

EUROPEAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Research Network 07 Sociology of Culture

REPORT 2017-2019

The European Sociological Association's Research Network on the Sociology of Culture provides a global network for scholars working on sociological studies of culture and cultural reflections upon sociology. It aims to develop sociological understandings of phenomena such as meaning, symbolism, cultural structures and practices.

Research Network 07, Sociology of Culture, was founded on the initiative of Anna Lisa Tota from the University of Roma III and with the support of many colleagues from many different countries in 2005. At its first business meeting at the 7th ESA Conference in Torun, Rudi Laermans (Catholic University of Leuven) was elected as chair, Anna Lisa Tota as vice-chair and Tia de Nora (University of Exeter), Thomas S. Eberle (University of St Gallen), Mark Jacobs (George Mason University) and Hubert Knoblauch (Technical University Berlin) as board members. At our second business meeting in Glasgow, the board was enlarged by Pertti Alasuutari (University of Tampere), Dick Houtman (Erasmus University of Rotterdam) and David Inglis (University of Aberdeen), and Thomas S. Eberle was elected chair, while Anna Lisa Tota remained vice-chair. For the term 2009-2011, the board proposed Anna Lisa Tota as new chair and Hubert Knoblauch as vice-chair. At the business meeting during the 9th ESA Conference in Lisbon both were elected, and the board members were confirmed for another two years. For the term 2011-2012, the board proposed Hubert Knoblauch as chair and Mark Jacobs as vice-chair. At the business meeting during the 10th ESA Conference in Geneva both were elected, and the board members were confirmed for another two years, except Dick Houtman, who asked not to be on the board for another period. The board was enlarged by Motti Regev (The Open University of Israel) and Koen van Eijck (Erasmus University of Rotterdam).

During the 11th ESA conference in Turin in 2013, Marc Jacobs was elected chair and Pertti Alasuutari was elected co-chair. Carmen Leccardi from the University of Milan-Bicocca (Italy), Joost van Loon from the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (Germany) and Predrag Cveticanin from the University of Nis (Serbia)'s Centre for Empirical Cultural Studies of South-East Europe were elected to the board. The other board members were confirmed for another 2 years.

During the 12th ESA conference in Prague in 2015, Trever Hagen (University of Exeter) was elected to the board and immediately also elected as chair and Joost van Loon was elected vice chair. The board was extended with Anna-Mari Almila from the London College of Fashion in the U.K., Michaela Pfadenhauer of the University of Wien (Austria), Siobhan Kattago of the University of Tartu in Estonia and Dagmara Beitnere-Le Galla of the University of Riga in Latvia. Koen Van Eyck and Pertti Alasuutari were not present to be reelected and were no longer members of the board by default.

During the 13th ESA conference in Athens, Joost van Loon was elected as network coordinator and Anna-Mari Almila as vice-coordinator. Newly elected to the board were Rita Ribeiro from the University of Minho in Portugal and Simon Stewart from the University of Portsmouth UK. Motti Regev was not present to be reelected as a member of the board.

During the 14th ESA conference in Manchester, Ana-Mari Almila was elected as network coordinator and Simon Stewart as vice-coordinator. Jörn Ahrens from the University of Giessen in Germany, Lisa Gaupp from Leuphana University in Germany, Simon Ridley from France (no permanent affiliation), Otto Segersven from the University of Helsinki Finland and Dominik Zelinsky from the University of Edinburgh; Scotland, were all elected to the board. Siobhan Kattago had decided to step down from the board. Hubert Knoblauch was moved to the advisory board.

The Research Network has been quite successful in the past, and it continues to be so in the present. The network currently has 83 paying members (I do not have any new data on this) but draws from a wider constituency of interested colleagues (our mailing list has 122 entries).

During the period 2017-2019, our activities encompassed

1. The organization of a midterm conference on 4-7 September 2018 at the University of Malta in Valetta, 201 participants from 29 different countries took part. There were 3 keynote speakers at plenaries, 54 panels and 1 PhD workshop.
2. The organization of the panel sessions for the bi-annual conference in Manchester, 2019 as well as two joint-plenaries of which one had been approved by the conference organizers.
3. Early preparations for a mid-term Conference in Helsinki, Finland

1. The Midterm Conference 2018

European Sociological Association

RN02 Sociology of Arts

RN07 Sociology of Culture



Joint Midterm Conference of the European Sociological Association's Research Network Sociology of Arts (RN02) and Sociology of Culture (RN07)

CREATIVE LOCATIONS: ARTS, CULTURE & THE CITY

4-7 September 2018, University of Malta, Valletta, Malta

The Research Network Sociology of the Arts aims to advance sociological and interdisciplinary research providing contexts for understanding the multifaceted and

interwoven factors that characterize the arts in society, in the past, present, and potential futures. RN02 promotes collaboration and scholarly exchange between European-based scholars of the arts and non-European scholars whose work encompasses the arts in Europe.

The Research Network Sociology of Culture brings together an exciting mixture of a wide range of different approaches to sociological analyses of cultural practices, from almost all traditions of European Sociology. Because culture relates to almost anything that is sociologically relevant, we stress that cultural sociology is not bound to culture in terms of a thematic focus, but instead we advocate that culture should be used as a toolbox for exploring the connections between everyday life and practices of communication, signification and valuation. The European Sociological Association's Research Network on the Sociology of Culture provides a global network for scholars working within Cultural Sociology. Through collaboration in the Network, RN7 aims to develop the sociological understanding of how human meanings, symbols, cultural structures and practices play a defining role in building social lives.

From 4 to 7 September 2018, the ESA research networks Sociology of Arts (RN02) and Sociology of Culture (RN07) held their second joint midterm conference at the University of Malta in Valletta. For RN02 it was their 10th midterm conference, for RN07 it was their 7th. The theme of the conference was "Creative Locations: Arts, Culture and the City". Apart from the three plenary sessions, 12 slots with in total 54 parallel sessions had been planned to enable a total of 201 presentations. The attendance rate was very high and the discussions were lively, diverse and engaging. Because of the very broad spectrum of thematic and theoretical interests presented at the conference, participants were encouraged to develop their own publication strategies in smaller groups or individually.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE: Anna-Mari Almila, Dagmara Beitnere-Le Galla, Predrag Cveticanin, Constance DeVereaux, David Inglis, Mark Jacobs, Sacha Kagan, Sari Karttunen, Siobhan Kattago, Carmen Leccardi, Joost van Loon (vice chair), Dafne Muntanyola Saura, Aleksandra Nenko, Michaela Pfadenhauer, Anna Lisa Tota, Valerie Visanich (chair).

VENUE: University of Malta, Valletta Campus, St Paul Street, Valletta, Malta

ORGANISERS: Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, University of Malta & European Sociological Association, RN2 & RN 7

LOCAL CONVENERS: Mark-Anthony Falzon & Valerie Visanich, Department of Sociology, University Malta

Call for Papers:

In recent years, the arts have gained increasing importance as part of strategies designed for culture-led urban regeneration. The general topic for the 10th Midterm Conference is

the connection between the arts, the city and the processes that link them, to examine the intricate interweave of aesthetic, social, cultural and economic dynamics in cities.

Primarily, the conference in Malta intends to offer a terrain for debates on the theoretical development of sociology of culture and of the arts, in particular the role of arts and aesthetics in city life. Specific attention is paid to theoretical paradigms on the arts and cultural regeneration and their implications for sociologists, anthropologists, cultural policy makers and planning practitioners. The conference aims to stimulate debates on the relationship and/or conflict between the 'creative class' who look at creativity as a tool for pursuing socio-economic goals, those who treat creativity either as an end in itself or as a partaking in wider cultural, social and ecological transformations, those who activate creativity in relation to solidarities and urban cultures, and the meanings of everyday creativity for local communities. Researchers on the European Capitals of Culture are invited to contribute to the discussion on the impact of strategic involvements and investments in artistic projects in cities, whether from approaches stipulating a need to invest in the 'creative economy' (or critiques of the neoliberalization process involved therein), from approaches aiming to reorient urban development according to goals of e.g. 'cultural planning' and/or 'cultural democracy', or from transdisciplinary approaches aiming for sustainable urban development.

Moreover, on a more micro level, this conference aims to present discussions on the reflexive, transversal and/or autonomous characters of culture as well as the role of artists and cultural audiences in urban change, their shared experiences of contested meanings of artworks and their engagement in cultural participation.

This conference brings together academics and researchers from areas of sociology of the arts, cultural anthropology, urban planning, cultural sociology, cultural studies, cultural policy and related fields.

The ESA Research Networks conferences are traditionally open to other issues beyond those related directly to the main conference theme. This plasticity is highly valued since the Research Networks aim to bring together researchers and support interchange and mutual learning. For this reason, the program will be thematically broad and open for presentations to all core areas of sociology of the arts and sociology of culture.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Charles Landry is an author, speaker and international adviser on the future of cities best known for popularising the Creative City concept. His book *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* became a movement to rethink the planning, development and management of cities.

Richard Sennett is the Centennial Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics and University Professor of the Humanities at New York University.

Nina Wakeford is a Reader in Sociology and ESRC Research Fellow, Goldsmiths, University of London. Her specialisation is within the field of Visual Sociology.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION AND REGISTRATION FEES:

The deadline for abstract submission was February 15th, 2018. The acceptance of abstracts had been notified by March 31st, 2018. Registration opened on: April 1st, 2018

Early Bird deadline: April 30th, 2018. Registration deadline: Monday 27th August.

Cancellation policy: 75% until 15 May, 50% until 31 August, no refunds were given after this date.

Full fee: €200 (early bird) for all participants (non-ESA members, from countries category band 1)¹; €225 (late fee)

Reduced fee: €150 (early bird) for all participants who are members of the European Sociological Association (ESA); €175 (late fee)

€150 for all participants from countries with a low gross national income (countries not in band 1).

€125 for all free-lance artists

€125 for all students

***Registration fees included:** Conference pack, 2 light lunches, 6 coffee breaks, WiFi access, Maltese buffet dinner during opening night.*

PHD WORKSHOP

On Monday the 3rd of September, a PhD Workshop was held entitled "How to get published?" Three speakers (Anna-Lisa Tota, Peter Mayo and Joost van Loon) who shared with PhD students at different stages of their PhD process their own professional experiences as authors and editors with various aspects of publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals as well as alternative publication strategies.

2. The Biannual Conference, Manchester 20-24 August 2019

For the biannual conference of the European Sociological Association we had 61 submissions of abstracts, of those 57 were selected. After confirmations of attendance 13 parallel sessions had been organized, involving 51 presentations. Additionally 2 joint sessions had been conducted: one with RN09 The Economics, Politics and Cultures of Dark Networks, the other with RN15 on Globalizing Cultures: Globalised Territorialism and Transnational Anticosmopolitanism.

CALLS FOR PAPERS:

RN07: CULTURAL-SOCIOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON BOUNDARIES, BARRIERS AND BELONGINGS

Whereas Boundaries and Barriers have been popular topics in the Sociology of Culture for decades, the concept of Belonging tends to be taken for granted as a corollary of identity and community. However, perhaps the time has come to ask ourselves why cultural

processes are more often than not associated with bonding and binding and how this actually relates to bordering and bounding? What kind of Cultural Sociology might be able to engage more critically with the identity thinking that often belies notions of collective belonging? What concepts could Cultural Sociology develop in order not to become an apology of preconceived notions of “culture” (e.g. ethnicity, nation, civilization)? Alternatively, one might want to deconstruct the extent to which Cultural Sociology embraces Cosmopolitanism as its implicit standpoint from which to analyse processes of globalization and counter-globalization and the privileges this takes for granted. The Research Network “Sociology of Culture” welcomes all critical contributions that call into question established conceptions of culture, as either theoretical reflections or empirically grounded interventions. We particularly welcome contributions that explicitly engage critically with established traditions within the Sociology of Culture. Of course, we will also have open sessions for papers addressing other themes relevant to the Sociology of Culture.

Globalising cultures: globalised territorialism and transnational anti-cosmopolitanism

Joint session of RN7 (Sociology of Culture) and RN15 (Global, Transnational and Cosmopolitan Sociology)

Coordinators: Anna-Mari Almila a.almila@fashion.arts.ac.uk and Peter Holley peter.holley@helsinki.fi

How can we create a truly global sociology of culture(s) or a profoundly global cultural sociology? This session welcomes contributions that consider various ontological, epistemological and institutional opportunities and challenges arising as a result of an increasingly globalised and hybrid social world (e.g. highly cosmopolitan consumption being evermore localised and territorialised, or nationalist movements such as national Defence Leagues or Soldiers of Odin being increasingly transnational and globalised). The session seeks to understand how global and transnational phenomena are cultural, how globalised cultures are hybrid and contested, and how sociologists should make sense of such contradictions.

The economics, politics and cultures of dark networks

Joint session of RN07 (Sociology of Culture) and RN09 (Economic Sociology)

Coordinators: Mark Jacobs mjacobs@gmu.edu and Sebastian Koos Sebastian.Koos@uni-konstanz.de

Sociologists have been studying the social and symbolic boundaries that constitute the many dimensions of difference, inequality and abuse shaping human life. Yet, existing research pays relatively little attention to the operation of less obvious dark networks, illegal forms of economic organization and exchange, arguably responsible for the most extreme forms of inequality and exploitation. Recent events, such as the Volkswagen “Dieselgate”, the Rana Plaza disaster or the human trafficking of refugees in the Mediterranean Sea, have again brought the perversion of social, cultural, political, and economic norms to the foreground. Yet, corruption, forced labor, trade in drugs, body parts, weapons and digitized personal identities as well as other forms of racketeering seem to be fairly widespread facets of economic life. Such practices are based on specific social networks, power structures, forms of organization and taken-for-granted beliefs and norms. In this session, we seek to explore such “dark networks”, illicit markets and corporate irresponsibilities addressing some of the following questions: How do illicit markets emerge and diffuse? How

are they governed? What is the economic “rationality” of illegality? How is trust established in illegal economic exchange? What is the special culture of dark networks? What are the human costs of their operations? In what ways are they dependent on the cooperation of ostensibly legitimate actors? How do illegal and irresponsible economic practices contribute to inequality?

Additional note: A prize has been awarded for the best paper by an early-career academic (those who are within 7 years after the award of the PhD) to Lisa Gaup, Leuphana University Germany, for her contribution entitled “Beyond Diversity: A Critical View From And On The Sociology Of Culture”.

3. Preparing the 8th Midterm Conference of RN07 2020

En-Compass-ing Culture(s): Beyond East/West and South/North 8th mid-term conference of the European Sociological Association's, Sociology of Culture research network (RN7), **10th to 12th June 2019**, University of Helsinki, Finland

The ESA Research Network Sociology of Culture (RN7) announces its 8th midterm conference, which will take place on 10th–12th June 2020 at the University of Helsinki, Finland.

Conference Theme

The critique of culturally and politically dividing the world into essentialising entities such as ‘East’, ‘West’, ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ is now well established. Yet all sorts of seemingly objectively geographical, but in reality socio-culturally constructed, divisions survive or thrive: the global South versus the global North; southern Europe versus northern Europe; Eastern Europe versus Western Europe; so-called Eastern countries versus Western countries; eastern versus western districts of cities, regions and countries; and so on.

Such categories carry various and fundamentally unequal connotations and associations. They are constituted by, and in turn serve to constitute, wider structural inequalities and social divisions around the world. In this conference we ask whether it is possible for sociologists of culture, cultural sociologists and practitioners of cognate disciplines to go beyond these categories, whether we should attempt to do so, and how we might do so if we try.

How do both “real” and “imaginary” geographies and socio-cultural-geographical constructions currently inform the practice of sociology, especially but not only those branches of sociology concerned with cultural matters? And how do these factors inform and shape, for good or for ill, how culture and cultures are conceived of and practically researched? What are the “geographical politics” of sociological analyses of culture, both around Europe and around the world? How might current power imbalances and inequalities in cultural sociological practice be identified and challenged, and how might they be overcome in both shorter and longer terms?

Is it possible to understand the history of such cultural constructions of geography in a manner that would help us to move incrementally forward, or do we need radical breaks and ruptures with these histories instead? Which theories, methodologies and methods might help or hinder us to think in fresh ways about, and beyond, geographical division, be those cultural, social, economic, political, or a mixture of some or all of these? Which sorts of empirical and conceptual foci should be involved in this regard? How might a stress on socio-culturally constructed, imagined and contested geographies be thought about in existing sociological ways, or how might these prompt and create innovative forms of analysis? Can we move away from using conceptual and methodological compasses which already point in certain prescribed directions, towards using tools which allow envisaging the world in less divisive and more encompassing ways? If so, how might these ways of thinking and researching enable us to contribute to meaningful social change?

The conference explores these and related questions at local, national, transnational, regional and global levels and welcomes contributions on following areas, as well as others not mentioned here:

Gentrification of cities and locations

Borders and boundaries – new and old

Cultural production

Cultural consumption

Communities

Movements and flows – voluntary and forced – humans, goods, ideas

Cultural and human geographies

Mapping locations and cultural phenomena

Appropriation and appreciation

Taste and tasting

Cosmopolitanisms

History, change and continuity

Representation of locations, people, cultures

Social and sociological theory

Cultural sociology (general)

The deadline for abstract submission is **1st December 2019**.

Notification of acceptance by **15th January 2020**.

Registration opening **15th March 2020**.

Registration deadline for presenting authors: **12th April 2020**.

Joost van Loon and Anna-Mari Almila, coordinators of RN07 2017-2019