Dear INTERCO-SSH friends and partners,

The European collaborative project INTERnational Cooperation in the Social Science and the Humanities (Interco-SSH) celebrated its second anniversary with a large conference in Budapest in April 2015, which gathered members of the project and researchers from other European countries, especially Eastern Europe, in order to enlarge the comparison, taking into account the effects of Communist regimes on the evolution of the SSH.

Some of our findings are highlighted in this newsletter. The prosopography of academic staff in Hungary since 1945 reveals the unequal power relations between disciplines. The position of political philosophy in Italy and Germany partly explains differences in the reception of Hanna Arendt’s work in the two countries. The circulation of theories can provoke academic conflicts such as the one that burst in Cambridge in the early 1980s. A compared history of two international associations, political science (IPSA) and sociology (ISA), displays different patterns of internationalization. The dissemination circuits of journals can be used as an indicator of scientific peripherality, as the Argentinian case illustrates. Finally, a comparative analysis of public interventions of SSH scholars from nine countries during the EU parliamentary election campaign 2014 shows the overrepresentation of males aged over 50 and the predominance of political scientists.

Gisèle Sapiro
Scientific Coordinator of the INTERCO-SSH project, CESSP-CNRS.

SSH Scholars in the Press: A comparative analysis of public interventions of SSH scholars during the EU parliamentary election campaign 2014

Christian Fleck, Matthias Duller and Rafael Schögl (GRAZ) reported at the Budapest conference on the results of a collaborative research project on newspaper articles written by social science and humanities scholars on the occasion of the EU parliamentary elections held from 22-25 May 2014. Over the period of one month collaborators in nine EU countries identified in 21 broadsheet newspapers 216 articles. Several variables describe the SSH scholars contributing to public political debate on a European scale.

The results show a bold overrepresentation of men (90 %). With 56 years on average, the authors are mostly academically settled. Measured by academic and public prominence, an East-West divide is visible with internationally prominent authors being represented chiefly in renowned West European newspapers. Most noticeable are the differences between scholarly disciplines of the authors. The most visible field was political science with more than a third of the articles. They do, however, publish predominantly in the country where they work or come from (less than 7 % of their articles are what we label “foreign commentaries”). Economists stand out as being particularly active in international dialogue (32 % foreign commentaries), while public sociologists are overwhelmingly male and with 63 years on average second oldest only to philosophers.

Matthias DULLER (Universität Graz)
The fate of individual social science disciplines in various countries was discussed through numerous case studies: demography and sociology in Romania, the SSH and pedagogy in Sweden, party history, educational science and geography in Hungary, anthropology in Lithuania, economics in Switzerland, economic cybernetics, ethnography, philosophy and semiotics in the Soviet Union. The conference concluded that study of social science disciplines benefits from a historical and comparative perspective and that the papers presented deserve to be published by the end of the year.

Viktor KARADY (Central European University)

The reception of Hannah Arendt in Germany and Italy

A research project comparing the reception of Arendt in Germany and Italy is conducted by Barbara Grüning (Bologna). The history of her reception seems to be similar in the two countries: until the 1960s, Arendt was chiefly received for her concept of totalitarianism by conservative intellectuals; from 1968 to the mid-1970s, her fame was obscured by Marxist thinkers. With the crisis of Marxist theories her thought progressively became central among political philosophers and undogmatic leftists because of her idea of ‘the political’.

However, there are some crucial differences in her reception due to the different structures and history of the SSH in the two countries. In Germany, since 1945, political philosophers were included among political scientists, whereas in Italy they occupied a marginal position in the academic field until the mid-1970s. Later, political philosophy developed as an autonomous discipline through the initiative of some professors who constituted an intergenerational network and defined a new canon of ‘political thinkers’, among which Hannah Arendt. In Germany, by contrast, the first scholars who introduced Arendt stressed her anti-conventional political thought to challenge academic boundaries and to symbolically legitimate their position at the interface between the university and the public political space. Finally, in the 1990s, Arendt’s canonization was fostered by a new generation of academicians who mostly refused the interpretation of Arendt developed by the first generation of ‘Arendtianer’.

Barbara GRÜNING (University of Bologna)
In Hungary, the belated development of the social sciences and the humanities changed direction after the Communist take-over (1948). Most then emergent disciplines were banned until the 1960s. Scholarly career patterns reshaped via a set of research institutes outside universities and the exclusive competence granted to the Academy of Sciences to qualify scholars with special degrees. All this was accompanied by political purges. The central management of careers gave birth to an intellectual ‘state nobility’ of sorts with persistent impact until today.

The exhaustive prosopographical study of academic staff conducted by Victor Karady and Peter Nagy (WESLE), includes their bibliographies (1950-2010) and empirically accounts for this development. The table below summarizes the relative weight of productive clusters of SSH staff in the early 21st century in terms of the relative number of practitioners and their distribution by discipline (Column 1) by hierarchical standing (Column 2, 3 and 4) and by scholarly productivity (Column 5). This is an empirical demonstration of intellectual power relations between disciplines, marked, for example, by the variously dominant positions of history, economics and literary studies.

Victor KARADY (Central European University)

Argentina is a complex and interesting case for exploring new forms of scientific peripherality. After a period of military dictatorships and economic crisis (1976-2003), emerges a dynamic, predominantly public and professionalized scientific field. While research capacities and material resources increased geometrically in the last decade, the structural heterogeneity of the field has been reinforced due to segmented circuits and an unequal distribution of scientific power between disciplines and institutions. Scientific policies concentrate full-time researchers and material resources within CONICET, widening the distance with public Universities located in the hinterlands, thus reinforcing the division between research and teaching. Two different cultures of evaluation consolidate: one clearly internationalized at the CONICET and another more nationally-oriented at public universities.

Fernanda Beigel and Maximiliano Salatino (CONICET-UNCuyo) built a database of all of the active Argentinian SSH journals (468). Many of these are indexed and disseminated internationally or regionally, mostly at Latin American repositories such as LATINDEX-C, SciELO or REDALyC. But a sizable share is besieged by severe circulation limitations: 222/468 are not available in full text, or are not indexed in any database, or are still printed only on paper. As a result, these journals do not circulate beyond local spaces. The figure below shows Argentinian publishing circuits according to their interconnections and scope of circulation, pointing out a large local circuit featured by its isolation and restriction to small circles fueled by nationally-oriented scientists.

Fernanda BEIGEL (CONICET)
FORTHCOMING

9 - 11 September 2015
Cordoba, Argentina
Conference
«Social sciences and humanities in the changing North-South relations»

First circular already available on the project website. More information to come soon

More information: http://www.interco-ssh.eu/events

Recent Publications

**Conflict in the Academy**
Patrick Baert & Marcus Morgan
Palgrave, 2015

Conflict in the Academy is based upon an historical case study of a dispute that erupted in the early 1980s over whether a young academic in the English Faculty at Cambridge University would be upgraded to a permanent post. Marcus Morgan and Patrick Baert ask how and why what might conceivably have been quickly forgotten as merely a trivial and routine difference of opinion within the workplace quickly turned into a cause célèbre.

In the first part of the book the authors show how the dispute can in part be understood by examining the effects of fundamental shifts that were taking place within the university system in England at the time. They show how the enormous explosion in student numbers, and the concomitant change in the demographic makeup of both staff and students in universities during this period were instrumental in producing certain anxieties and resentments which eventually played themselves out in the affair. One key factor was the perceived threat of the infiltration of methods originating in the rapidly burgeoning social sciences into traditional humanistic modes of literary analysis. The authors identify another, more proximate contextual factor that structured the dispute in the relatively idiosyncratic and complex institutional structure of the university in which it unfolded. The second part of the book moves from a material to a symbolic analysis, working upon the assumption that conflicts are best understood as liminal events, in which collective norms have broken down, and struggles ensue over the reconstruction of shared symbolic classifications.


