

## Sociologidagarna 2018: Sociology in a polarized world

The Swedish Sociological Association welcomes you to *Sociologidagarna* 2018, at Lund University 7–9 March. Given the increasingly international character of Swedish sociology, with staff and PhD students coming from outside of Swedish speaking countries, and given our aim to also attract attention from scholars from outside of Scandinavia, this year's conference will be bilingual. This means that there will be a possibility of attending the conference even if you do not speak Swedish, as we will make sure that there is always an English speaking 'stream' throughout the conference. However, it will of course still be possible to submit your abstract and present your research in Swedish.

The conference theme is *Sociology in a Polarized World*, a topic that can be approached in different ways. We see today increasing divisions between groups of people, in, e.g., growing income disparities, between locals and migrants, and also in rifts between the political establishment and popular sentiments. We also witness a rise of populist movements, increased xenophobia, and anti-democratic sentiments. Sociology occupies a central position in relation to these processes. As a discipline, it possesses excellent theoretical and methodological tools for analysing the complex manifestations of social differences and hierarchies. In addition, sociologists have been the champions in research and in lecture halls of precisely the aspects of cosmopolitan and tolerant open society that are under threat. Yet sociologists have sometimes been reluctant to participate in public discourse, and those who do publicly engage often find their voices sidelined, or even threatened by anti-democratic forces. We are witnessing worrying tendencies today, of independent research – and individual researchers – being under threat in Europe and elsewhere. We invite you to participate in critical sociological discussions of the contours of current societal conditions, as well as of the role of sociology and sociologists today.

Prominent keynote speakers are Michèle Lamont and Elena Zdravomyslova, both of whom have addressed the conference theme in different ways throughout their impressive research careers. Michèle Lamont is Professor of Sociology and of African and African American Studies and the Robert I. Goldman Professor of European Studies at Harvard University. She currently serves as the 108th President of the American Sociological Association (2016–2017). A central theme throughout her research is group boundaries, with a special focus on class, race and ethnicity, such as in her studies of

working class and upper working class milieus (*The Dignity of Working Men*, 2000; and *Money, Morals, and Manners*, 1992), and of professional cultures of the humanities and the social sciences, in *How Professors Think* (2009). In her most recent work she, together with colleagues, presents an extensive comparative study of the experiences of racism by marginalized groups in different parts of the world (*Getting Respect: Responding to Stigma and Discrimination in the United States, Brazil, and Israel*, 2016). Our second keynote speaker is Elena Zdravomyslova, Professor at the Department of Political Science and Sociology at the European University at St. Petersburg, and also co-coordinator of the university's Gender Studies programme. She has served as a member of the executive committee of the International Sociological Association as well as the European Sociological Association. Her research focuses care and emotional work, reproductive health, and qualitative methods. She has co-managed several research projects, e.g., *The gender construction of private life in contemporary Russia* (Ford Foundation, 2008–2011), *Safety, sexual and reproductive health* (Carnegie Foundation, 2005–2007), and *New lifestyle: forms of familial organization and changes in domestic space* (Finnish Academy of Sciences, 2004–2006), and she has published widely in Russian and in English, in books, journals and also in the popular press. This has made her a central mentor for sociologists studying gender and feminist approaches in post-Soviet Russia.

In addition to the keynote speeches, the conference theme as well as other topics will be discussed in a number of semi-plenaries (keep an eye on our website!). Also, there will be author-meets-critics events, as well as a special opportunity for PhD students to meet and discuss with professor Lamont.

The core of the programme is, as always, the working groups: no less than 23 working groups have answered the call for this conference, giving you an excellent opportunity of finding the right place to present your research. Every group is presenting itself on our website, in Swedish and in English, and this is also where you submit your abstract, no later than November 1.

In addition to the scholarly programme, the conference will – as in previous years – serve as a good opportunity to socialize and get to know sociologists from all over (and maybe also outside of) Sweden.

On behalf of the Swedish Sociological Association and the local organizing committee, welcome to Lund!

[www.sociologidagarna2018.se](http://www.sociologidagarna2018.se)