

ESA News of the Day

The Future of Capitalism – a vast subject difficult to capture

How the speakers of the closing plenary, Sylvia Walby and John Solomos, understand the topic

According to Ms Walby, the crisis of capitalism has three faces: a financial, environmental and social one. Capitalism itself also can take different forms. It can be influenced by strong neoliberalism, social democracy, by authoritarian and protectionist regimes. One important component which affects the form of capitalism is the gender regime.

Mr Solomos, on the other hand, doesn't really think that the word "crisis" describes well what we are all observing right now. He rather talks of conflicts which society is facing. To understand the current situation, it is necessary to understand the impact of multicultural society on people's and nation's identity. It is important to capture the key areas which influence society.

Both speakers consider the rise of violence as a part of the problem. For Mr Solomos, the riots in London, as an example, symbolize the tensions society has to deal with. Ms Walby thinks of violence as one of the crises we are facing.

Mr Solomos doesn't think that capitalism will come to its end, but that society will change because

of the many tensions. Sociology has to concentrate on these conflicts. It is impossible to predict what will happen, but we can describe the important forces.

Ms Walby dares to make a few suggestions on civilization's future. She will discuss the different possibilities and try to find out whether our civilization is likely to survive these three crises of capitalism.



Photo: sc

Last changes

Saturday Septembre 10th 2011

Poster Session (12.30-13.30)

All posters will be displayed in the main Hall of Uni-Mail, instead of the rooms previously communicated.

Room Changes

- RN12:** Sessions 8a + 9a in Room PA07
Sessions 8b + 9b in Room PA09
- RN20:** Sessions 8a + 9a in Room PA03
Sessions 8b + 9b in Room PA04
- RS32:** Sessions 8a + 9b in Room M6020
Sessions 8b in Room M4189
- RN34:** Sessions 6b + 7b + 8b in Room M6093

Editorial: Debriefing the crisis of capitalism

Just as a high divorce ratio blesses advocates, sociologists take the turbulences created by the financial crisis for upwind. The decline of the real estate prices indeed stock society up with countless economic castles in the air, which now call for sociological fundamentals. References to Marx and Polanyi guarantee attention and quick response times: Now all clicks into place. Due to the crisis, we afford to call for more state or embeddedness without a guilty conscience again.

Our present (de-)briefing of the crisis of capitalism demonstrates our joy of the fact that society's pendulum of symbolic power swings from the economy to politics. This casts a damning light on one of our blind spots, which is our traditional alliance with politics: While half of us rather neutrally act as public actuaries delivering hard facts on the social footprint of the crisis, the other half focuses on specific parts of the population in specific geopolitical regions of the world and uses the impacts of the crisis to better advocate these groups. In the end, we do it all for a state, an opposition, a NGO or a civil society. In doing so, we rather contribute to the present shift from economization to politicization instead of reflecting it.

Reflecting the nature of the politico-economic pendulum, we might indeed ask why it should be, (first) of all, politics that has to deal with the depressed economy. Why do we not rely on the health system or religion to solve the crisis? Why do we take the relationship between politics and the economy for more important than the one between law and art? Particularly in view of the turbulences brought by the recent crisis of capitalism we should realize that there are more interesting social relations to study than the meanwhile slightly neurotic 20th century classic politics vs. the economy.

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The ESA: A Bridge Over Troubeled Waters

Interview with Analia Torres, outgoing President of the ESA

cb When asked why she wanted to be President of the ESA, Analia Torres had a ready response; to build bridges between researchers and give a channel for sociologists to have a greater impact in national and European-wide debates. "For me as a comparative researcher in Portugal and former President of the Portuguese Sociological Association, I had realised the importance of seeing national issues in the context of European and global debates. The Presidency was an opportunity to bring more awareness to this level, and to continue with an Executive that wanted the organisation to evolve into a representative, strong group with a strategy and a voice."

She described the trajectory of the ESA since 2005 as building a stronger network across Europe, taking a stand and making the voices of sociologists heard – influencing EU policy and being listened to by the EU Commission. For her, the increase in membership numbers and conference attendees is a sign of this stronger network, and she is particularly proud of this achievement of

the Association. Strengthening communication between the Research Networks and Executive was also high on her list of priorities as President. "The ESA can be the backbone to bring people closer. We want to come together, to discuss, now in the current economic and political climate more than ever. We as sociologists have a responsibility and capacity to act in the public arena, to see our research disseminate and make a difference, and a strong

ESA can perform some of this role."

For the future, she sees even more opportunities to link national associations, research networks and individual researchers. "I think the next President can go further, make a public stand on our behalf so that we as sociologists recognise that we have a voice and sociologists around Europe know that we have an organisation working to bring us together."



Anália Torres, photo: Augusto Brázio

To seeing in Turin 2013

We are delighted to welcome you to the vibrant and historical city of Torino for the 2013 ESA Conference. The city captures a wealth of European history from the 'Royal' legacy and the first capital of Italy in 1861 to establishment of FIAT as an international industrial giant. The embodiment of social inequalities are visible from the Baroque palaces and sumptuous royal re-

sidences, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, to the city being a heartland of radical working class movements. The cultural richness of Torino is found in its historic churches and museums capturing the heart and soul of the city and Italian culture. The National Cinema Museum in the Mole Antonelliana symbolises Torino. The Cesare Lombroso mu-

seum presents attempts to use scientific methods to identify criminality. You will be enchanted by our culinary tradition and delicacies such as Piedmonts wines, truffles, cheeses and breadsticks and our famous chocolate; not to forget the very *torinese* rite of the aperitif offered by the historic cafés, where intellectuals and thinkers have passed time for over the centuries.

Looking forward to seeing you in Turin in 2013,

The Local Organizing Committee

Plainpalais and Carouge

We finish today our tour in Geneva's Neighbourhoods

Plainpalais

ccb Last but not least, why don't we present you the nearest area? Indeed, the 10th ESA Conference, and more precisely, the Uni Mail building are situated in the so-called Plainpalais area. Plainpalais is between the city center and the southern periphery of Geneva.

During your stay, you walked from Uni Mail to Uni Bastions, you cross an open area *La Plaine de Plainpalais*. If you are observant, leaving Uni Mail, you go closed by a monument. On 9th November 1932, a working class demonstration took place there. The Swiss army fired, shooting 13 persons and injuring 65. The monument commemorates this event.

Different activities take place at *La Plaine de Plainpalais*. On one hand, you will have leisure activities, like young boys and girls in the skate park. On the other hand, you also have different markets. Indeed, on Tuesday and Friday, from 6:30am to 13pm and on Sunday from 8am to 18pm, farmers of the region sell their products, fruits and vegetables. On Wednesday and Saturday, from 6:30am to 17:30 or 18:30pm (it depends on the season), there is the famous flea market.



Plainpalais, photo: lc

Besides, Geneva hosts yearly the Knie Circus. This is the story of a Swiss family who became famous thanks to its taming talent. This year, the show is composed by a mixture of young talented acrobats, well-tamed animals (by the Knie family) and a touch of Swiss humour with two groups of comics, the Starbugs and the Belgian Barto. Let yourself go into this magical atmosphere!

Then, if you have time, you can walk all around *La Plaine de Plainpalais*. You will see a lot of restaurants, bars, shops, office buildings. On Saturday

night, if you would like to discover Eritrean food, we recommend you to have a dinner in a friendly restaurant: *Restaurant Club Erythréen*, at 7 Boulevard Carl-Vogt, first floor. In fact, you will feel like as if you were eating in somebody's flat. After your meal, you can go out to the *SIP*, at 8-10 Rue des Vieux-Grenadiers. There, in a relaxed atmosphere but also "stylish" you can enjoy and have fun. It's a long dancing place not too young.



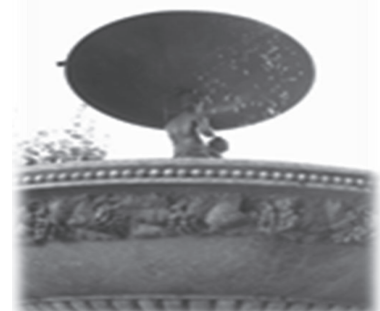
Plainpalais, photo: lc

Carouge

lc On the left bank of the river Arve, you can visit Carouge which was historically a separated town from Geneva. It was indeed a Sardinian territory in the XVIII century. Therefore, there, you will notice the nice typical Sardinian architecture.

This charming is worth a walk through its small streets full of nice little shops which remind us of Mediterranean cities. You have to see the market place with the old fountain. If you go further, have a look at *La Place du Temple* and have a drink and a delicious snack at the Wolfisberg's Tea room. Enjoy the evening with an unforgettable dinner, in the Cuccagna Pizzeria, situated at 33 Rue saint-Joseph. Finish your meal with a great Italian ice at the « Gelato mania » shop situated in the same street. You will find there a large selec-

tion of delicious ice creams. To remember Carouge forever, enjoy different sorts of music on *Place de la Sardaigne*, *Place du Temple* and *Place du Marché*. You can, for example, return to the *Place du Marché* where from 10pm until 1am you can hear beautiful French songs sung by the group « Padam ». Or at the *Place du Temple*, you can hear songs sung by young artists. At the *Place de la Sardaigne*, enjoy hearing songs polyphonics of Corou de Berra from 10pm to 1am.



Carouge, photo: lc

Is sociology useful?

Flash- interviews :

Wendy, United Kingdom

1. We can give new definitions, open up discussions. For example, the definition of a recession used at the moment is purely economic, but the impact on households and how individuals adapt is important to have a holistic understanding of what is happening. Sociology is a discipline that can weave in-between other domains and pull other disciplines together.

2. A really interesting discussion in RN14 on Well-being on Thursday, and it's great to have a mix of younger researchers with more established researchers. I think it's good for everyone and it doesn't always happen at conferences.

Uta, Germany

1. Sociology makes research possible about inequalities. Sociology is tightly connected with politics.

2. I just arrived, so I can only say the weather is great.

Raquel, Portugal

1. Sociology offers reflection about citizen's social problems, especially in education. It is essential to improve education

2. It is wonderful for me to meet colleagues from over the world.

Karin, Portugal

1. Sociology is central to create an obvious basis on which politicians can take founded decisions. Sociology is necessary to understand changes in societies. In general, it helps to understand social environment, people's being. It is necessary to promote more social being to find better deals.

2. I have great memory of seeing the mass of sociologist here yesterday. To me, this mass of sociologists is a symbol of sociology, that is to say a collective group in exchanging ideas.

We asked some participants from the Esa's 10th Conference to answer the following questions :

1. What do you think sociology can offer politics and in general ?
2. What is your best memory of Geneva or of the ESA Conference ?

cb and lc

Gérald, France

1. Sociology helps in all society's fields. It is useful in taking right decisions without hast.

2. I like the city very much. I had a look at the sea and I visited the old town. I like the international atmosphere.

Michael, United Kingdom

1. Sociology has a potential in common sense. Sociology makes people realize they live in an unequal society.

2. I liked the conferences very much. I read a lot and met people.

Tania, Portugal

1. Sociology contributes to understand the society, made of complex problems, especially today with the economic and social crisis. Sociology give tools to understand and report those problems to people who decide. In general, sociology studies society and is able to go behind the first impression.

2. Geneva is a quiet and cosy city. There are lots of portuguese people here !

Sally, United Kingdom

1. Sociology helps to have right decision. It has a great influence in education. The problem is that sociologists say things that politicians don't want to hear.

2. It the first time I came to Geneva, I was impressed of the city because I heard a lot about Geneva in my youth.

From Grison to Geneva

fm I grew up with the impression that public administration is at the service of the population. In the Grisons, every village has its own office and as the public officers know me, the service was always excellent. I even managed to get stuff said to be impossible, as for example a new passport in ten days.

In Geneva, from the very beginning I noticed that this could be rather different. When I wanted to register myself, I was in one queue with all the immigrants and refugees of the whole canton and I was asked to present countless papers.

After having paid my taxes in the Grisons as it was foreseen, I received an invitation from the canton of Geneva to pay my taxes. I phoned them and told them that I had already paid them. I received a warning. I sent them a confirmation of the tax office in the Grisons that I had already filled in my tax declaration. I received a letter saying that I had three weeks to do the thing; afterwards I would have to pay a fine. I phoned them many times. In the end I got to speak the chief officer who told me not to panic, that there won't be any fine, but that they were sending these letters automatically to all the people refusing to pay the taxes, even if they weren't meant to pay them. Otherwise administration would cost even more. He asked my understanding for this fact. I refused.

In the Grisons, if administration doesn't work well, it is because the officer in charge doesn't like you. Does this mean that the city of Geneva doesn't like its population? Is this why you learn about construction works the day you are hurrying somewhere and notice that the tram line you intended to take is cancelled because of the works? I decided not to try to answer these questions, but to learn how to avoid contact with offices and to buy a bike.

In a strange environment, all living beings have to learn how to adjust themselves to the new conditions in order to survive. I'm feeling home in Geneva, even if our relationship already underwent a few crises and stays ambivalent. But there again, as Geneva itself is multifaceted this is alright.

Impressum

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