESA Research Stream on childhood in 1999, later establishing it as an official Research Network (RN04) in 2006. I was Co-ordinator of this Research Network until 2011. The Research Network attracts a substantial number of papers at each conference and we are now at a steady state of around 100 submitted abstracts per conference from across Europe, plus we have a growing programme of activities between conferences. My interests now are in ensuring that newer fields in sociology are more visible in the main conference framework and fostering links between Research Networks.

Continued
Bernadette Brereton  Ireland

Technology (Ireland). With published research interests in the areas of gender, education and social policy, Dr. Brereton has established an international research profile through the representation of DkIT at national and international conferences and the ongoing publication of research papers and book chapters.

She has been a member of ESA and has been a board member of Research Network 10, Sociology of Education, since 2003. Her duties include the co-organisation of annual international conferences, most recently in Ghent (Belgium) in 2012, in Turin (Italy) in 2013, and in Lisbon (Portugal) in 2015. She is currently co-organising the upcoming international conference “Education and Social Inequalities: Key Issues, Challenges and Explanations” to be held in Prague (Czech Republic) in August 2015.

In February 2014, she was elected as Secretary of the All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE), which promotes the development and dissemination of good and innovative practice through the annual AISHE International Conference and in the online journal the All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Bernadette currently serves as a peer reviewer for this journal, which is published three times yearly. As a Board Member of AISHE, she is affiliated with the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED), which promotes educational and academic development in higher education worldwide.

In June 2013, she served as guest editor for the Italian Journal of Sociology of Education’s special issue on Pluralism and Diversity Management in Education (Vol. 5, No. 2).

Some of the ongoing research projects with which she is working include: “Gender in the Labour Market and the Welfare State” (co-authored paper presented at In and Of the State: Resisting Austerity conference in Queen Mary University London in September 2014); “Education and Citizenship in DkIT, Ireland” (a co-authored paper delivered at the Education and Citizenship: Theoretical Issues, Policies and Practices conference held in the University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal in September 2014); and “Social Networks and Education” (a collaborative journal paper in association with the School of Computer Science and Informatics, University College Dublin).

As a Personal Academic Tutor within the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) for colleagues undertaking the Masters programme in Learning and Teaching, she provides ongoing academic support and marks assignment submissions throughout the 2 year Master’s degree programme, including the final Master’s Research Projects.

WHERE TO CAST YOUR VOTE

The voting desk can be found near the registration desk at the first floor of the Faculty of Architecture building. Alternately you can vote online using your unique voting key, which will be sent to all ESA members via email.
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In order to provide our members with sufficient information when electing ESA’s President for the coming term (2015-2017), we have decided to include a short statement detailing each of our four candidate’s electoral programmes. Therefore, in the following each candidate briefly introduces some of their key concerns and priorities.

Alongside these brief statements, all candidates will present themselves and their plans for the ESA Presidency at our Prague conference. Those attending the conference have two opportunities to meet all four candidates: The first will take place during the opening ceremony and plenary session on Tuesday August 25th between 17:30 and 20:00 (for more information click here). The second will take place on Wednesday August 26th in the first of the ESA Lecture Sessions between 12:45 and 13:45 (for more information click here).

Airi-Alina Allaste

In respect to my programme for presidency, I would first like to recognise the huge contribution made by previous presidents in their initiatives and activities to support and strengthen the position of the European Sociological Association. My first aim is therefore to continue their work in improving the standard of management in the Association, promoting equal opportunities among researchers in regard to gender and generation, and in fostering co-operation with other European scientific organisations. But looking towards the future, I have identified a number of key areas in which I believe ESA can develop further; ideas that can be understood in terms of the triangular relationship between research, policy and practice, as widely accepted in youth studies, which is the main topic of my research.

Alongside recognising the importance of fostering gender equality and the inclusion of young researchers in the Association, I would also emphasise the need to make better use of the potential contributions to ESA by members across Europe. This includes recognising different theoretical and methodological traditions, especially in societies outside the familiar European centre: sharing paradigms that reflect local diversity as well as international applicability. I would therefore like to recommend recognising distinguished original theoretical thinking in the form of the opportunity to participate in a conference plenary.

Regarding co-operation, recognising the importance of our links with public and private sector organisations is essential, since co-operation impacts policy-making and societal governance. These organisations are vital to engaging Sociology with society and should be recognised by ESA as a means of making its members’ work relevant and useful. Therefore, as an organisation we should make a concerted effort to ensure that this process happens, particularly now, when society is in crisis and in need of fresh ideas. In practical terms, this means integrating sociologists into decision-making processes alongside policymakers, starting at the early stages of their careers. I would therefore recommend that ESA PhD summer schools integrate practitioners and policymakers to facilitate developing this capacity. Additionally, summer schools could include media courses for better preparing younger scholars for public discussions and communication via media platforms. To encourage general debate between researchers, policy makers, practitioners and key European journalists, the Association should also aim to organise roundtables and forums including all these parties in ESA conferences.

Drawing from previous points – recognising locally-grounded theorisation and emphasising practical contributions, I would also like to stress the need to publish in national languages alongside international publications. I am not encouraging self-referential Sociology detached from international discussion, but rather drawing attention to the tendency for locally-oriented publications to become undermined by a lack of recognition, especially in smaller countries. Sociology is not only international and European, but both through its object of research and its social function strongly anchored in a local context. Many smaller countries (for example Finland) have strong traditions of writing research-based sociological volumes in their own language to serve their own society. National publications are also essential for developing terminology closely linked to teaching social sciences. ESA could help motivate national associations to encourage books and special issues in regional journals in national languages.

Last but not least, the Association could continue debating alternatives to the dominance of scientometrics within our profession as a part of the wider issue of science policy. This does not mean promoting sidelining mainstream requirements for evaluating the quality of scientific work but rather acknowledging the scientific quality of European Sociology alongside its estimated quantitative impact within the scientific community. The importance of this issue is confirmed by the fact that ESA already participates in debates on science policy and aims to have an impact on EU research funding through membership of the Initiative of Science in Europe, an activity that should be continued and strengthened. There are also many good practices of national associations taking the initiative. In Estonia we have discussed the topic of science funding publicly, made concrete proposals to the Estonian Research Council and successfully impacted some evaluation criteria. As in Germany official ranking of universities is considered unsuitable for evaluating Sociology institutions and misleading for potential Sociology students seeking an appropriate institution, the national association has established an alternative information system, and the boycott of ranking is now followed by 70% of German sociological institutes. These are only a few examples among many other country-level activities. Similar initiatives could be explored at the European level with the aim to develop a supportive framework for country specific solutions. Finally,
Sociology makes bold attempts at understanding the workings of modern society and finding ways to make it better. However, many in the modern world look upon these efforts with indifference. The emphasis on economic effectiveness and financial management has pushed all other considerations to the background. We are witnessing the unleashing of forces that radically affect the stability of European social development. These forces manifest themselves in aspects such as rising social inequality; increased flows of migrants; and the limiting of social welfare. Ethnic rationalism is on the rise; and the middle class is losing its former status. Universities and academic research – the mainstays of modern rationalism and catalysts of development - face increasing austerity.

To meet these challenges sociology needs to develop conceptual frameworks that can help to analyse and predict the outcomes of new global policies and processes, together with their local impact and emerging social conflicts.

Sociology is moving away from grand visions of collective life and setting analysis in a historical or political perspective. It is providing deep insights into complex and intimate areas of human life, and conducting research into very specific issues, involving cultural, biological, ethical, medical, historical, legal and political implications.

We have a better understanding today of the meanings of various human actions from the individuals’ point of view - as we focus on behaviours, meanings and individualization of social life. But for human beings the outcomes of all these processes could be the source of emancipation and suffering, isolation and involvement, creativity and deprivation. Thus we rediscover the ideas, which were central to classical sociology. The problem seems to be more the capacity of sociologists to articulate studies in restricted horizons within the framework of a general vision of collective life.

One can also argue that a focus on individual action is necessitated by the pragmatic purpose to make sociology useful for economics and politics. Above all, human autonomy is promoted and imposed by the dominant neoliberal discourse. We can easily find individuals who have lost their bearings, whose subjectivity does not succeed in finding an outlet in action and to whom society, or rather globalization, sends a message which is intolerable: consume, gain access to the fruits of modernity and be yourself, be autonomous.

Not only do ‘actions’ play a major role in the sociological agenda, but ‘identities’ do also. Identity is one of the key terms, invented relatively recently by sociologists. It has become one of the main foci of sociological studies to stress individuality and explain actions in this light. This is great achievement; however there is the other side of the coin. Will it be possible to move from the politics of identity to wider solidarity?

Can sociology contribute to the healing of modern society and contribute to its cultural and spiritual health? It can, but only if it is steadfast in fulfilling its duty. Sociologists need to reclaim their positions as experts in societal well being, and not leave the field to journalists and self-interested political actors. Sociology can do more to solve basically a political impasse. It can do more to deconstruct ideological stereotypes of “clashing civilizations”, which all too easily legitimise most dangerous geopolitical considerations.

Eastern European societies, including Russia, went through radical structural transformations. Post socialist societies which have tried to abide by the universal prescriptions, reaped many negative consequences. Eventually however more reflexive and critical thinking about transformations has appeared. There are other lessons and ideas that may be taken from exploring this region.

We must strengthen professional associations in the times when the social sciences and humanities faculties face cuts and degradation of the quality of education. ESA can serve as platform for united actions by bringing together diverse voices and actions of sociologists from Europe and beyond.

I see my objective as President in promoting new agendas, furthering critical debates and understandings of how sociology can help to formulate and reformulate policy, to create productive humanist discourse. It is vitally important to get the results of these debates across to the larger public and make societies aware of new challenges and ways to confront them. Humanist perspective may attract more young people searching their ideals and professional satisfaction in the changing competitive world. It is necessary to popularize sociology as a social science that addresses human relations and collective life in a society.

More than 25 years after its debut, the ESA is a successful body of European sociology. In line with this success story, I seek to continue this road of accomplishment by focusing on two main issues, one internal and one external.

The internal focus pertains to the elaboration of the ESA-secretariat. It is a great thing to have an office in Paris at the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme – the centre of French sociology. But as the organization of ESA is growing, it needs in addition to an engaged and efficient secretary, an enlarged body of administration in order to cope with the new challenges and tasks. Particularly, on a daily basis to keep the communication and activities smoothly going among its members as well as with the rest of the world, ESA needs more man/woman-power. The new personnel will do so certainly under the guidance of the Presidency and the Executive Committee, but in order run such an organization smoothly, we need additional personage as the growing number of activities shows.

The external focus pertains to the professional and intellectual vision and mission of the ESA. Today, more than ever after the Second World War, Europe is in a deep crisis and with it, the European model of peace, prosperity, freedom and solidarity. This serious crisis is able to destroy the European model and the European way of life as well. The ESA should speak with one voice and make its voice heard to prevent this catastrophe from happening. A number of measures may help to increase the visibility of ESA and to take seriously the standpoint of European sociology in the European public.

1. In collaboration with the national associations of sociology we regularly comment upon pressing economic, political, social and cultural problems and outline prospects of what is to be done from a social scientific viewpoint. The Newsletter could be used for that
In this spirit, I would like to take action together with you, the executive board, the research networks and the members. ESA’s President may inspire initiatives but it is up to us to accomplish the goals set together. For this program, I am ready to engage my powers and international networks in collaboration with you, my dear European colleagues.

Frank Welz

There is an urgent need for more sociological imagination in Europe. Inequalities and differences are not simply atoms in some technical pattern, but parts of a social, relational world; as famously outlined by C.W. Mills, ‘public issues’ are behind ‘private troubles’ and vice versa. This is too rarely framed in public debates in Europe, particularly in debating the EU crisis itself.

So, what can we do for sociology and sociologists in Europe, and what can I do for the ESA?

If elected, drawing on my organizational experience as ESA Research Network coordinator (2007-11), Vice-President (11-15) and Executive Committee (ExeC) member (and organizer for ESA/ISA/DGS/ÖGS), I will serve the ESA along three lines: administrative, social and intellectual. I shall be well aware that the actual work will be the project of a team whose members are elected to represent European diversity within the unity of the ESA.

1. Increase organizational stability (freeing us up to become proactive for the voice of sociology)
   - Experience of the ESA’s ExeC identifies burdens on its practical efficiency: (1) its lack of organizational stability; (2) handling conference issues takes up too much energy; leaving little time for other efforts; (3) power has moved from the ESA and LOC (local organizers) to PCOs, paid professional organizers. (4) This reduces us to stakeholders unable to be adequately future-oriented, proactive voices for sociology.

2. Collaborate with Research Networks and National Associations, build a task force
   - Sociologists in Europe face hard times in working-conditions, career paths, research funding. In terms of both language and finance, participation in the ESA is extremely uneven.
   - What to do? (1) Listen attentively to RNs, National Associations (NA), PhD scholars; map the world of sociology in Europe, fight under-representation; contact proactively, create spaces (e.g. PhD forum; invite contributions from different regions to the ‘European Sociologist’). (2) Offer further services, supportive infrastructure, practical knowledge. (3) To do this, explore interests and needs (such as content-management-system webspace, group email module for RNs; exchange of strategies, statistics, best-practice examples, teaching materials, forum for research collaboration with NAs). (4) I propose a task force including experts from NAs and EU science policy leading actors - first, to analyze how other social sciences organize their “voice”; second, to develop a plan for improving our strategic support for sociology and sociologists in Europe.

3. For sociology as public good
   - Sociology was born from new thinking on the big questions; its promise to help to understand the world and improve life has been accompanied by a decrease in sociology’s intellectual identity and the loss of its “memory” of the ESA, to facilitate the work of the current and succeeding ExeCs. (3) I will thus also strengthen links to other organizations and previous ESA presidents. The simple but urgent aim is to improve the ESA’s administrative backbone, particularly since we have extremely fast-growing conferences (doubled in size since 2007), too big to fail.

   - Why this? If we increase organizational stability, the ExeC will have more time and energy for building further services for our individual and institutional members beyond the basics (conferences, two journals, PhD schools). We can learn from other Associations and collectively better organize the “voice” of sociology on the battlegrounds of science policy and public debate in Europe.

We cannot save the world (immediately) but thanks to its flat, open character in a hierarchical academic world, the ESA is optimally placed to keep alive the idea that science should be a public good. At this point, (1) make things visible, foster intellectual debate, invite ‘European Sociologist’ discussions (make our newsletter more professional); (2) listen, call for ideas, for bottom-up initiatives, new session formats. (3) Last, treat the ESA as common project and a public good.
The British Sociological Association was founded in 1951. From a small organisation with a tiny office courtesy of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and a part-time administrator, BSA has grown into a membership organisation with an excess of 2500 members, some 12 paid staff, offices in Durham and a meeting room in London. An elected Board of Trustees of 13 manages the affairs of the Association on behalf of members and there is an Advisory Forum which meets regularly through the year to represent the many constituencies and interests of the BSA. We receive no government funding and all our income comes from members, conferences and events and royalty income from our journals. The BSA is of course an organisation for and of its members but it is also a charity and a company governed by English charity and company law. Its prime charitable purpose is “the advancement of public education by the promotion and diffusion of the knowledge of sociology....”

The scale of BSA’s growth is testimony to the activities of generations of members who put so much effort into building up an organisation that would represent the discipline of Sociology and provide services to members.

The BSA has two wholly owned and highly rated journals – Sociology and Work, Employment and Society, and shared ownership of the relatively new Cultural Sociology and Sociological Research Online, which was a pioneer of wholly online publication. These journals are overseen by the trustees of the Association but of course have independent editorial boards for day to day supervision. Three times a year we have a glossy print newsletter ‘Network’ (40 years old this year!) for members in addition to a monthly e-newsletter.

The major activity of the Association is an Annual Conference each Spring. (This year’s was held in Glasgow with 750+ delegates and a theme of ‘Societies in Transition: Progression or Regression’, whilst next year’s will be held at Aston University in Birmingham with a theme of ‘Global Societies: Fragmenting and Connecting’. The Annual Conference is the highlight of the BSA year and in addition to the overarching theme there are many sessions organised into thematic sessions and sessions for professional development (for example ‘how to be published’) and awards and prizes. This year BSA gave its Distinguished Service Award to Professor John Eldridge for outstanding contributions in several areas of Sociology over many decades. At the other end of the career ladder there was the Philip Abrams Prize for the best first book in Sociology and the new BBC Thinking Allowed/BSA Ethnography prize. Both these latter two awards went to books on important areas of contemporary concern regarding human rights NGOs (Monica Krause’s The Good Project: Humanitarian Relief NGOs and the Fragmentation of Reason, University of Chicago Press) and the trade in migrants from Africa (Reuben Andersson’s Illegality, Inc. Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe, University of California Press) respectively.

The range of BSA’s activities are in its 50+ specialist study groups, the largest of which MEDSOC has itself more than 10 sub-groups and an annual large scale conference in September. Much of BSA’s activity is organised via its study groups and interest groups which embrace groups for postgraduates, early career sociologists, sociologists outside academia, a teachers group for school and college teachers, and the new activists group. The latter reflects a growing concern by members to engage more widely and actively with local communities and to ensure sociology remains and is made relevant to the pressing issues of inequality and social justice.

The BSA has a very active postgraduate forum which organises a full day conference immediately before the main BSA conference. In addition a number of regional events organised by postgraduates themselves are
supported financially and organisationally throughout the year. Similarly, an Early Career Forum organises events and this year published through Policy Press an acclaimed volume called *Sociologists Tales* giving accounts of varied careers in sociology from a range of contributors with lessons hopefully for a new generation.

Another key recent focus has been to ensure that sociology in the UK can continue to prosper in the future with new generations of students and therefore researchers and teachers. The BSA merged with the small previously separate Association of Teachers of Social Science who now form our Teachers Group. There have been a number of successful regional events for secondary school teachers of sociology. We have built up a database of where sociology is taught and helped to forestall any attempt to withdraw Sociology as a school subject. There is a new annual BSA Sociology Sixth Form Essay Prize assisting outreach to teachers and students. We have built up a database of where sociology is taught and helped to forestall any attempt to withdraw Sociology as a school subject. There is a new annual BSA Sociology Sixth Form Essay Prize assisting outreach to teachers and students. Currently we are supplementing promotional materials for school with the development of a new website that will provide a rich resource for those teaching and studying sociology at secondary school level. We are very aware that school students are our next generation of academic sociologists.

The BSA as a whole has been increasingly concerned to go out to a wider public. There have been a number of outward facing events aimed at a wider public beyond professional sociologists in recent years, most prominently, an annual Equality Lecture held at, and in conjunction with, the British Library in London. This year the fifth annual lecture was given by a non academic, Shami Chakrabati, the Director of the UK pressure group Liberty, on the theme of liberty itself and pressures the rule of law and human rights are under today. Previous speakers have been Richard Wilkinson, Danny Dorling, Danielle Allen and Tom Shakespeare. The Association has supported *Discover Society* the much praised initiative of members of BSA and the Social Policy Association along with Policy Press, whose aim is to promote the publication of social research, commentary and policy analysis to a wide audience.

The BSA's organisational structure reflects this desire to be more outward looking and in addition to a Board of Trustees led by a Chair, we also have a role of President, filled by someone not a trustee responsible for the day to day activities of BSA, but a leading figure in Sociology who can represent the discipline externally. Recent Presidents have been John Brewer and John Holmwood. The current President is Lynn Jamieson.

The BSA and British sociology as a whole face a number of challenges that are not unique to our discipline. An External Affairs Group (currently convened by Sue Scott) was formed a few years ago to enable the BSA to respond more effectively to policies for higher education that have adversely affected our members along with others. We have been very active in policy debates over the application of Open Access policies in the UK, both because it is of major concern to those of our members who research and publish but also because much of the BSA's income comes from royalty income from owned journals.

The BSA has actively engaged with government funding bodies to advance the concept of a broadly based critical Sociology in the face of increasing pressure on researchers to provide simple behavioural models for policy makers to advance economic interests. We have also joined with many other subject and professional associations recently to object to the attempts to restrict free speech in universities in the name of combating extremism.

Sociologists have been concerned over the increasing application of managerialism, monitoring, marketisation and measurement that have threatened to narrow the focus of university teaching and research. The BSA has supported the Campaign for the Public University which has campaigned on many of these issues and we have joined forces with a broader Campaign for the Social Sciences to advance the arguments for the importance of social science in a somewhat hostile climate. These are challenging times for public higher education in general and sociology in particular. An externally benchmarked review of its governance structures and processes is currently underway to ensure that the BSA remains in a position to represent the interests of all its members whatever their position, stage of career, and status and to continue to further our aim of effectively promoting sociology.

Howard Wollman  
Honorary Fellow, School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh  
Immediate Past Chair of BSA, 2013-2015.

Eileen Green  
Professor Emerita in Sociology  
School of Social Sciences and Law, Teesside University  
Chair of BSA

<<< Photo: Professor John Eldridge with his Distinguished Service Award  
BSA Conference 2015
Ulrich Beck, who has died in Germany aged 70, was the greatest sociologist of his generation. He was a prolific author, whose works reached not just the academic community but also a wide popular audience across the world. Beck was one of the very first authors to discuss globalisation – at a time, in the 1980s, at which the notion was very new and when in fact many disputed its essential validity. As Beck deployed the term, globalisation refers to the increasing interdependence of world society, a process that for him goes a long way beyond the marketplace. This is far from being simply a benign phenomenon, as he showed in his first major work, Riskgesellschaft (Risk Society), published in 1986. As industrial society spreads across the world, it creates a complex tangle of risks and opportunities, many of which have no parallel in previous periods of history. For example, today we intervene into nature to a degree massively greater than any previous civilisation. We gain many benefits – such as a large-scale jump in standards of living. Yet at the same time we create huge new risks for ourselves.

One example consists in environmental hazards. Risk Society was published a year or so before the disaster at Chernobyl – a type-case of the sort of scenario Beck sketched out in his book and a remarkable anticipation of the future on his part. The book broke new ground in many ways and has influenced legions of researchers since the time at which it first appeared. It formed the platform for much of Beck’s subsequent work.

Risk – and awareness of risk – Beck argued, do not just come to dominate the large institutions of our society. They penetrate our everyday lives, as a necessary part of the breaking-away of the modern world from traditional customs and traditions. Our lives become far more ‘reflexive’ – thought about, considered, pondered – than used to be true in the past. Take the example of marriage and what we have come to call ‘relationships’. Marriage in modern contexts is no longer simply a ritual passage from one social status to another. It is an agreement made primarily by those directly involved, not by the wider family, and often agonised about before the commitment entered into. Virtually everyone who gets married today, for example, recognises that divorce rates are high, and in some sense or another factors that awareness into the decision that is taken.

These ideas a key part of The Normal Chaos of Love, a work published by Beck, together with his wife, Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, in 1995. Love is ‘chaotic’ because the world of ‘relationships’ is one continually in flux. Love is rarely “for life” today any more than a job is. Fundamentalism, which turns back to tradition, is a reaction against this new world of everyday life. For this very reason, however, fundamentalism is not itself in fact ‘traditional’ – it is a creation of the very world it seeks to reject.

The ‘reflexive individualism’ that comes to dominate everyday life penetrates and reshapes the political world also, an issue discussed by Beck in a series of works including The Reinvention of Politics (1996), Power in the Global Age (2005) and World at Risk (2009). A half a century ago, political parties in most democratic countries boasted high levels of membership and the majority of voters would vote regularly for the same party. Today that stable landscape has almost completely disappeared. The normal chaos of love has its counterpart in the ‘normal chaos of politics’, where stable political affiliations have sharply declined, levels of voting have fallen and volatility of voter preferences is the order of the day. Populist groups and parties, most of which have only a short life span, become a core part of the political scene, as do many other forms of informal grouping. Beck spoke of the influence of ‘sub-politics’ – political engagement that bubbles up from below and can have a significant impact upon the exercise of political power.

Beck explored these issues most recently in German Europe (Das deutsche Europa, 2012), written in the context of the crisis of the euro and its political fallout. The theme of risk, of course, pepper the political landscape across Europe today – from the Front National in France to UKIP in Britain, on one side of the political spectrum, through to Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece on the other. Beck had a long-standing interest in the evolution of the European Union, of which he was a strong supporter. For Beck the European countries will be the playthings of globalisation if they are not able to come together and exert a collective influence in world affairs. Sociology, he believed, must progress beyond ‘methodological nationalism’. The national context is far too narrow a focus for grasping the forces moving our lives in today’s global age. Similarly, the EU must be a transnational project, not just an assemblage of nations each trying to go its own way.

Populist parties of various kinds, of course, pepper the political landscape across Europe today – from the Front National in France to UKIP in Britain, on one side of the political spectrum, through to Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece on the other. Beck had a long-standing interest in the evolution of the European Union, of which he was a strong supporter. For Beck the European countries will be the playthings of globalisation if they are not able to come together and exert a collective influence in world affairs. Sociology, he believed, must progress beyond ‘methodological nationalism’. The national context is far too narrow a focus for grasping the forces moving our lives in today’s global age. Similarly, the EU must be a transnational project, not just an assemblage of nations each trying to go its own way.

Beck explored these issues most recently in German Europe (Das deutsche Europa, 2012), written in the context of the crisis of the euro and its political fallout. The theme of risk, of course, reappears here with a vengeance. The novelist Thomas Mann famously argued in the 1950s that, against the background of two world wars, the objective of European integration should be to create a ‘European Germany’, not a ‘German Europe’. Yet as a result of the euro crisis and its aftermath it is precisely a German Europe, Beck points out, that is arising. Angela Merkel is the de facto ‘President of the EU’. Nothing much can be done without her say-so: Germany is setting the rules for everyone else. She exerts great power, but since Germany’s leadership position has little direct legitimacy, tries to cover this up. Merkel, Beck
argued, has become ‘Merkiavelli’, deploying artful strategies to shore up his influence – strategies that amount essentially to deceit.

She seeks to save the European Union, but all her policies must first pass through the prism of German politics and German economic thinking. The result is the situation we see today. The euro is not stabilised because ‘Merkiavelli’ won't support the mechanisms needed to do so, which essentially involve greater economic and fiscal integration within the eurozone. Germany’s austerity policy is imposed on the supposedly irresponsible southern countries without a semblance of democratic consultation.

As a result, the political centre in those countries is collapsing even more than in most other states. What is needed in this situation, Beck argues, is a new ‘social contract’ for Europe. It would involve essentially a collective revolt against austerity and German dominance. Economic policy would become more investment-driven; social protection would be partly Europeanised; and the richer countries at any one point in time would assume greater responsibility for those that are suffering. In the longer-term efforts must be made to build European identity from the bottom-up. At the moment, ‘the power of capital and governments is strong but their legitimacy is weak, the exact opposite of the protesters whose power is weak but whose legitimacy is strong’. The fallout of the Greek elections this past January, one could say, demonstrates the struggle between just these rival forces.

Ulrich Beck was a dedicated and conscientious scholar, with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the social sciences. For such a distinguished figure he was refreshingly down to earth and approachable, highly popular with his students everywhere. I used to tease him quite often, since he never mastered the British sense of humour, with its mixture of self-deprecation and smug superiority. More often than not though I was the one who ended up looking foolish. He had a good line in put-downs when he needed to.

He was very much a creature of the world portrayed so incisively in his writings. He was for a long period a professor at the University of Munich. Yet he was an inveterate traveller and lectured at a host of academic institutions in different countries. He held visiting posts at the London School of Economics and at the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme in Paris and wrote widely for the press in Germany, the UK, France and the US, while his books have been translated into over thirty languages. Amongst his many works, he is the co-author, with Ulrich Beck and Scott Lash, of Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order, published in 1994 by Polity Press.

Ulrich Beck was one of the most important German sociologists and public intellectuals who managed to accomplish international visibility and fame. He set out to study law in Freiburg but continued his studies in sociology, psychology, philosophy and political science in Munich. There, he submitted his doctoral dissertation in 1972 and his Habilitation in 1979. He held Professorships in Münster (1979-1981), Bamberg (1981-1992) and Munich (1992-2009). But he taught also at the London School of Economics, the Fondation de maison de science de l’homme in Paris and at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was what he taught: an optimistic cosmopolitan sociologist and intellectual who had a keen sense for the “Risk society” (1986) of the “second modernity”.

What is less known is that he started out as a sociologist of labour and occupation under the tutelage of his long time teacher and fatherly friend Karl Martin Bolte who himself was one of the most influential institution builders in German sociology after the Second World War. A testimony to this preoccupation in “labour studies” is the seminal book by him, Michael Brater and Hansjürgen Daheim titled Soziologie der Arbeit und der Berufe (1980). But in the 1980ies Beck broadened the canvas and became a public intellectual. Risk Society (1986) was the book about the catastrophe of Tschernobyl. He even stopped its publication in order to write a new foreword pointing to this new type of “normal accidents” (Charles Perrow 1984) as a case in point of his theory. His book was translated into 35 languages and made Beck’s global career. His study had two messages:

1. The transition of paradigms; from class society and its preoccupation with social inequality towards risk society and environmental dangers.

2. The process of individualization, a double-edged process due to the dismantling of the normative order of classical industrial society and the enhancement of mobility among ordinary people forced to forge their conduct of life resulting in “Bastel-Biografien” or “biographical bricolage”.

Beck’s study was the most influential diagnosis of the times and preoccupied many special sociologies in order to find out if his assessment of “individualization” was empirically valid. As double-edged as the book was its success: many sociologists in Germany didn’t buy the “either-or” rhetoric of its author – myself included.
Robert Nisbet once distinguished between two types of sociologies: the sociology of portraits that gives us the minutia of everyday life in social reality and the sociology of landscapes that draws vast pictures of society and its transformations. Beck belonged to the second category of scholars. His sociological creativity and phantasy enabled him to draw the conclusions of trends and tendencies he empirically observed and put them together in a bold diagnosis of the time.

He had the gift to spell out powerful visions of society and its future ranging well beyond the horizon of conventional sociology. But if we look back at the beginnings of our discipline to scholars like Tocqueville, Marx, Durkheim, Simmel and Weber, it was the raising of big questions like democracy, capitalism, solidarity, individuality and rationalization that drew the attention of the public. It is needless to add that only the best sociologists of one’s age are able to outline powerful visions of great impact for the discipline and the public. Ulrich Beck was such a great figure. He died much too young. We will miss the broad canvases of his intellectual vistas and the professional inspiration he gave to several generations of sociologists at home and abroad.

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