Europe and Beyond:
Boundaries, Barriers and Belonging

Abstract Book

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# Table of Content

Organisers..........................................................6
Executive Committee..............................................6
Local Organising Committee......................................6
Research Networks Coordinators.................................6
Research Streams Coordinators..................................7
Europe and Beyond: Boundaries, Barriers and Belonging ......8
Types of Sessions ..................................................8
Plenary 1 ................................................................9
Plenary 2 ................................................................10
Plenary 3 ................................................................11
SP01 | Urban Futures ..................................................12
SP02 | Populism, Racism and Everyday Life in Europe ..........13
SP03 | Boundaries, Barriers and Belonging in Digital Labour Capitalism ............................................................15
SP04 | Sociology, Feminisms and the Future of Global Gender Research .................................................................16
SP05 | Contested Boundaries of Humanitarianism. Refugee Movements and the Global Crisis of Asylum Systems ......18
SP06 | Nationalism, Europe, and Brexit ................................20
SP07 | Ageing in Europe: Agency, Citizenship and the Dynamics of Power .................................................................23
SP08 | Symbolic Boundaries: Barriers or Belonging(s)? ........24
SP09 | Social Mobilisations and the Shape of the Future: To the Left, Right, or Nowhere .............................................25
SP10 | Understanding Risk and Uncertainty in the Anthropocene.................................................................26
SP11 | Sexual Citizenship in Europe and Beyond .................27
SP12 | New Understandings of Children and Young People’s Activism .................................................................28
SP13 | What Boundaries Are (Not) Needed For: Conceptualising Boundaries Beyond the Metaphor .........................29
SP14 | Negotiation, Boundary-Making and Social Relationships in Migration Processes: Cultural, Ethnic and Religious Challenges in Southern European Societies ........30
MD01 | Cosmopolitanism, Antisemitism, Universalism: A Tribute to the Critical Social Theory of Robert Fine ............31
MD02 | Funding Opportunities at the European Research Council (ERC) .................................................................32
MD03 | Assessing and Evaluating Research and Impact ..........33
MD04 | Meet the Editors: How to Write a Journal Article and Get It Published ..........................................................34
MD05 | Making Sociology Matter Beyond the Academic Journal .................................................................................35
MD06 | Paths of Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe: Boundaries, Barriers and Belonging .........................36
MD08 | An Alliance for Research, NOT a Research Alliance ....37
MD09 | How Big Data Changes Sociology ...........................38
MD11 | Author-Meets-Critics: Refugees, Civil Society and the State – by Ludger Pries ............................................40
MD12 | Disrupting Disciplinary Boundaries ............................41
RN01 | Ageing in Europe ..................................................42
RN02 | Sociology of the Arts ..............................................47
RN03 | Biographical Perspectives on European Societies ..........90
RN04 | Sociology of Children and Childhood ........................97
RN05 | Sociology of Consumption .....................................115
RN06 | Critical Political Economy .......................................155
RN07 | Sociology of Culture ..............................................174
RN08 | Disaster, Conflict and Social Crisis ............................192
RN09 | Economic Sociology .............................................206
RN10 | Sociology of Education ..........................................222
RN11 | Sociology of Emotions ............................................256
RN12 | Environment and Society .........................................274
RN13 | Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives ....................307
RN14 | Gender Relations in the Labour Market and the Welfare State .................................................................343
RN15 | Global, Transnational and Cosmopolitan Sociology 361
RN16 | Sociology of Health and Illness ................................371
RN17 | Work, Employment and Industrial Relations ................408
RN18 | Sociology of Communications and Media Research 440
RN19 | Sociology of Professions ........................................465
RN20 | Qualitative Methods ..............................................481
RN21 | Quantitative Methods ............................................498
RN22 | Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty ............................507
RN23 | Sexuality .............................................................519
RN24 | Science and Technology ..........................................541
RN25 | Social Movements ................................................564
RN26 | Sociology of Social Policy and Social Welfare ............581
RN27 | Regional Network on Southern European Societies 595
RN28 | Society and Sports ................................................606
RN29 | Social Theory .......................................................614
RN30 | Youth and Generation ............................................629
RN31 | Ethnic Relations, Racism and Antisemitism ...............659
RN32 | Political Sociology ................................................674
RN33 | Women’s and Gender Studies ....................................700
RN34 | Sociology of Religion ............................................729
RN35 | Sociology of Migration ............................................745
RN36 | Sociology of Transformations: East and West ............786
RN37 | Urban Sociology ....................................................795
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Europe and Beyond: Boundaries, Barriers and Belonging

In encouraging presenters and other conference participants to think Beyond Europe we wish to consider contemporary developments, processes, practices and subjectivities not only through the lens of Europe and European sociology, but also as central to the development of sociology, or sociologies, for the present and the future. We cannot and should not ignore the factors which are re-shaping Europe from within, such as the effects of globalisation, nationalism, populism and migration and, of course, ‘Brexit’. However, it is also crucial that we continue to look towards the possibilities of a global sociology which also takes account of the local without being parochial. Boundaries and boundary making spans the sociological spectrum, from how we create and reinforce the markers of distance and difference in social interaction, through the ways in which communities and groups are divided from each other by ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation and other dimensions of inequality. Boundaries are underlined through the extreme divisions of our living conditions: homelessness, ghettos and gated communities. Divisions are being reinforced between citizens and non-citizens as well as between Europe and the rest of the world. Social, symbolic and material boundaries affect us all.

We will also explore the Barriers which reinforce these boundaries: barriers to movement, whether for asylum, migration, work or education; barriers to reflection and understanding; barriers to better living conditions; barriers to cooperation and empathy; barriers created through politics and policy – intended and unintended.

Belonging is an increasingly contested idea, reinforced as nationality through populism and the far right, disrupted by war, violence, racism and other forms of rejection. It is also created and re-created in communities of necessity and choice and through intimacies, transformations of the self, and our understandings of home. New types of belonging are emerging through virtual networks and communities which challenge both traditional and sociological thinking.

The 14th ESA conference will offer opportunities to engage not only with the content of sociological research and theorising, but also with the ways in which our discipline has been and is being shaped, both in and beyond Europe. Where are the boundaries of the discipline? How can we address barriers to its development both inside and outside of academia? What does it mean to belong to the community of sociologists?

We are sure that the conference will give a wide range of sociologists, other academics, practitioners and fellow travellers, an excellent opportunity to present and engage with research and scholarship and also to explore the potential influence of sociology in the public sphere. The conference theme calls for thinking in new ways about persistent inequalities, for challenging dominant discourses and for taking a fresh look at abstract concepts in order to better understand how sociology can contribute, both in theory and practice, to the unmaking and rethinking of ‘boundaries’ and ‘barriers’ and to understanding ‘belonging’.

Types of Sessions

While Research Network and Research Stream sessions cover the immense variety of sociological inquiry, Plenary, Semi-Plenary and Midday sessions offer the opportunity to engage in core debates.

Plenaries (P) address the main conference theme. Semi-Plenaries (SPs) discuss the main conference theme from the viewpoint of different fields of research. They promote discussion between speakers, next to that with participants. SPs are based on proposals made by the ESA Research Networks. This time, four of them were open for abstract submission.

Midday (MD) sessions cover topics which are relevant for sociology as a discipline and/or for the day-to-day work of sociologists.

Research Network (RN) sessions feature research papers submitted in response to the Call for Papers. The majority of sessions is organised by ESA’s 37 Research Networks. RNs are open to all ESA members. Note that many RNs organise Joint Sessions (JS).

Research Stream (RS) sessions are made by sociologists from several European countries who come together to organise sessions on specific sociological topics. RSs are self-organised bodies with a loose structure which is determined by the researchers who join the stream. While some RSs are regularly organising sessions at ESA conferences, other RSs offer ad hoc sessions around spur-of-the-moment topics.

Session codes:

Regular sessions are sorted by the number of Research Network (RN01 to RN37), Joint Session (JS_RN01_RN13 to JS_RN35_RN37) and Research Stream (RS01 to RS20).

Numbers after the underline character indicate in which timeslot the session took place:

_01 Wednesday 21 Aug 2019 11:00-12:30
_02 Wednesday 21 Aug 2019 14:00-15:30
_03 Wednesday 21 Aug 2019 16:00-17:30
_04 Wednesday 21 Aug 2019 18:00-19:30
_05 Thursday 22 Aug 2019 11:00-12:30
_06 Thursday 22 Aug 2019 14:00-15:30
_07 Thursday 22 Aug 2019 16:00-17:30
_08 Thursday 22 Aug 2019 18:00-19:30
_09 Friday 23 Aug 2019 11:00-12:30
_10 Friday 23 Aug 2019 14:00-15:30
Towards a Sociology of Transfusion: European Politics of Blood Beyond Procurement
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Human blood for transfusion constitutes a vital resource in European medical practice, with many Europeans needing a transfusion over the course of their lives. Previous scholarship in Political Sociology, Science and Technology Studies, and the Sociology of Health and Illness has shown that institutional politics of blood inform multiple, sometimes competing, logics of action that structure the interrelation of donors, recipients, blood establishments and actors from proximate fields (e.g. state, EU, WHO, the media). These logics shape actors’ behavior with and toward blood. However, there is a dearth of scholarship beyond the interrelation of donors and procurement agencies. Largely ignoring blood distribution and transfusion processes in the health care setting, transfusion-recipients are characterized as a unitary, passive actor, which limits sociological understanding of diverse patient-pathways and transfusion needs. Part of a project developing a sociology of transfusion, this paper maps the institutional logics and logics of action structuring blood distribution and transfusion practices in Belgium. Through abductive analysis of transfusion guidelines and policy of the national ministry of health, the high council for health, the government institute for healthcare benefits, the federal agency for drugs and health products, and the European Blood Directives, we study how politics of blood relevant to the health care setting inform dominant logics of action. The latter technocratic, European standards on blood storage, transport, quality control, traceability and notification of serious adverse reactions are used as a starting point to scrutinize guidelines on how to engage with patients, how to negotiate transfusion and communicate risks, and expected recipient-behavior.

RN24_09 | Gender in/equality in science and technology

Exploring the Relationship Between Gendered Team Dynamics and academic performance.
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This paper opens up the black-box of the often discussed gender gap in research performance. Empirical studies are largely inconclusive, with some finding evidence of a gender gap (Abramo, Cicero, & D’Angelo, 2015) while others do not (Nielsen, 2017). Meta-analyses have shown that this may be because there is no simple or linear relationship between gender diversity and performance indicators (Haas, 2010; Webber, 2001). In addition, this relationship may vary within different subject areas, or in relation to the overall working environment (especially the team). This paper thus explores this further and examines the relationship between gendered team dynamics and performance using multilevel modelling. It builds on a cross-country survey of R&D teams in Europe (H2020 GEDII project 2015-2018). The dataset provides information on 1,357 individuals, working within 159 teams. In our models, we rely on socio-demographic data (e.g. care responsibilities, experience, etc), information about the team (e.g. team climate, gender stereotypes, power disparity, etc), and also include a Gender Diversity Index, a composite indicator that considers the representation and attrition of women and men within teams along seven grounds of diversity. Performance is measured through self-reported publication output but also through outreach activities and academic governance roles. Our contribution provides a compelling snapshot of the contemporary gendered aspects in R&D teams while contributing to critical discussions on gender diversity and research performance.