

WORKSHOP

Relational Sociology: Reconstructing Networks with Meaning

May 27th, 10 am – 8 pm

Organization: Jan Fuhse

BERLIN
GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES



Relational sociology is a relatively new approach in (mainly North-American) sociology. It springs from sociological network research, but incorporates a systematic concern for culture and meaning. Starting with the publication of Harrison White's *Identity and Control* (1992), relational sociology views networks as dynamic socio-cultural constructs of identities linked in stories. In theoretical treatises and empirical applications, it studies the interplay of networks with categories, roles, narratives, institutions, collective identities, artistic and academic creativity, and stratification.

In the workshop we will discuss the theoretical concepts and the methods applied in relational sociology with three leading scholars in the field:

Ronald Breiger University of Arizona
John Mohr University of California at Santa Barbara
John Padgett University of Chicago

In particular, we discuss methods that relate properties of social networks to other social stuff, including events, practices, roles, institutions, and organizational invention and innovation. Examples are blockmodel analysis, Galois lattices, correspondence analysis, and other statistical analyses of relational data. On the conceptual side, we are led to questions like: What are social networks really? Can culture be studied as a network? How are culture and networks related to one another? How do events lead to networks, and vice versa? How do reproduction and change come about? And most importantly: There may be networks in my field of study – what do I do about that?

Our workshop day features three sessions between 10 am and 6 pm, with generous breaks for networking. Starting at 6 pm, we will have a general discussion about relational sociology, with Sophie Mützel as an additional participant. This discussion is open to the wider academic public – so you don't have to go through six hours of methods discussion to meet our esteemed guests.

Participants at the workshop (not the general discussion) have to register until April 19th via e-mail to doc-service.bgss@sowi.hu-berlin.de. Please shortly state (no more than three sentences) your particular interests! Participants are required to read extensive material (roughly 120 pages) in advance to facilitate meaningful discussion. For any questions contact me at mail@janfuhse.de!

The schedule looks roughly like this:

10.00 - 11.45	Dualities in Social Networks (Breiger)
11.45	Lunch break
13.15 - 15.00	Multiple Networks in Renaissance Florence (Padgett) 15.00 coffee break
15.45-17.30	Networks of Culture (Mohr)
17.30	coffee break
18.00-20.00	Discussion: The State and Prospective of Relational Sociology (Ronald Breiger, Jan Fuhse, John Mohr, Sophie Mützel, John Padgett)
20.00	Reception