

## European sociology: its size, shape, and 'excellence'

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# European sociology

## Its size, shape, and “excellence”

*Christian Fleck and Barbara Hönig*

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Once in a while authors refer to a species they call “European” and most of the time they add a noun, as identity, journal, model, tradition, theory, or now and then even sociology. Characteristics of European sociology are discussed in this chapter. We will argue using empirical data instead of continuing a flimsy debate of the kernel of the European in the sociological tradition. We start with some considerations about the boundaries of Europe and then give some figures about the number of sociologists in Europe. Our data will indicate that the size of sociology in Europe is larger than the one of its major competitor, sociology in the United States. As a matter of fact, sociology in Europe is much more diverse and fragmented and therefore lacks unity and identity. A portrait of sociological journals in Europe emphasizes the existence of nation-state bounded sociologies in Europe and the absence of any truly European arena of exchanging ideas and debates. Finally we offer a detailed analysis of a recently established truly European funding agency, the European Research Council (ERC). Looking at its first cohorts of grantees reveals that this scheme does not support disciplines as such but established something like a post-disciplinary world of scholarship. We will end with some considerations about the potential for integrating sociology in Europe in the foreseeable future. Most probably sociology will continue to be practiced separately at the nation-state level, indicated by the languages used, and play a minor and nearly independent role at the newly established post-disciplinary arena of highly recognized and well-funded projects within the ERC program.

### **1 Who belongs to and where ends Europe?**

To start with we need to establish the phenomenon, which means that we will have to draw some lines around the old continent. In books by sociologists, the European tradition is restricted to a small sample from the whole of today's Europe: Donald Levine, for example, besides referring to a Hellenic, distinguishes between a British, French, German, and Italian tradition, omitting all other national traditions. Raj Mohan and Arthur Wilke present several nation-state related chapters, ten on West European, four for Eastern Europe, and three on Southern Europe. On a smaller scale, Patel covers several European countries, whereas Boudon et al. mix author-based chapters with portraits of national traditions and add chapters on theory groups but do not give much credit to smaller European communities.<sup>1</sup> Whereas for sociological theorists and historians

of sociology Europe is more or less limited to the larger cultural areas that dominated both the political and the world of scholarship, present-day observers of Europe would draw the boundaries differently. Often Europe is nowadays identified with the European Union and its now 28 member states (Croatia came in last in 2013), but Europe could be seen as extending even beyond the area captured by 50 something states, ranging from A as Albania down to V as Vatican. Geographically, Europe is usually seen as stretching from the Atlantic in the west towards the Ural Mountains in the east, from the North Cap down to the Mediterranean Sea. Neither the list of 50 internationally recognized states, nor the smaller list of partially recognized states as Kosovo, Transnistria or the dependent territories still existing offer much help to define which territories belong to Europe if one intends to say something about the status of sociology in it.<sup>2</sup> Since we are interested in the status of sociology in Europe and related topics, it might be advisable to refer to institutionalized boundaries of European-ness, as, for example, the European Research Area (ERA). It was established by the member states of the European Union in 2000 to strengthen the scientific and technological bases by encouraging the free circulation of ideas, people, and money throughout what is now usually referred to by the acronym ERA.<sup>3</sup> However, the ERA club is anything but exclusive: apart from the EU's 28 member states there are 13 associate countries such as Norway, Switzerland, and Israel. That is, the ERA consists of in total of 41 countries held to be “eligible” for EU research programs. Eastern and Mediterranean Partnership Countries form together the so-called International Cooperation Partner Countries which outreach to practically all corners of the world. The only, but crucial, restriction is related to the eligibility for funding; money goes only to those countries which either contributed directly or indirectly to the EU's budget or have signed cooperation agreements.

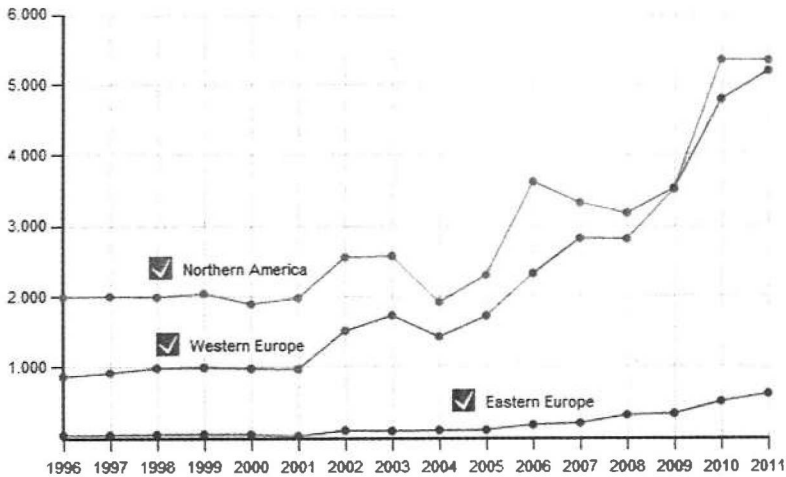
Sociology obviously is a minor player in ERA and similar endeavors, given the number of members in international organizations for sociologists. After the breakup of the Soviet Europe,<sup>4</sup> a group of sociologists from different regions formed the European Sociological Association (ESA) which in 2013 consisted of some 1,800 individual members and 28 national organizations affiliated to it (Russia is represented by two organizations). The much older International Sociological Association (ISA) encompasses 57 national associations, 30 of which belong to the larger European continent, including Israel, Turkey, and Russia (each of them represented in ISA with only one organization).<sup>5</sup> Therefore only every second European state has a national organization of sociologists interested in international collaboration. Any attempt to find valid data on the number of sociologists in Europe might fail, for several reasons. First, there is no consensus as to what defines a member of this discipline and occupation, respectively: university degrees are less than unified, graduate study programs vary widely, job conditions differ from country to country, and disciplinary identity is not based on comparable training or occupational entry barriers; lay people and amateurs are in some places still recognized and respected members of the sociological tribe. Official statistical data are therefore not at hand.<sup>6</sup> A pretty practicable way to estimate the size of sociology in Europe is to refer to data on membership in learned societies devoted to sociology. Not all of them resemble professional associations like the American Sociological Association (ASA) and the majority of the national sociological associations' websites do not offer any data on membership. The *World of Learning* handbook lists only 13 learned societies with “sociology” in their titles and only nine of them give numbers on their membership (the *World Guide to Scientific Associations and Learned Societies* provides additional but not very current data). Together with data on membership from websites of sociological associations and a recent survey by ESA, one can try to estimate the number of sociologists in Europe. For comparative reasons, the numbers are given to 100,000 inhabitants of the particular country. The range is too wide to conclude that these figures are a valid measurement (see Table 3.1).

*Table 3.1* Numbers of sociologists in national sociological associations and per 100,000 inhabitants in 32 European countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>Members in national associations</i>	<i>per 100,000</i>
Iceland	100	32.9
Portugal	2,760	25.9
Greece	2,200	20.5
Norway	850	18.3
Denmark	720	13.1
Finland	600	11.4
Macedonia	170	8.2
Switzerland	600	7.9
Hungary	760	7.7
Austria	500	6.1
Estonia	72	5.5
Czech Republic	548	5.4
Slovakia	270	4.9
Israel	350	4.9
Croatia	185	4.1
UK	2,500	4.1
Albania	148	4.1
Netherlands	550	3.3
Latvia	70	3.1
Sweden	257	2.8
Lithuania	98	2.7
Poland	1,040	2.7
Ireland	100	2.4
France	1,508	2.4
Ukraine	950	2.1
Germany	1,600	1.9
Bulgaria	127	1.7
Belgium	140	1.3
Russia	1,560	1.1
Turkey	627	0.9
Spain	200	0.5
Romania	106	0.5
Total	22,266	
Mean		6.7

*Sources: The Europe World of Learning 2012*, 62nd edn. London: Routledge, 2011; *World Guide to Scientific Associations and Learned Societies*, 9th edn. Munich: Saur, 2004; professional sociological associations' membership figures, as given on their particular websites (accessed May 2012), and survey conducted by Roberto Cipriani, chair of the ESA Council of the National Associations. Where the figures differed we used the more recent data.





**Figure 3.1** “Citable documents” from sociology and political science journals according to their regional location (Scopus)

Notes and source: most probably the database coded individual articles’ authors’ affiliation for this comparison.

[www.scimagojr.com/compare.php?un=countries&c1=Northern%20America&c2=Western%20Europe&c3=Eastern%20Europe&c4=&area=3300&category=3312&in=itp](http://www.scimagojr.com/compare.php?un=countries&c1=Northern%20America&c2=Western%20Europe&c3=Eastern%20Europe&c4=&area=3300&category=3312&in=itp)

Since there is only one larger country missing (Italy), and although the accession policies for membership vary per country, we can take the total of members in national associations of around 22,000 as a sound approximation of the number of sociologists in Europe. Even if the true number might be somewhat different, a comparison with the United States is telling: ASA reports to have 14,000 members but utilizes a much more restricted accession policy.<sup>7</sup> Assuming conservatively roughly the same numbers for “professional” sociologists in Europe and the United States we could, following a clue from Andrew Abbott,<sup>8</sup> expect a comparable number of sociological journals on both sides of the Atlantic. A search in Ulrichs confirms this assumption: the 538 journals classified there as belonging to sociology are distributed evenly between Europe (244) and North America (US and Canada: 221).<sup>9</sup> Using Scopus, one could compare within the (larger) field of “sociology and political science” journals “citable documents” according to their distribution over regions (North America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe). Figure 3.1 shows not only an increase, which is most probably the result of Scopus’ own expansion, but also the proportion between the three selected regions. At least these data might be valid and would indicate the trend of closing of the gap between Europe and America during the last half decade.

## 2 Sociological journals in Europe

Since there is no trustworthy procedure to establish the phenomenon “European sociology” by counting heads, we switch to another type of source to grasp our subject. Databases like CSA Sociological Abstracts (SA), Scopus, and the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) offer rich stocks to do this. Whereas ProQuest’s SA covers as many journals as possible<sup>10</sup> – and meanwhile also other kinds of documents – the two more selective databases from Elsevier and Thomson

Reuters also provide statistical data on their holdings.<sup>11</sup> All three databases offer search options to characterize the European sociological scenery in more detail; at the same time these sources give very different portraits of this branch of scholarship.

Thomson Reuters' SSCI and its accompanying Journal Citation Reports (JCR) makes it possible to sample journals both by discipline and by country of publication. There are 142 journals which are sorted as belonging to "sociology" and 17 European countries host 59 of them. Some journals are classified as belonging to "sociology" only beside other fields of research and if one excludes double, triple or even quadruple classified cases and restricts the selection to journals whose first and only "subject category" is "sociology," the number goes down to 36 journals allegedly of European provenance. A case-by-case check brought strange results: the ostensible "country of publication" was indeed the location of the publishing house.<sup>12</sup>

Whether a particular journal is covered at all should be the consequence of its high reputation, measured by citations. It is fair, however, to remind readers that nowadays the owner of Web of Science (WoS), Thomson Reuters, selects journals not only for their "reputation" but also for other reasons, as they frankly declare on their website:

All social science journals undergo the same thorough evaluation as journals in the natural sciences. Publishing standards, editorial content, international diversity, and citation data are all considered. Standard citation metrics, at both journal and author levels, are analyzed while keeping in mind that overall citation rates in the social sciences are generally lower than those in the natural sciences. Regional studies have special importance in the social sciences, as topics of local rather than global interest are often the subject of scholarly research.<sup>13</sup>

The manifest result of this mixed business strategy is that in 2010 the 142 journals belonging to "sociology" include surely the most prominent but arbitrariness rules below the top 20.

Scopus does not offer a search for sociological journals but classifies them together with political science. A total of 459 journals are to be found in this subset, 154 located in the United States, 262 in Europe and 43 elsewhere.<sup>14</sup> Scopus, WoS/JCR and Ulrichs classify the country of publication by using the location of the publishing house. Therefore far more journals are assigned to the Netherlands and the UK, and several European countries are missing all together; for example, Bulgaria, Greece, and Portugal. Others, like Italy, are definitely underrated (see Table 3.2).

We checked all journals covered by JCR/WoS individually and classified those where their editors are located in more than one country as international. This resulted in a minor revision of the number of journals assigned to the United States but major changes for those countries with big publishing houses at home, namely the Netherlands and the UK.

The list of European journals is much too long to suggest that we are familiar with each of them, not even a reasonable share of them has been at our desks. For the present purpose, we selected a sample of 86 journals for closer examination. Starting with those journals that are listed in Scopus (classified as belonging to sociology and political science), we checked the number of articles per journal indexed in SA and selected those with more than 100 entries as journals belonging to sociology. Next we checked every journal for whether their present lead editors were located in a European country, which brought 15 of the journals classified as international in Table 3.2 into the list. Another 25 journals were selected case-by-case because of their prominence and their coverage in SSCI.<sup>15</sup> The result is a sample of 86 European sociological journals; all are covered in Scopus and 56 are to be found somewhere in SSCI (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.2 Sociological journals in Europe, according to different databases and case-by-case classification

Country	Case-by-case	JCR/WoS	Scopus	Ulrichs
International	37			
United States	59	62	134	200
United Kingdom	17	36	198	144
Germany	5	5	25	22
Poland	3	2	1	2
Croatia	2	2	5	3
France	2	3	15	12
Spain	2	2	12	4
Czech Republic	1	1	1	3
Ireland	1	1	3	0
Lithuania	1	1	1	2
Netherlands	1	9	47	13
Romania	1	1	2	3
Russian Federation	1	1	5	4
Slovakia	1	1	1	2
Sweden	1	1	3	7
Switzerland	1	2	3	1
Austria	0	0	2	2
Belgium	0	1	2	6
Denmark	0	0	1	4
Hungary	0	0	3	1
Israel	0	0	0	1
Italy	0	0	10	1
Norway	0	1	3	1
Slovenia	0	0	2	1
Turkey	0	0	1	3
Europe, total	40	70	346	242
Total	136	132	479	439

Source: WoS, JCR, Scopus, Ulrichs, our calculations.

This sample can be classified according to five types: there are 23 national journals, playing a more or less prominent role in their country of origin, some of them recognized abroad too; examples are the *Kölner*, *BJS*, and *Acta Sociologica*. Second, we identified 11 interdisciplinary and 32 journals covering sociological specialties. Whereas *Economy and Society* and *Poetics* belong to the first category, journals such as *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *Global Networks*, and *Sociologia Ruralis* fall into the second group. In addition, we classify four journals as truly European, lacking any particular nation-state reference and not belonging to any of the sub-disciplines of sociology. Those are the *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* (founded in 1960 by Raymond Aron), *European Sociological Review* (1985), *European Societies* (1997), and *European Journal of Social Theory* (1998). Because of the merger of sociology and political science into

Table 3.3 Editor's location, grouped according to type of journal

Country	National	Interdisciplinary	European	Specialized	Pol Sc	Total
UK	5	4	2	16	10	37
Germany	4	2	1	0	2	9
France	3	1	0	3	1	8
Netherlands	0	2	1	3	0	6
Spain	1	1	0	1	1	4
Sweden	1	0	0	1	1	3
Croatia	1	0	0	2	0	3
Italy	1	0	0	0	1	2
Russia	1	0	0	1	0	2
Poland	2	0	0	0	0	2
Belgium	0	0	0	2	0	2
Switzerland	0	0	0	1	0	1
Slovenia	0	0	0	1	0	1
Czech Republic	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hungary	1	0	0	0	0	1
Denmark	0	0	0	1	0	1
Slovakia	1	0	0	0	0	1
Cyprus	0	1	0	0	0	1
Norway	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	23	11	4	32	16	86

Source: Own calculations based on WoS, SA, and Scopus.

one subject category by Scopus, we do have 16 journals in our sample which belong primarily to political science but have published a reasonable share of sociological articles (as mentioned above, >100 according to SA).

Table 3.3 shows the spread of editors' offices across Europe. The UK exceeds all other countries: 43 percent of the 86 journals are edited there (note that this classification is not based on the location of the publishing houses), followed by Germany, France, and the Netherlands. Some 87 percent of the journals are produced in the former western part of Europe, which is much closer to the above mentioned distribution of the production of (Scopus') "citable documents" than SSCI's numbers.

In using the data on language reported in Sociological Abstracts, one finds for the first decade of the twenty-first century the following distribution: 66 percent of all articles indexed there are written in English, followed by about 10 percent in German and French, respectively, 3.5 percent are in Spanish and the remaining 10 percent are from 14 other European languages.<sup>16</sup>

If we use the above-mentioned classification of journals by type and look at the degree of cosmopolitanism (measured by the percentage of foreign contributors, according to data from Scopus), in a subset of journals the differences are revealing. It is not surprising that journals classified as "national" show the lowest degree of cosmopolitanism but a closer look

demonstrates interesting differences: the Scandinavian *Acta Sociologica* is an outlier, presumably because its contributors are distributed all over the northern countries. As a consequence, the degree of internationalism should be even higher than indicated.<sup>17</sup> The British, Spanish, and German journals' internationality is remarkably lower than the Czech, French, and Polish ones. Language cannot explain these differences, because the Scandinavian and Polish journals publish in English only, and the Czech claims to be multilingual (see Table 3.4).

Related to the degree of cosmopolitanism is the level of self-citation. JCR provides data on the percentage of citations to a particular journal. It is not really surprising that journals classified as "specialized" or "national" demonstrate a higher degree of self-citations than interdisciplinary and European journals. Table 3.5 shows the means for the types of journals and gives examples for the two extremes: highest and lowest percentages. In the group of national journals, the highest level of self-citation appears in journals published in their national languages, whereas those publishing in English, such as *Acta Sociologica* and the *Polish Sociological Review*, are on the opposite side; the Spanish journal is an outlier with a very modest percentage of self-citations. Similarly, the specialized journals show a surprisingly wide range, with no particular patterns.

Table 3.4 International collaboration 2000–10, means

	Means
National journals	6.62
<i>Acta Sociologica</i>	14.19
<i>Sociologicky Casopis</i>	13.17
<i>Revue Française de Sociologie</i>	6.46
<i>Polish Sociological Review</i>	6.09
<i>British Journal of Sociology</i>	2.6
<i>Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas</i>	2.01
<i>Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie</i>	1.79
Interdisciplinary journals	11.07
<i>Poetics</i>	17.67
<i>Economy and Society</i>	4.46
Specialized journals	16.77
<i>Journal of Consumer Culture</i>	47.19
<i>Public Administration</i>	12.11
<i>Sociologia Ruralis</i>	11.35
<i>Global Networks</i>	7.68
<i>Young</i>	5.51
European journals	12.69
<i>European Journal of Social Theory</i>	18.14
<i>European Sociological Review</i>	13.29
<i>European Societies</i>	11.18
<i>Archives Européennes de Sociologie</i>	8.15

Note: "Publication Ratio whose affiliation includes more than one country address", our calculation for the period 2000–10. Source: Scopus SCImago, [www.scimagojr.com/](http://www.scimagojr.com/) (accessed May 2012).

Table 3.5 Range of self-citations in selected journals

	Self-Citation %	Mean
National journals (n=16)		18.44
<i>Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia</i>	53	
<i>Sociologisk Forskning</i>	31	
<i>Revue Française de Sociologie</i>	21	
<i>Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie</i>	21	
<i>British Journal of Sociology</i>	12	
<i>Polish Sociological Review</i>	11	
<i>Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas</i>	4	
<i>Acta Sociologica</i>	2	
Interdisciplinary journals (n=7)		14
<i>Historical Social Research</i>	32	
<i>Poetics</i>	18	
<i>Economy and Society</i>	2	
<i>New Left Review</i>	0	
Specialized journals (n=22)		22.68
<i>Sociologija i Prostor</i>	81	
<i>Deviance et Société</i>	54	
<i>Journal of Consumer Culture</i>	25	
<i>Global Networks</i>	19	
<i>Public Administration</i>	12	
<i>Sociologia Ruralis</i>	10	
<i>Young</i>	5	
European journals (n=4)		5
<i>European Societies</i>	8	
<i>European Sociological Review</i>	7	
<i>European Journal of Social Theory</i>	3	
<i>Archives Européennes de Sociologie</i>	2	

Source: SSCI, JCR, our own calculations.

In the early years of the citation index business, some experts suggested excluding all self-citations from the calculation of the impact factor. Later on they established the arbitrary threshold of one-fifth, and found that about 18 percent of all journals demonstrate a self-citation rate above this threshold.<sup>18</sup> A closer look at the self-citation practices of a subsample of our European sociology journals demonstrates some revealing details. If we contrast the self-citation ratio with the distribution of referencing other sources most often in their articles to this particular journal (for short: incoming citations), we find highly “nationalistic” patterns of referring to other journals. The *Kölner Zeitschrift* has a self-citation rate of 21.3 percent. Eight of the nine most cited incoming citations (62 percent of all citations to this journal, >10 in each case) are published in Germany. Of the incoming citations to *Soziale Welt*, 22.8 percent come from itself and the three most cited incoming sources (>10 each) are from Germany; together they build 30 percent of

the total of all source citations. The *BJS* cites only 3.7 percent from itself, the five most cited incoming sources (>10 each) are from the UK but the first twenty amounts for only one-quarter of all citations to this journal and they are located in different countries. *Acta Sociologica* has a comparably low self-citation rate of 5.8 percent and the next eight incoming sources (>10 each) are distributed evenly between “European”, American, and British journals. A similar pattern can be found in the case of *European Societies*, with only 8.7 percent self-citations, together with nine more source journals (>10) from different countries they cover only one-third of all incomings. The *European Sociological Review* is similar: nearly 10 percent of the incoming citations are of the self-citation type, but 20 more journals amount to not more than additional 30 percent of the source citations (>12 each). The interdisciplinary *Economy and Society* has a low self-citation ratio of only 5 percent, and the first fifth of the incomings (>20 each) are distributed evenly across disciplines but not countries, they are all located in an English-speaking environment. The Russian journal is an outlier: three-quarters of the citations are self-citations and only three more journals refer to it (>7 each). Finally, two specialized journals: *Young* has a self-citation rate of 13 percent and only four more journals refer more than four times to it; all of them are located in UK. The *Journal of Consumer Culture* – recall: the journal with the highest manually computed impact factor – collects about a tenth of the incoming citations from itself; eight more journals cited articles from it (>6 each).

The resulting picture is fuzzy but contains some lessons: highly recognized national journals are embedded in their particular vernacular, national journals publishing in English are somewhat more cosmopolitan, but this higher degree of internationalism is closely related to the language used. European and interdisciplinary journals are less self-centered, but specialized journals are used primarily by those who are familiar with the language in use.

Sociology’s struggle to overcome the lack of integration in Europe will be made even more difficult because of the policy of the European Research Council (ERC) and its efforts to establish a scheme of funding which intentionally is trans-disciplinary by design. The ERC grants are not allocated according to established scholarly disciplines but follow a different rationale. Let us take a look at it in more detail before we try to offer an interpretation of its consequences for sociology.

### 3 The case of the European Research Council<sup>19</sup>

Apart from the Research Framework Programs of the European Union for applied research, the most important supranational institution at European level providing for research grants for basic research is the European Research Council (ERC). It was brought to life in 2007 as part of the Seventh Framework Program for Research and Technological Development of the European Union (2007 to 2013) with the explicit intention to promote research projects in frontier research at the highest level of scientific excellence. In institutional terms, the ERC is a science-led funding body that is assured in its full autonomy and integrity by the European Commission, consisting of an executive agency and a scientific council of 22 eminent European scientists.<sup>20</sup> The grant system consists mainly of two types of grants:

The ERC Starting Independent Researcher grants [...] boost the independent careers of excellent researchers by providing adequate support at the critical stage when they are starting or consolidating their own independent research team. The ERC Advanced Investigator Grants [...] encourage substantial advances at the frontier of knowledge by supporting excellent, leading advanced investigators to pursue ground breaking high-risk/high-gain research.<sup>21</sup>

The ERC funding structure enables individual researchers to apply for a grant, particularly young researchers up till 12 years after having received their PhD, and advanced senior researchers as well. Since the beginning of the ERC in 2007 more than 3,000 research grants have been given to individual researchers all over Europe. Comparing research projects in different scientific domains, there are slight differences in the success rates among the physical and engineering sciences (PE), the life sciences (LS), and the social sciences and humanities (SH): while among Starting grants from 2009 to 2011 this has been 11 percent for SH, 12 percent for LS, and 13 percent for PE, at the level of Advanced grants this has been 10 percent for SH, 15 percent for LS, and 14 percent for PE.<sup>22</sup>

The following considerations are led by two crucial questions characteristic for any sociology of science. First, which institutional conditions in the social organization of science in Europe support or hinder the probability for researchers to be successful in the competition for an ERC grant? In looking for adequate answers, we will investigate some dimensions of the institutional structure of science in a country comparison of ERC host institutions. Second, which cognitive structure of scientific knowledge is regarded as “excellent” in the competition for ERC grants? This requires investigating the content dimension of research, namely fields of science, disciplines, and subdisciplinary research areas as they are represented in the panel structure of the ERC. Generating knowledge on both institutional and cognitive dimensions is relevant for estimating the ERC’s supposed innovative impact on the scientific community of sociologists in Europe. In following these research trails, we are strongly influenced by the methodology of a Mertonian sociology of science. Robert K. Merton can be regarded as the forefather of theoretical and empirical research on science as a social institution. He has investigated resource capacities of science and has always been interested in scientific semantics and conceptual classification practices of scholars as well. Here we interpret his groundbreaking insights (see, for instance, Merton 1973, 1996) not just as a historical phase in developing social science studies, but rather we experience his research on science as an institution as still inspiring many current investigations of the social organization of science.

Taking into account that the ERC’s data protection policy restricts our access to empirical material on submitted proposals, here we have to mainly concentrate on the accepted ones. We analyze the outcome of research performance as given by the ERC grant distribution within the first five years of its existence (2007–11) and its variation across countries and fields of science as represented in the panel system of the ERC. Drawing on data on ERC grants,<sup>23</sup> we restricted our sample to the domain of the social sciences and humanities within those first five years of the ERC ( $n = 461$  grants). Treating the amount of research grants as the dependent variable, we have analyzed its variation across 22 countries of 179 host institutions and 23 disciplines in six panels.

Before reporting data on the ERC grant distribution across host institutions’ countries, we take a look on differentials in the research capacities among them. Table 3.6 gives some OECD data on basic features of research capacities across countries. Column two shows country-specific variations in the total numbers of researchers in the higher education sector. In large countries such as the UK, France, Germany, and Spain more than 60,000 researchers work in all fields of science across the higher education sector, while in medium-sized and small countries the total number of researchers is between 10 and 60 thousand (NL, IT, BE, SE, AT, PT, DK, CZ, PL) or less than 10 thousand (CH, NO, IE, HU, EE). GERD (column three) and HERD (column four) as indicators given in columns three and four measure a country’s investment in research and development and in higher education as a percentage of the gross domestic product. Scandinavian countries (such as FI, SE, DK) show high proportions in both and particularly in the Netherlands comparable high investments in higher education are taken. FR, DE, CH, and



AT invest relatively as much in R&D, however, they lack parallel expenditures in the higher education sector. In Poland and Hungary expenditures both in R&D and in the higher education sector are comparably low.

Columns five, six and seven of Table 3.6 give data on the research performance of a host institution's country, measured by ERC grants received in that period. The grant distribution shows a clear concentration of 75 percent of all grants in only five host institutions' countries,

Table 3.6 Distribution of researchers in higher education sector and of ERC grants in the SH domain 2007–11, per host institutions' country

Countries	R&D Indicators			ERC grants		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Countries	Total researchers in HE 2009	GERD 2010	HERD 2010	in n	valid %	cum %
UK	147,304	1.77	0.48	142	30.8	30.8
NL	19,661	1.83	0.75	57	12.4	43.2
FR	62,427	2.26	0.48	52	11.3	54.4
DE	84,770	2.81	0.51	42	9.1	63.6
IT	43,066	1.25	0.36	42	9.1	72.7
ES	63,174	1.37	0.39	28	6.1	78.7
BE	17,251	1.98	0.46	20	4.3	83.1
IL	m	4.39	0.58	13	2.8	85.9
SE	15,851	3.42	0.91	12	2.6	88.5
CH	8,818	2.99	0.72	10	2.2	90.7
AT	11,262	2.75	0.72	8	1.7	92.4
NO	9,162	1.69	0.55	7	1.5	93.9
IE	6,328	1.79	0.51	6	1.3	95.2
FI	m	3.86	0.79	4	0.9	96.1
HU	6,164	1.16	0.23	4	0.9	97.0
PT	27,492	1.59	0.59	3	0.7	97.6
BG	m	m	m	3	0.7	98.3
DK	12,409	0.89	0.89	3	0.7	98.9
CY	m	m	m	2	0.4	99.3
CZ	10,114	1.56	0.28	1	0.2	99.6
PL	38,080	0.73	0.27	1	0.2	99.8
EE	2,179	1.62	0.62	1	0.2	100.0
Total	–	–	–	461		100.0
US		2.9	0.39	–	–	–

Source: OECD 2010 and own calculations based on ERC Indicative Statistics 2007–11. OECD data for researchers in higher education in all fields of science in full-time equivalents (FTE). Available country data for total researchers from 2009, except CZ and EE (2010 respectively), UK (2006), FR and SE (2001 respectively), CH (1998). Data on GERD and HERD from 2010, except CH (2008) and US (2007). m: missing data.

while the remaining quarter has been acquired by institutions in 17 other countries. The UK has acquired the most grants in absolute numbers (142 grants or 30 percent of all grants), followed by the Netherlands (57 grants or 12 percent) and France (52 grants or 11 percent). More than a half of all grants have been awarded by institutions in these three countries. The third quarter of research grants went to Germany and Italy both with 42 grants, each equal to 9 percent of the sample, followed by Spain and Belgium with 28 and 20 grants respectively, each 5 percent of the sample. Israel, Sweden and Switzerland have acquired around 2 to 3 percent of all grants, with the remaining 12 countries awarded in sum 10 percent of all grants.

In interpreting the ERC grant as a new indicator for reward, reputation, and scientific excellence, empirical results show a clear concentration of ERC grants in certain countries: six countries amount for almost 80 percent of all ERC grants within the 2007–11 calls, while the remaining 20 percent are covered by 16 ERA countries. Some countries within the ERA have not been successful up until now in acquiring any ERC grant. In general, we would have expected a more balanced and diverse distribution of research grants all across Europe, since it is reasonable to assume that scientific talent is relatively equally distributed across nation-states and academic institutions. Even if we take into account that particularly eminent scientists might be attracted by highly reputed academic institutions and not by others, this would hardly explain the strong concentration of ERC grants in specific countries.

Moreover, we also take into account the difference in approval rates of submitted proposals per country. So, what about the relative approval rates for those six countries that have been the most successful ones in absolute numbers? Here we will draw on at least rudimentary data on the submittal and approval rate of proposals per panel that are publicly available. We do not have access to data from all five years of calls that we have quantitatively investigated, but refer to a subsample of SH proposals from 2008 to 2010 analyzed previously by Koenig (2010). As shown in Table 3.7, from 2008 to 2010 host institutions in France with more than 20 percent have achieved the highest approval rate of submitted proposals, followed by the UK (almost 19 percent), the Netherlands (16 percent), Germany and Spain (both about 14 percent) and Italy (9 percent).

Interestingly, there are relatively large differences in submission rates that cannot fully be explained by the size of the country or national research community. More important: how do we explain the different approval rates of submitted proposals per country? According to the ERC, the evaluation process of research proposals is solely guided by the criterion of scientific excellence of the respective research and researcher proposed; therefore, possible policy considerations regarding the higher diversity of EU countries among potential grantees are per definition irrelevant.

The historical emergence and prevailing importance of a European research funding program such as the ERC can meaningfully be explained only in relation to European universities, that (contrary to the US and other Anglo-Saxon countries across the globe) in their institutionalized structure traditionally have been very much state-centered, publicly funded, and more or

*Table 3.7 Approval rate for SH proposals 2008–10, per host institution's country*

<i>Country</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>DE</i>	<i>NL</i>	<i>ES</i>	<i>FR</i>
Submitted proposals in n	235	172	105	100	94	75
Approved proposals in n	44	12	15	16	13	16
Approval rate in %	18,72	6,97	14,28	16,0	13,83	21,33

*Source:* Koenig 2010 and own calculations.

less centralized respectively autonomous. From the 1980s and 1990s onwards, those traditional European universities had to face fundamental changes in their traditional role in scientific knowledge production. Therefore, cross-national variation in current universities' different success rates of awarding ERC grants must be explained by taking the social organization of the respective university system into account. For the same reason we interpret the different success of countries in accumulating ERC grants only partially dependent on the advantage of English as the vernacular language. While it is not possible to reflect all complexities of European higher education's country-specific contexts here,<sup>24</sup> we focus on two indicators for cross-national variation in the social organization of science: the historically grown structure of university governance and the institutionalization of research institutes outside university.

First, when we compare the governance system that has historically emerged among European universities, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, we find that higher education institutions in the UK and the Netherlands have not only successfully retained a comparably high degree of academic autonomy, but, more importantly, they have been strongly oriented towards a New Public Management system much earlier than other countries. Part of this management-oriented governance of universities is a historically grown evaluation culture of research assessments that have been regularly applied since the 1980s in these two countries. In contrast to this, French and German universities traditionally are much more state-centered than the market-oriented British university system, albeit with varying degrees in academic autonomy, and neither has institutionalized a comparably management-oriented governance system during the same period (Braun and Merrien 1999; Boden et al. 2004; Kreckel 2008; Münch 2011).

Second, in terms of an institutionalized research infrastructure mostly developing independently from universities, the case of France remains particularly interesting. With the French National Centre for Scientific Research CNRS,<sup>25</sup> France already in 1939 has institutionalized a large government-funded umbrella organization for research institutes outside university. It consists of ten research institutes, 19 regional offices responsible for decentralized laboratories, 1,100 research units, and employs in total 35,000 researchers, engineers, and support staff. Its academic personnel do not have to fulfill any teaching obligations, but are exclusively engaged in research, apart from promoting junior scientists in several graduate schools. Although other countries such as Germany and the Netherlands are also equipped with research institutes complementing universities, no other European country has such a comparably high quantitative share of these (Kreckel 2008: 343). Together with the fact that France historically has developed state-based elite universities such as the highly reputed *Grand Écoles*, the strong focus on research infrastructures outside universities can provisionally explain France's notable success in the European competition for ERC grants.

Now we turn to some features of the research program of the ERC itself that refer to the cognitive structure of scientific knowledge production. The cognitive or content dimension is the most relevant one for science policies to influence the direction and topics, aims and outcomes of academic research. The ERC as an institution might intend to influence these content dimensions of research by indicating a particular differentiation of subject domains in its classification system that research topics have to fit in as prerequisite to be competitive for funds at all. Panels, disciplines, and scientific fields are relevant dimensions for explaining an accumulation of research grants within certain cognitive areas of research. Since the variation of approved grant proposals across panels highlights features of the ERC funding program, here we discuss its implications and potential effects on sociology across Europe.

Research projects submitted to the ERC must correspond to a definite structure of six panels that in their titles and descriptors circumscribe research areas, however, lacking clear disciplinary boundaries or memberships (ERC Peer Review Evaluation Panels 2012). Panel 1 is designed

for projects on “individuals, institutions, and markets” largely targeting economic topics. Panel 2 regards “institutions, values, beliefs and behavior” from a wide range of social studies including sociology, anthropology, law, communication studies, science studies, and political science. Panel 3 is called “environment, space and population”, and is structured around topics from environmental and urban studies, regional planning, demography, migration, and human geography. Panel 4 is dedicated to the study of “the human mind and its complexities,” associated with topics from psychology, philosophy, linguistics, and education. Panel 5 identifies research on “cultures and cultural production,” including art and art studies, cultural studies, and literary and language studies. Panel 6 is dedicated for “the study of the human past,” consisting of topics from history and archeology.

In general, research-funding programs are seldom designed with the aim to fund a sample of research projects across all fields of science, roughly representative of actual disciplinary capacities in human resources. Rather, the underlying structure of the panel system can be interpreted as reflecting the steering intentions and political aims of the very research program. Here we suggest that the ERC classification structure partly shapes the outcome distribution of grants and their accumulation across certain disciplines and fields of sciences. This assumption implies that proposals do have a different structural chance to be approved that depends on their disciplinary affiliation and relative status within the ERC panel structure, partly independent of their relative status among the full range of research capacities in Europe at large. Of course, we also have to take into account that both the size of the established scientific disciplines and their relative share of scientific knowledge production is subject to notable variation. However, here we do not investigate the variation in disciplinary capacities per se, but the features of the ERC research program itself. As we will subsequently see, it is the relative status of the ERC panels within the full range of the social sciences and humanities domain that in part accounts for disciplinary differences in the ERC grants outcome.

It is important to underline that neither the ERC panel structure nor the CORDIS database of ERC research projects provides for information regarding the exact disciplinary membership of research projects investigated. The rather broad, abstract formulation of the panel structure mentioned above does not in itself indicate which researchers from which academic disciplines might feel encouraged to write and submit a research proposal to these panels. This lacking attention to boundaries of academic disciplines can be an effect of a highly inter- and trans-disciplinary orientation of research funding in Europe. At least since the late 1990s,<sup>26</sup> an anticipated “integrated, problem-solving approach” of research is explicitly addressed in contrast to disciplinary-oriented research in terms of a definite stock of knowledge in established topics, theories, and methods. Concerning the ERC classification structure that was developed in 2007 and steadily adapted since then, the lack of any disciplinary assignments might also be caused by its clear interest in innovative, original “frontier research” supposed to overcome established disciplinary boundaries. From the ERC perspective, the intention to find ways of identifying any connections between the panel structure and established disciplinary structures might therefore appear to be attempting “reification.”

How can we reasonably argue to draw such “things of boundaries” (Abbott 1995), whereas, seen from the ERC’s perspective, research boundaries per definition might be somewhat more interesting than disciplines? Scholars in fact do research within and along disciplinary boundaries not only because of cognitive problems to be solved and new puzzles to be found within that very context, but also because of its institutional relevance in scientific qualifications and the labor market. What seems to be at issue in sociologists’ often critical views on European research funding is not the problem-orientation of research per se that EU rhetoric might sometimes

Table 3.8 Distribution of SH ERC grants 2007–11, per panel

Panels	Grants in n	in %
SH 4: The human mind and its complexities	103	22.3
SH 2: Institutions, values, beliefs, and behavior	97	21.0
SH 1: Individuals, institutions, and markets	88	19.1
SH 6: The study of the human past	75	16.3
SH 3: Environment and society	51	11.1
SH 5: Cultures and cultural production	47	10.2
Total	461	100.0

Source: ERC Indicative statistics and own calculations.

suggest. As interviews with sociologists from different European states suggest, they rather criticize the highly selective, narrow scope of cognitive questions and problems covered by EU funding that does not reflect the full range of disciplinarily shaped sociological theories, methods, and objects of research (Hönig 2012: 158ff.).

Coming back to the question of how the ERC draws particular boundaries in the domain of the social sciences and humanities, resulting in panels as classificatory entities: what about the absolute number of awarded research grants for each of these panels? Comparing our sample of research grants from 2007 to 2011,<sup>27</sup> we found a distribution of grants across panels as shown in Table 3.8.

Concerning the investigation of the relative approval rate of proposals between these panels, we are restricted to limited data from 2008 to 2010 as offered by Koenig (2010) and documented in Table 3.9.

Koenig explains the different approval rates of submitted proposals in panels with the fact that “the budget of one call for each domain is distributed to the panels along the number of applications that each panel initially received, this difference determines also the number of fundable projects per panel. Hence, this results again in a striking variation of how many projects are funded by each panel” (Koenig 2010). However, his statement implies that the relative approval rates are quite the same across all panels. As shown in Table 3.9, the average approval rate across all panels has been 12.54 percent. Although a proposal submitted to Panels 6, 3, or 1 had a slightly better chance to be positively evaluated than one submitted to Panels 5, 2, and 4, the variation of approval rates between panels indeed has not been that big.

Moreover, slightly different approval rates between disciplines can reflect some differentials in their cognitive consensus in peer review; however, we do not overestimate this point. Rather, we suggest that the design of the panel structure, as an essential feature of the funding

Table 3.9 Approval rate for SH proposals 2008–10, per panel

Panels	SH1	SH2	SH3	SH4	SH5	SH6
Submitted proposals in n	367	443	143	409	200	299
Accepted proposals in n	53	45	21	48	19	44
Approval rate in %	14.44	10.16	14.68	11.73	9.5	14.72

Source: Koenig 2010 and own calculations.

program, itself reveals objective differences, considered in terms of the *relative amount of space* each of the disciplines is given within the classification structure of panel descriptors. Variation in the scientific discipline's relative space and importance within the overall SH domain classification structure is shaped by the underlying panel structure. The panel structure accounts for a discipline's opportunity structure given by that institutionalized research program.<sup>28</sup> From our point of view, this assumption is not trivial. By empirically investigating it we can show how steering intentions incorporated in the classification system affect structural conditions and possible outcomes of disciplines competing with each other for funds.

First, the panels frame a different number of potential scientific disciplines and research fields. A detailed analysis of the ERC classification system shows that two panels, loosely associated with "economics" (SH1) and "historical sciences" (SH6), are clearly favored in quantitative and qualitative terms. The positive discrimination of what we here take as disciplines is also visible in the absence of competing neighbor disciplines within the same panel. For instance, Panel 4 in its descriptors circumscribes five disciplines and Panel 2 six neighboring disciplines (political science, sociology, anthropology, law, communication studies, science studies). Second, structural imbalance in the classificatory representation of disciplines is also manifest in the variance of density and self-referential differentiation of research fields within their disciplinary scope. For instance, theories, methods, and history of economics as relevant self-reflexive topics have been included into the panel descriptors in contrast to theories, methods, and histories of other disciplines that have not been taken into account. Interestingly, Advanced grants in quantitative terms within the period investigated here have also been most common in these two panels mentioned above. Since any reasons for that particular ERC classification structure are neither self-evident nor transparent, it remains unclear why different SH disciplines are aggregated within one panel and other panels are reserved for one single discipline. While it can be assumed that the apparent different evaluation of disciplines within the ERC panel system is caused by the program's general aims, it might also indicate a changed public recognition of particular disciplines more or less successfully asserting its knowledge claims.

In general, sociology and similarly well-established disciplines in the social sciences and humanities such as literature studies, anthropology, and philosophy are seemingly more and more forced to compete fiercely with new trans-disciplinary-oriented studies such as cultural, urban, regional, and environmental studies and quantitatively do accumulate a comparable amount of ERC research grants. Interestingly, according to the ERC classification system, the latter appear as innovative semi-disciplines relatively autonomous from and independent of their disciplinary origins actually rooted in sociology too. Traces of these disciplinary ancestors are still partially present in panel descriptors such as "environment and society" or "health and society." However, as a conceptual transformation of the classification system in 2012 shows, the previously added idea of "society" has diminished in favor of the concepts of "space" and "population." Apparently the European re-contextualization of these sociological research fields within the ERC classification system as a side-effect enhances their status as semi-disciplines or at least as trans-disciplinary research areas independent of sociology. At the same time this contributes to a weaker relative status of sociology as an autonomous discipline within the very context of research funding. At least it seems to be so when reflected from a standpoint of European sociology that does not necessarily find itself represented by interdisciplinary "social studies."

Of course, the dynamics and differentiation of the social sciences and humanities must also be understood in their relation to the natural (and life) sciences. The ERC classificatory system in the natural sciences is not only much more differentiated but is also twice the size of the social sciences and humanities. Considering the rather surprising amount of research grants

in the (social scientific) field of cognitive sciences such as psychology and “brain research,” it is difficult to estimate whether this reflects that social sciences claim cognitive territory usually associated with natural sciences, or, in reverse, the increasing scientism of social sciences oriented toward “hard” sciences. However, in contrast to both the natural sciences and the humanities, the specific core competency of sociology lies in its critically reflexive perspective and analytical contextualization of processes generating social meaning. As empirical results on the ERC grant distribution show, both characteristics of sociological knowledge have not convincingly won recognition among panelists when competing with other social scientific disciplines.

## Conclusions

Our considerations have been led by the question of what provides an empirical basis for characterizing the size, shape, and assumed “excellence” of European sociology. Do all data given here offer a clue for the question “What is the nature of European sociology at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century?” First, we should emphasize that whatever European sociology might mean, it is definitely more diverse than its counterpart on the other side of the Atlantic. American sociology, long seen as the more professionalized, more populated, more empirical offspring of a discipline first proposed in Europe and for a very long period rooted in the tradition of the West, has some distinct advantages: the academic market there is much more integrated, facilitated by a common language and developed along well-established and observable criteria. Nothing similar can be said about sociology in Europe with its still fragmented academic landscape and lack of a common universe of discourse, academic labor market, and publication scenery. Even if sociologists use the same *lingua franca*, they are dispersed across the continent, do not have sufficient knowledge about what’s going on even in neighboring countries, and are still highly dependent on publishing houses with a much more cosmopolitan outfit than they themselves have so far been able to develop. The quite recently established regime of impact factors is driven by business concerns of two international corporations, Thomson Reuters and Elsevier, accepted as the gold standard of our day’s academic market by newly emerging elite of university administrators and politicians who see the old Continent still lagging behind its transatlantic competitor. The widespread usage of impact factors as instruments for policy decision making distorts the striving for an increased integration of the fragmented landscape of sociology in Europe in two ways: on the one hand, individual sociologists aspire to publish their papers in journals with the highest impact factor and since these journals are still located in the United States, the best papers’ authors will continue to submit them there; on the other hand, the importance of the nation-states for individual sociologists’ career outlook will direct their publication habits toward leading national and specialized journals as second best strategy. Remaining on the track will be a small group of European journals: their impact factors are much lower than those of national journals.

In order to find answers about which institutional and cognitive conditions are providing supportive environments for developing “excellent” sociology in Europe, we have investigated the case of the European Research Council (ERC). Empirically we have analyzed data on the distribution of research grants in the domain of the social sciences and humanities as funded by the ERC in the first five years of its existence, from 2007 to 2011. In particular we have undertaken a comparison of host institutions’ countries and single disciplines within the domain of interest. While the European Research Area consists of 41 countries eligible for research funding, a sample of 461 grants has shown a striking concentration of research grants in only

a few host institutions' countries. More than 50 percent of all grants are concentrated in three countries, 80 percent in six countries, 16 countries share the remaining 20 percent, and some ERA countries have not awarded any grant. Moreover, we detected country differences not only in absolute grant numbers, but also in relative approval rates of submitted proposals. Considering France, the UK, and the Netherlands as highly successful countries in awarding ERC grants, we suggested two features of the social organization of science in these countries as partly boosting that development: the institutionalization of research infrastructures within the higher education system, and the historically grown structure of university governance. The French CNRS as large umbrella research organization is a peculiarity of a higher education system that traditionally has separated research from teaching activities taking place in universities. In addition, both the UK and the Netherlands have relatively early in the 1980s began to institutionalize a rather market- and highly management-oriented form of university governance, accompanied by a respective evaluation culture whose features (such as type of language, style of procedure, similarly standardized criteria) might contribute to generate those countries' competitive advantages concerning the awarding of European research grants.

In looking for explanations why certain social scientific disciplines appear as more successful than others in that ERC grant competition, we investigated the panel structure or classification system of the ERC as an inherent feature of the funding program. We suggested that the objective differences in the relative amount of space within the given panel structure is dedicated to disciplinarily-shaped scientific perspectives and research topics can at least partly explain why grants tend to be accumulated in certain disciplinary fields, such as in economics and history, and not in others. In contrast to that, sociology finds itself in competition with those appearing as relatively new semi-professional disciplines, such as urban and regional studies, more and more successfully claiming the status of new disciplines independent of sociology. Apparently the structure of research funding as manifest in the ERC classificatory system helps them to do so. We conclude that the current form of interdisciplinary European research policy in the social sciences will not itself create a more integrated sociology as a scientific discipline across Europe.

## Notes

- 1 Levine, Donald N. (1995) *Visions of the Sociological Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Mohan, Raj P. and Wilke, Arthur S. (eds) (1994) *International Handbook of Contemporary Developments in Sociology*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press; Patel, Sujata (ed) (2010) *The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions*. Los Angeles: Sage; Boudon, Raymond, Cherkaoui, Mohamed, and Alexander, Jeffrey (1997) *The Classical Tradition in Sociology: The European Tradition*. London: Sage.
- 2 As a hint towards similar problems in a very different field of activity, one might remember that UEFA, the European organization for soccer, has 53 members, due to the fact that Great Britain is represented by more than one national team.
- 3 European Commission (2007) *Green Paper: The European Research Area. New Perspectives*, SEC (2007) 412 COM (2007) 161 final, Brussels, EU. [http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/era\\_gp\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/era_gp_final_en.pdf).
- 4 We use this as a shortcut for the former communist countries to avoid the somewhere misleading geographical expressions Eastern bloc, etc.
- 5 There exist other international bodies, such as the Scandinavian Sociological Association, founded in the early 1950s, or the Association Internationale des Sociologues de Langue Française (AISLF), and specialized organizations such as the European Society for Rural Sociology (ESRS).
- 6 See, for a short overview about a recent project investigating the careers of doctorate holders in 25 OECD countries from different groups of disciplines, Auriol, Laudeline (2010) *Social Science Doctorate Holders: Who are they? Where are they Working?* In UNESCO and ISSC (eds) *World Social Science Report 2010. Knowledge Divides*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 295–298, tables in Annex 3, 392–395.



- 7 The *World Guide to Scientific Associations and Learned Societies* (2004) gives the number of ASA members as 13,000, *World of Learning 2012* has 14,000 and ASA's website claims the same size.
- 8 Abbott, Andrew (2011) Library Research Infrastructure for Humanistic and Social Scientific Scholarship in America in the Twentieth Century. In Camic, Charles, Lamont, Michèle, and Gross, Neil (eds) *Social Knowledge in the Making*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 43–87, estimates that for approximately every 150 scholars a new journal is founded.
- 9 Ulrichs (<http://ulrichsweb.serialssolutions.com>). The remainders are from Australia and New Zealand (28), Asia (20), South America (20), and Africa (5) (accessed May 2012).
- 10 According to SA's website: "over 1800 serials, over 40% of titles are published outside North America" with a scope of coverage to all subdisciplines of sociology and selected "content from such other disciplines as anthropology, social psychology, demography, education, criminology, penology, and political science."
- 11 Correct quotations for these databases are difficult to provide since they are mostly supplied through local libraries' subscription: [www.csa.com/factsheets/socioabs-set-c.php](http://www.csa.com/factsheets/socioabs-set-c.php); [www.scopus.com](http://www.scopus.com); [www.scimagojr.com](http://www.scimagojr.com); [http://thomsonreuters.com/products\\_services/science/science\\_products/a-z/social\\_sciences\\_citation\\_index/](http://thomsonreuters.com/products_services/science/science_products/a-z/social_sciences_citation_index/); [http://thomsonreuters.com/products\\_services/science/science\\_products/a-z/journal\\_citation\\_reports/](http://thomsonreuters.com/products_services/science/science_products/a-z/journal_citation_reports/).
- 12 See for more details Fleck, Christian (2013) The Impact Factor Fetishism. *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 54 (2): 327–356.
- 13 [http://thomsonreuters.com/products\\_services/science/free/essays/journal\\_selection\\_process/](http://thomsonreuters.com/products_services/science/free/essays/journal_selection_process/).
- 14 SCImago Journal & Country Rank. Retrieved May 18, 2012, from [www.scimagojr.com](http://www.scimagojr.com).
- 15 For example, the German *Kölnner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* is classified by WoS as belonging first to "psychology, social" and only second to sociology. *Young* is classified first as "social sciences, interdisciplinary" and second as sociology; *Economy and Society* as belonging first to economy and second to sociology. *Polis: The Journal of the Society for the Study of Greek Political Thought*, which is located in Cyprus, is a border case because it is devoted mainly to ancient Greek political thought.
- 16 Ulrichs (<http://ulrichsweb.serialssolutions.com>) contains data for 88 journals classified only as sociology, located in one of the European countries. The languages in which articles are published read as follows: 52 journals use English, 11 are multilingual, eight publish either in German or French, two either in Dutch or Russian, and one each uses one of the following languages: Czech, Danish, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, Spanish, and Swedish, respectively.
- 17 It is not quite clear how Scopus calculated the international collaboration, in particular in cases of transnational boards of editors. We fear that they make use of the publisher's location. Therefore readers should consider these data with more than the usual skepticism.
- 18 Vanclay, Jerome (2012) Impact Factor: Outdated Artefact or Stepping-stone to Journal Certification? *Scientometrics* 92 (2): 211–228 summarizes these debates in Table 2.
- 19 For reading and commenting on a previous draft of this part of the contribution, we thank Marianne Egger de Campo, Johan Heilbron, Andreas Hess, Thomas Koenig, and Stefan Laube. The contribution here is based on several preparing and accompanying papers on the European Research Council. For two commentaries on the ERC, see Fleck, Christian (2007) Grant Contest Proves An Ill-Conceived Lottery, *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 7 September, p. 14 and Fleck, Christian (2007) Forschungsförderung: Start mit zu hohen Hürden, *Europäische Rundschau* 35 (4): 73–79. For a structural analysis of the ERC's role in Europe, see Hönig, Barbara (2014): The Making of "Excellence" in the European Research Area. How Research Funding Organizations Work, in Christian Fleck and Andreas Hess (eds) *Knowledge for Whom? Public Sociology in the Making*, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 127–146. For an empirical study of the dynamics of Europeanization in sociology, see Hönig, Barbara (2012) *Europeanization of Sociology. A Comparative Perspective on Slovenia and Austria*, Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- 20 European Commission (2007): *Commission Decision of 2 February 2007 Establishing the European Research Council (2007/134/EC)*, Brussels: EU, February 24. European Research Council (2012) *ERC Work Programme 2012. Established by the ERC Scientific Council and transmitted for Adoption to the Commission on 21 of March 2011*, ERC, p. 6.
- 21 European Research Council: <http://erc.europa.eu> (retrieved Feb. 6, 2013).
- 22 See ERC Indicative Statistics: <http://erc.europa.eu>. Earlier domain-specific data on the proportion of submitted but unsuccessful proposals are not available on the ERC website. However, after the first ERC call in 2007, the overall success rate of submitted proposals has been only about 3 percent.
- 23 Databases used are available on the internet, see the website of the ERC itself and the CORDIS project database <http://erc.europa.eu> and <http://cordis.europa.eu> (retrieved Feb. 6, 2013).

- 24 Cross-national variations in the governance system of universities have been investigated by several authors. A classic – and partly historical – formulation is that of Burton Clark, distinguishing between market governance, state governance, and academic oligarchies and autonomies (Clark, Burton (1983) *The Higher Education System. Academic Organization in Cross-National Perspective*, Berkeley: University of California Press). For a cross-country comparison of university systems with particular attention to more recent developments since the 1980s, see e.g. Braun, Dietmar and Merrien, Francois-Xavier (eds) (1999) *Towards a New Model of Governance for Universities? A Comparative View*, London: Kingsley, and Kreckel, Reinhard (ed.) (2008) *Zwischen Promotion und Professur. Das wissenschaftliche Personal in Deutschland im Vergleich mit Frankreich, Grossbritannien, USA, Schweden, den Niederlanden, Österreich und der Schweiz*, Leipzig: Akademische Verlagsanstalt.
- 25 French National Center of Scientific Research CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique): [www.cnrs.fr](http://www.cnrs.fr) (retrieved Feb. 6, 2013).
- 26 European Parliament (1999) *Decision No 182/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 December 1998 Concerning the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Community for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities 1998 to 2002*, Brussels: EU.
- 27 Our results are based on those panels in the ERC classification system showing continuity from 2007 to 2011; the “interdisciplinary” panel, operative only in 2007, has not been taken into account.
- 28 For a similar argument, focusing on objective differences in the relative amount of space available for publication in journals, see Merton, Robert K. and Zuckerman, Harriet (1973) *Institutionalized Patterns of Evaluation in Science*, in Merton, Robert K. (ed.) *The Sociology of Science. Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, p. 474ff.

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## Appendix 1: Sample of ERC grants assigned to sociology as discipline: Which kind of sociology counts as “excellent” one?

*Sample:* The following data is based on abstracts to the ERC projects as part of the CORDIS data base (status June 2012),  $n = 38$ . Relevant projects have been identified by their membership in sociology as a discipline by three criteria: a) all have been identified as panel 2 projects by the principal investigators themselves and by their respective evaluators as well ( $n = 97$ ); b) institutionally by the appointment of the principal investigator to a department of sociology at the time of the project application ( $n = 17$ ); c) cognitively by the similarity of the project topic to the topics or panel descriptors as suggested by the ERC ( $n = 11$ ; in these cases, the institutional affiliation of the principal investigator has been indicated in brackets). This has led to a sample of in sum 38 projects.

Abbreviations used: SG: Starting Grant; AG: Advanced Grant, U.: University, HIC: host institution’s country.

No.	Year	Type	Principal investigator	Host institution (HIC)	Project title
1	2007	SG	Kosnick, Kira	U. of Frankfurt (DE)	New migrant socialities. Ethnic club cultures in urban Europe
2	2009	SG	Letki, Natalia	U. of Warsaw (PL)	Public goods through private eyes. Exploring citizens' attitudes to public goods and the state in Central Eastern Europe
3	2009	AG	Wagner, Peter	U. Degli Studi di Trento (IT)	Trajectories of modernity. Comparing non-European and European varieties
4	2009	AG	Mol, Anne-Marie	U. of Amsterdam (NL)	The eating body in Western practice and theory
5	2009	SG	Kuipers, Giselinde Maniouchkaa	U. of Amsterdam (NL)	Towards a comparative sociology of beauty. The transnational modeling industry and the social shaping of beauty standards in 6 European countries
28	2009	SG	Algan, Yann	Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (FR), (dept. of economics)	Culture, cooperation and economics
29	2009	SG	Abu Sharkh, Miriam	Humboldt U. Berlin (DE), (dept. of development studies)	Global governance and gender disparities. Explaining developments in key labor related human rights indicators
30	2009	SG	Quandt, Thorsten	U. Hohenheim (DE), (dept. of communication studies)	The social fabric of virtual life. A longitudinal multi-method study on the social foundations of online gaming
6	2009	AG	Glucksmann, Miriam	U. of Essex (UK)	Consumption work and societal divisions of labour
7	2010	SG	Aspers, Patrik	U. of Stockholm (SE)	Coordination by evaluations and valuations. Market logic inside and outside the economy
8	2010	SG	Rydgren, Jens	U. of Stockholm (SE)	Individual life chances in social context. A longitudinal multi-methods perspective on social constraints and opportunities
9	2010	AG	Santos Boaventura de, Sousa	U. of Coimbra (PT)	Strange mirrors, unsuspected lessons. Leading Europe to a new way of changing the world experiences
10	2010	SG	Franko Aas, Katja	U. of Oslo (NO)	"Crimmigration." Crime control in the borderlands of Europe
11	2010	AG	Esping-Andersen, Gosta	U. of Pompeu Fabra (ES)	Stratified family dynamics. Polarizing trends in couple behavior and parenting
12	2010	SG	Scherer, Stefani	U. Degli Studi di Trento (IT)	Families of inequalities. Social and economic consequences of the changing work-family equilibria in European societies
13	2010	AG	Roy, Olivier	European U. Institute (IT)	The reconstruction and formatting of religions in the West through courts, social practices, public discourse, and transnational institutions

(Continued)

No.	Year	Type	Principal investigator	Host institution (HIC)	Project title
14	2010	SG	Grunow, Daniela	U. of Amsterdam (NL)	Transition to parenthood. International and national studies of norms and gender division of work at the life course transition to parenthood
31	2010	SG	Lillie, Alan	Rijks U. Groningen (NL) (dept. of political science)	Transnational work and the evolution of sovereignty
15	2010	SG	Muniesa, Fabian	ARMINE Association pour la Recherche et le développement des méthodes et processus industriels (FR)	Performativity in business education, management consulting and entrepreneurial finance
16	2010	AG	Latour, Bruno	Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (FR)	An inquiry into modes of existence
17	2010	AG	Blossfeld, Hans-Peter	U. of Bamberg (DE)	Education as a life-long process. Comparing educational trajectories in modern societies
18	2010	AG	Vertocev, Steven Allen	Max Planck Society (DE)	Migration and new diversities in global cities. Comparatively conceiving, observing and visualizing diversification in urban public spheres
19	2010	SG	Avendano Pabon, Mauricio	U. College London (UK)	Economic cycles, employment and health. Disentangling causal pathways in a cross-national study
20	2010	SG	Guggenheim, Michael	Goldsmiths College (UK)	Organizing disaster. Civil protection and the population
21	2010	AG	Collins, Harry	U. of Cardiff (UK)	A new method for cross-cultural and cross-temporal comparison of societies
22	2011	SG	Jacobs, Dirk	U. Libre de Bruxelles (BE)	Equal opportunities for migrant youth in education systems with high levels of social and ethnic segregation
23	2011	SG	O'Riain, Sean	National U. of Ireland Maynooth (IE)	New deals in the new economy
32	2011	SG	Crul, Maurice	U. of Amsterdam (NL) (dept. of political science)	Elite leadership positions in the emerging second generation
24	2011	SG	Dewilde, Caroline	U. of Amsterdam (NL)	The interplay between the upward trend in home-ownership and income inequality in advanced welfare democracies
33	2011	SG	Ronald, Richard	U. of Amsterdam (NL) (dept. for urban studies)	Housing markets and welfare state transformations. How family housing property is reshaping welfare

(Continued)

No.	Year	Type	Principal investigator	Host institution (HIC)	Project title
25	2011	SG	Zigon, Jarrett	U. of Amsterdam (NL)	Rights, responsibilities, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic global impact on moral and political subjectivity
26	2011	AG	Mackenzie, Donald	U. of Edinburgh (UK)	Evaluation practices in financial markets
34	2011	AG	Miller, Daniel	U. College London (UK) (dept. of anthropology)	Social network sites and social science
35	2011	SG	Benoit, Kenneth	London School of Economics and Political Science (UK) (dept. of political science)	Quantitative analysis of textual data for social sciences
27	2011	SG	Mackenzie, Simon	U. of Glasgow (UK) (dept. of criminology, law, society)	Global traffic in illicit cultural objects
36	2011	SG	McMunn, Anne Marie	U. College London (UK) (dept. of epidemiology)	Health effects of social change in Gender, Work & Family. Life course evidence from Great Britain
37	2010	AG	Kaldor, Mary	London School of Economics and Political Science (UK), (dept. of international development)	Security in transition. An interdisciplinary investigation into the security gap
38	2010	AG	Della Porta, Donatella	European U. Institute (IT) (dept. for political sciences and sociology)	Mobilizing for democracy. Democratization processes and the mobilization of civil society

**Appendix 2: Host institutions of ERC grantees in sociology per year, type and gender (n = 38):**

abbreviations: HI: host institution; HIC: host institutions' country; SG: starting grantee; AG: advanced grantee; f: female; m: male.

HI	HIC	Year					Type		Gender	Total
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	SG	AG		
University of Amsterdam	NL			1				1	f	7
				1			1		f	
					1		1		f	
						1	1		m	
							1	1	f	
							1	1	m	
							1	1	m	

(Continued)

<i>HI</i>	<i>HIC</i>	<i>Year</i>					<i>Type</i>		<i>Gender</i>	<i>Total</i>
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	<i>SG</i>	<i>AG</i>		
University College London	UK				1		1		m	3
						1		1	m	
					1		1		f	
University of Trento	IT		1					1	m	2
				1			1		m	
Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques	FR		1				1		m	2
				1				1	m	
European University Institute	IT			1				1	m	2
				1				1	f	
London School of Economics	UK					1	1		m	2
					1			1	f	
University of Stockholm	SE				1		1		m	2
					1		1		m	
University of Frankfurt	DE	1					1		f	1
University of Warsaw	PL		1				1		f	1
Humboldt University of Berlin	DE		1				1		f	1
University of Hohenheim	DE		1				1		m	1
University of Essex	UK		1					1	f	1
University of Coimbra	PT				1			1	m	1
University of Oslo	NO				1		1		f	1
University Pompeu Fabra	ES				1			1	m	1
University of Groningen	NL				1		1		m	1
ARMINE Association pour la recherche ...	FR				1		1		m	1
University of Bamberg	DE				1			1	m	1
Max Planck Society	DE				1			1	m	1
Goldsmiths College	UK				1		1		m	1
University of Cardiff	UK				1			1	m	1
University Libre de Bruxelles	BE					1	1		m	1
National University of Ireland	IE					1	1		m	1
University of Edinburgh	UK					1		1	m	1
University of Glasgow	UK					1	1		m	1
Total		1	-	8	18	11	24	14	12f, 24m	38

**Host institutions' countries of ERC grantees in sociology (n = 12):**

<i>HIC</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Val %</i>
UK	10	26.31
NL	8	21.05
DE	5	13.15
IT	4	10.52
FR	3	7.89
SE	2	5.26
PL	1	2.63
PT	1	2.63
NO	1	2.63
ES	1	2.63
BE	1	2.63
IE	1	2.63
Total	38	100



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