

Research Committee ,Interpretive Sociologies‘: Annual Report 2011

Our RC was involved in two activities this year:

1. The co-organization of the *10th Conference of the International Institute for Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis* at the University of Fribourg from 10 to 14 July 2011. Co-chairs of the organizing committee are Esther González-Martínez and Lorenza Mondada.
2. The co-organization of the first *Swiss Methods Festival – Qualitative Research Methods and Mixed Methods Designs* at the University of Basel from 16-17 September 2011. Main organizers were the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAHS/SAGW/ASSH) in cooperation with its *Social Science Policy Council*, and the local organizer were Max M. Bergman and his team at the University of Basel.

1. 10th Conference of the IEMCA

The *International Institute for Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis* is located in Boston, Mass., and hosted for the first time in Switzerland, thanks to the initiative of Esther González-Martínez and Lorenza Mondada. It was the 10th Conference. The goal was to promote the study of practical action and social interaction, and to provide an international forum for researchers working within the domains of Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis.

The program included four plenary conferences – by Douglas Maynard (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Christian Heath & Paul Luff (King's College London), Wes Sharrock (University of Manchester), Marja-Leena Sorjonen (University of Helsinki) – 118 papers in panels and individual paper sessions, 4 data sessions and a poster exhibition.

The Conference was marked by the passing of Harold Garfinkel, on April 21, 2011. To pay tribute to Harold Garfinkel's contribution to the Social Sciences, the conference hosted several special events: an exhibition of testimonies related to his work, 5 workshops given by Jörg Bergmann, Graham Button, Peter Eglin, Timothy Koschmann and Kenneth Liberman, and a tribute organized by Douglas Maynard. This brought together presentations by Michael Lynch, Douglas Macbeth, Douglas Maynard, Yoshifumi Mizukawa and Wes Sharrock.

The Conference featured contributions from both the ethnomethodological and conversation analysis traditions in a spirit of mutual enrichment. On this common ground, several different fields and approaches were represented: interactional linguistics, membership categorization analysis, multimodal analysis, studies of work, workplace studies, and phenomenological and ethnographic studies.

The Conference gathered 231 participants in total, of which a third were students, from 24 countries and a very large array of disciplines that went far beyond the traditional areas of Social Sciences and Linguistics. The support of the Swiss Sociological Association, through our RC, have made possible to offer four travel grants enabling international students to participate in the Conference.

2. Swiss Methods Festival

The second main activity of our RC was the organization of the first *Swiss Methods Festival – Qualitative Research Methods and Mixed Methods Designs*. This event is a Swiss version of

the *Berliner Methodentreffen* that has been organized every year by Günter Mey and Katja Mruck from the *Institute of Qualitative Research* in Berlin, for seven years by now. It was a tremendous success, overbooked by students and researchers every year. Our conception was different in three respects: 1. We offered methods workshops and research workshops; 2. We included not only qualitative methods but also mixed methods; and 3. it was held in three languages: German, French and English.

Each day was opened by a keynote, on the first day by Hans-Georg Soeffner on the methodological context of qualitative methods, on the second day by Julia Brannen and Rebecca O'Connell on mixed methods designs. The first day was closed by a panel on strengthening qualitative research, with Max Bergman, Veronique Mottier, Hubert Knoblauch and Thomas Eberle.

In the *methods workshops* one specific method or approach was presented by an expert, like ethnography by Ronald Hitzler, sequential analysis by Jo Reichertz and Sylvia Wilz, grounded theory by Günter Mey, soundscape analysis by Christoph Maeder, video analysis by Hubert Knoblauch, narrative interview by Fritz Schütze, discourse analysis by Veronique Mottier, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis by Esther González as well as mixed methods by Max Bergman.

In the *research workshops* some PhD students could present their own work and get feedback by an expert of that specific approach. There were workshops on ethnographic research designs by Ronald Hitzler and Alexa Kunz, sequential analysis by Jo Reichertz and Sylvia Wilz, grounded theory by Günter Mey, video analysis by Hubert Knoblauch, narrative interview by Fritz Schütze, discourse analysis by Veronique Mottier, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis by Esther González, mixed methods design by Julia Brannen and Rebecca O'Connell, objective hermeneutics by Peter Schallberger, Content analysis by Philipp Mayring, expert interviews by Ulrike Nagel and mixed methods II by Rosalina Latcheva.

The success of this event was sweeping, the maximum of 220 participants was reached at an early stage and many applicants had to be rejected. The atmosphere at the methods festival was great and really appreciated, participants as well as lecturers felt inspired. But there is also room for improvement: the methods workshops and research workshops on the same topic should be better linked; the (typically Swiss) multiple-language approach proved to be difficult in methodological and methodical discussions; and the presentation and discussion time for research problems of doctoral students seemed too short. We received 55 written feedbacks with many suggestions that will taken into account in order to plan the next event.

Most of the members of the program committee are members of our RC: Max Bergman (unibas), Thomas Eberle (unisg), Eric Widmer (unige), Claudia Vorheyer and Emanuela Chaipparini (unizh), Peter Farago and Stefan Buerli (FORS), Markus Zürcher and Beat Immenhauser (SAHS/SAGW/ASSH). A second event is planned for 2013. We are presently pondering options of a future organization by FORS, which would allow for an institutionalization of the methods festival.

The RC *Interpretive Sociologies* has presently about 50 members of 14 different universities; about half of them are members of the SGS/SSS. The RC is also embedded in several international networks.

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