



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Highlight:

European Research Council grants hold promises for sociologists

11 July 2014

How can wealth be distributed more evenly on the planet? And what role can sociology play in dealing with the various aspects of inequality related to for instance family, income, arts, culture, minorities or access to natural resources? Together with several European Research Council (ERC) grantees, renowned French sociologist, ERC Scientific Council member Prof. Michel Wieviorka is taking part in the 18th World Congress of the International Sociological Association (ISA), in Yokohama (Japan), to discuss these crucial issues.

On the occasion of the opening of the congress, Prof. Michel Wieviorka ([@MichelWieviorka](#)) commented: *“At a time when countries across the globe have difficulties in funding research in social sciences and humanities, I am proud that the European Research Council is one of those rare funding bodies which consider that disciplines such as sociology should get substantial support.”*

Since 2007, the ERC has supported around 650 projects in the field of Social Sciences and Humanities (SH) but less than 50 of them in sociology, out of a total of 4,500 ERC-funded projects across all scientific fields.

“Sociology has become a prerequisite for understanding current societal challenges but the low number of applications from sociologists in ERC competitions remains a cause for concern. The ERC is keen to make its prestigious funding visible to the best sociologists; this is another reason for us to be present at the ISA congress this year in Japan, a hotbed for research”, Prof. Wieviorka added.

Based on the demand for funding in previous years, over €2.5 billion of the ERC budget could be awarded to excellent projects in SH field under *Horizon 2020*, the new EU research and innovation programme which runs from 2014 to 2020. Since its launch, the ERC has awarded 14 grants to researchers of Japanese nationality based in the EU or its associate countries for a total amount of around €20 million.

As a former ISA President, Prof. Wieviorka will speak at the presidential session on 16 July (more info [here](#)).

Spotlight on ERC research results presented at ISA

Several ERC grant winners working in interdisciplinary teams in areas such as sociology, gender, epidemiology, geography and social and urban studies, *etc.* will also attend the conference.

Prof. Jani Erola ([@JaniErola](#)), an ERC Consolidator grant winner based at the University of Turku (Finland), will speak about the impact of parental unemployment on the socio-economic status of children, in periods of both economic growth and recession. His first results on the intergenerational effects of unemployment show that although social



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

institutions can act as a compensating mechanism, their ability to address inequality is not universal. He showed that the extended family (grandparents, aunts and uncles) can be a source of compensation over the course of life (read the ERC [story](#) about his “INDIRECT” project) (more info [here](#)).

In the same vein, **Dr Daniela Grunow** (Goethe University, Germany) who holds an ERC Starting grant, will present her research on the financial independence of German women before and after giving birth. Her findings demonstrate a deep East-West divide in the speed with which mothers re-gain financial independence. Her ERC-funded “APPARENT” project also addresses the broader issue of parenthood, its norms and practices in a number of European countries (read the ERC [story](#)) (more info [here](#)).

Dr Anne McMunn, holder of an ERC Starting grant for her “SOCIALCHANGEHEALTH” project at University College London (UK), will debate the new family-work patterns that have dramatically impacted the UK society in the past 40 years. She also studies the incidence of these new patterns on health and in particular on some chronic diseases such as coronary heart diseases and type II diabetes (more info [here](#)).

Prof. Bert Klandermans studies the political behaviour and motivations of citizens who engage into social movements and will speak about street demonstrations at the congress. Using a unique dataset of 80 demonstrations, including the “*Occupy-London*” or the “*15th of May*” demonstrations in Spain, he and his team have shown that alternative movements have become the natural counterparts of traditional party politics (read the ERC [story](#) about his “POLPART” project) (more info [here](#)).

ERC Starting grantee **Dr Richard Ronald** will discuss about homeownership and how family housing property practices have evolved in different welfare regimes facing austerity measures in the Netherlands, UK, Germany, Sweden and Italy (more info [here](#)). In another session, he will analyse the housing market and the intergenerational inequalities in a number of European and East Asian cities (more info [here](#)).

ERC team members **Michaël Deinema** and **Sylvia Holla** work on the “BEAUTY” project at the University of Amsterdam (the Netherlands) and are investigating the perceptions of beauty, as conveyed by the media and the industry in our contemporary societies. Using case studies in six European countries, they expect to develop a comparative sociology of beauty (more info [here](#)).

Check the full [ERC programme](#) and visit the **ERC booth no. E6**.

Note that the ERC is also holding a special **information session** on its funding schemes in sociology on Saturday 19 July (click [here](#) for more details).

Note to the editors

Set up in 2007 by the EU, the **European Research Council** ([ERC](#)) is the first pan-European funding organisation for frontier research. It aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by encouraging competition for funding between the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age. The ERC also strives to attract top researchers from anywhere in the world to come to Europe.



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

From 2007 to 2013 under the seventh EU Research Framework Programme (FP7), the ERC's budget was €7.5 billion. Under the new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, *Horizon 2020*, the ERC has a substantially increased budget of over €13 billion.

The ERC consists of an independent Scientific Council and an Executive Agency. The Scientific Council, the ERC's governing body, is composed of 22 distinguished scientists and scholars, including the ERC President. They define the scientific funding strategy and methodologies, and act on behalf of the scientific community in Europe to promote creativity and innovative research. Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon has been the ERC President since 1 January 2014. The ERC Executive Agency implements the ERC component of *Horizon 2020* and is led by Director Pablo Amor.

Links

[ERC website](#)

[Webpage for non-EU researchers](#) (in Japanese)

[XVIIIth ISA World Congress website](#)

For media queries or interview requests with Prof. Wieviorka or ERC grantees, please contact:

Maud SCELO

Press and Communication advisor

Phone: +32 (0) 2 298 15 21

ERC-press@ec.europa.eu

Madeleine DRIELSMA

Press and Communication advisor

Phone: +32 (0) 2 298 76 31

ERC-press@ec.europa.eu

Also follow us on social media



https://twitter.com/ERC_Research



<https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanResearchCouncil>