

SSA Congress 2013

Congress of the
Swiss Sociological Association

Inequality and Integration in Times of Crisis

June 26 – 28, 2013
University of Bern

www.sgs-kongress2013.unibe.ch

Organizing Committee

Members of the Institute of Sociology at the University of Bern

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- Prof. Dr. Ben Jann
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SSA Congress 2013

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Inequality and Integration in Times of Crisis

Since Karl Marx first described the enormous social inequalities and their potential for social change at the beginning of industrialization in the 19th century, the origins, extent, and consequences of social inequality, as well as the level of inequality which a society is willing to tolerate, have been major themes in sociology. Our discipline has taken on the theme of inequality in multiple areas ranging from research on unequal educational and labor market opportunities, unequal income distributions, gender and health inequality, and inequality in life expectancy, to mention only a few. There are innumerable national and international conferences devoted to these themes. Do we need yet another one? Is inequality still a problem in our society?

The answer to this question is undoubtedly yes. In particular, the economic crisis at the start of the 21st century underlines the fact that the theme of inequality has not lost its relevance. Above all, the European debt crisis inclines us to suspect that social inequality is growing. In comparison with economic boom times, almost all the European countries feel the pressure of stabilizing their economies and cutting back on public expenditures. This will also impact redistributive policies to reduce inequality and bring about new challenges for integration policies addressing the emerging disparities. At the same time as inequalities within European societies are exacerbated, disparities between states are also rising, which will likely have adverse effects on European unification, not to mention creating new challenges for Switzerland as well.

The European debt crisis came at a point in time when global environmental and demographic problems worsened simultaneously – the aging of industrialized countries and population explosion in developing countries. The inequality effects of climate change and the unequal distribution of population growth will lead to an increase in migration and elevate the immigration pressure on the European Union and Switzerland. For this reason, Switzerland, as well as the other European countries, grapple with questions of managing migration and integration.

Inequalities – as problematic they may be – are also in some sense an opportunity. They increase the diversity of society and can bring about new ideas, innovation, and growth. Our desire and ability for social integration depends, above all, on the ultimate balance between these advantages and disadvantages. Within the

framework of the various foci of the research committees, the conference will concentrate on the opportunities as well as the risks associated with these social changes.

Call for Organizers

If you would like to organize a *plenary session*, please submit the title of the plenary as well as the designated contributions (including titles, abstracts, and the names of the contributors) to the organizing committee by January 15, 2013 (by e-mail to sgs-kongress2013@soz.unibe.ch). A plenary session usually includes three contributions.

If you would like to organize a *workshop* (parallel session), please submit the theme proposal and call for papers for the workshop to the organizing committee by November 30, 2012 (by e-mail to sgs-kongress2013@soz.unibe.ch). After the organizing committee accepts the proposal, the call for papers will be published. The organizers of the workshop are responsible for collecting the submissions and selecting the contributions to be included in the workshop. The final program of the workshop (including titles, abstracts, and the names of the contributors) has to be submitted to the organizing committee by March 15, 2013 (by e-mail to sgs-kongress2013@soz.unibe.ch).

Information

Further information about the conference can be found on our homepage:
www.sgs-kongress2013.unibe.ch