



## **Call for Papers**

# **The return of class society? Revisiting the relationship between research on social inequality and social theory**

**Conference of the sections „Sociological Theory“ and  
„Social Inequality and Analysis of Social Structure“ in the German  
Sociological Association at the **University Duisburg-Essen,**  
**Thursday 27th & Friday 28th of May 2010****

During the last decades the sociology of social inequality has emphasized gradual transitions between social layers. The pluralisation of cultural lifestyles or even the dissolution of socio-cultural collectives have been interpreted as elements of individualization processes. At the same time the concept of a class society lost its relevance for theorizing about societies. Nowadays empirical research is breathing new life into the question. While theoretical debates about the end of class society continue empirical research is again asking whether social inequalities have deepened or stabilized and whether cultural differences between milieus have widened.

Have we moved beyond the “end of class society”? Can we observe new class formations and class constellations that ask for a revitalisation of what Pierre Bourdieu proposed in “La Distinction”? Or should we follow Luhman in viewing discourse about class as a „self description“ of society, which is neither empirically nor theoretically feasible?

Debates about the end or the revitalization of class society respectively are relevant both for the analysis of social structure and for social theory. The conference will focus on a number of questions:

- What is the social basis of social inequalities and in what way do they become relevant for theorizing about society? What is the impact of discourses about social inequality?
- How can the relationship between social inequality and functional differentiation be understood? What forms do socio-structural and cultural differences take in particular social fields? Do forms of “cultural hegemony” transverse social fields?



- Were “old” layers and milieus such as middle class, working class, upper class transformed? Can distinctly “new” classes and/or milieus be observed?
- Is the “class question” global? Can new class constellations be identified in a transnational perspective? How can we develop a global scope in the analysis of social structure?

The conference will focus on these and neighbouring questions. We are asking for papers with a theoretical focus, which can be based on empirical inquiry.

**Schedule: Thursday 27th 1 p.m. to Friday 28th of May 4 p.m. 2010**

**Conference Location: Schalterhalle at the Zeche Zollverein in Essen  
(Germany)**

Please send an **abstract of no more than 1 page** before

 **January 15 th 2010**

preferably via e-mail to:

**Prof. Dr. Andreas Reckwitz (Konstanz)**

**E-Mail: [Andreas.Reckwitz@uni-konstanz.de](mailto:Andreas.Reckwitz@uni-konstanz.de)**

**and**

**Prof. Dr. Anja Weiß (Duisburg-Essen)**

**E-Mail: [anja.weiss@uni-due.de](mailto:anja.weiss@uni-due.de)**