

STATUTES OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE 51 ON SOCIOCYBERNETICS of the INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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I. NATURE OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

1) The Research Committee bears the name: Research Committee on Sociocybernetics, and is a Research Committee within the organizational structure of the International Sociological Association (henceforth to be called: RC51).

2) It has been established in accordance with article 4 of the statutes of the International Sociological Association (henceforth to be called: ISA) and the ISA *Booklet on ISA Aims and Requirements for Research Committees*. This requires the RC to have:

- a) a minimum of 25 ISA paid-up members
- b) members from at least 10 countries in 2 continents or 7 countries in 3 continents.
- c) statutes that reflect the ISA statutes.

3) The RC will administer its own funds, in accordance with article 4.1 of the ISA statutes.

4) These funds consist of (see art. 10):

- a) membership fees from individual members;
- b) membership fees from institutional members;
- c) ISA subventions;
- d) donations, grants, and other means.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE:

5) It is the main objective of RC51 to promote the development of sociocybernetic theory and research within the social sciences. Sociocybernetics is broadly defined here as including first- and second-order cybernetics, general system theory, and various combinations and variations of these that can be subsumed under the term "the emerging sciences of complexity", to the extent these can be applied to the subject matter of the social sciences.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE:

6) To bring this objective closer to realization, RC51 has formulated the following subgoals and shall take measures accordingly:

a) to encourage individual and collaborative research in the field of sociocybernetics (as defined in section II);

b) to stimulate international collaborative research, especially of a comparative nature;

c) to promote publication of research results;

d) to publish a regular Newsletter, at least once per annum, as required by the ISA, e-mailed to all members in good standing, to keep them informed of ongoing and planned activities;

e) to publish online the *Journal of Sociocybernetics*, two issues per annum;

f) to initiate and/or support networking: within the RC51 community; between RC51 and other ISA RCs; between RC51 and other relevant associations outside the ISA;

g) to foster interdisciplinarity by involving scientists from disciplines other than sociology (e.g., psychology, philosophy, political science, economics, anthropology and so on ..);

h) to organize sessions at the ISA World Congresses of Sociology and at other conferences dealing with sociocybernetics and related areas;

i) to organise at least one international conference on sociocybernetics between the ISA World Congresses of Sociology;

j) to have a global perspective and encourage and facilitate the participation of members from all parts of the world, especially those from Third World countries.

IV. MEMBERSHIP IN THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

7) Any bona fide social scientist, working in any of the fields described in article 5, can be an individual member of RC51, provided he/she accepts the statutes and observes them. Membership in RC51 is possible as a regular member, i.e., a member both of RC51 and of the ISA, or as an affiliated member, i.e., a member of RC51 only, with limited rights in accordance with article 4.6a of the ISA statutes.

8) Participation in the activities of RC51 is only possible for those who are members in good standing (regular or affiliated). For presentation of a paper at a World Congress of Sociology, the presenter must be a regular member in good standing. Exceptions can be decided by the Board for certain cases.

9) Members in good standing are those who have either paid their membership dues or have received an exemption of dues from the treasurer, who is empowered by the Board to give such exemptions.

10) The RC51 membership fees, for the four-year period in between World Congresses of Sociology, are set by the Board subject to a majority vote of 75%. Currently, they are set at:

- \$ 25 for individual members of countries within ISA Category A;
- \$ 15 for individual student members of countries within ISA Category A;
- \$ 10 for individual members of countries within ISA Categories B and C;

- life members: one payment of a double fee after reaching the age of 60 according to country category;
- a variable amount for institutional members, depending on the size of the institution concerned.

11) The regular members in good standing have the right:

a) to vote every four years for Board elections;

b) to suggest themselves or others for Board functions and/or organizational functions (e.g. session organizers), Board members have to be regular members in good standing in accordance with article 4.6a of the ISA statutes;

All members in good standing have the right:

c) to participate in all scientific activities of RC51;

d) to receive the RC51 Newsletter and the *Journal of Sociocybernetics* free of charge;

e) to obtain a reduction on other RC publications;

f) to ask for support in all matters directly or indirectly relating to their professional lives (e.g. letters of recommendation for tenure at their university, for publishers to publish their manuscripts, for travel grants to attend RC51 meetings, etc.);

g) to volunteer for membership in special committees (see article 15).

12) The members are expected:

a) to accept and observe the statutes;

b) to pay their membership fees;

c) to fill out occasional questionnaires, an indispensable instrument for the Board to determine its policy, and return them promptly;

d) to send relevant news items (book reviews, announcements of upcoming meetings, proposals for research projects, possibilities for grants, etc.) to the Newsletter editor, to contribute to the *Journal of Sociocybernetics*, and to take an active role in the affairs of RC51;

e) to produce a paper at least once every four years, whether at the World Congress of Sociology, one of the annual International Conferences of Sociocybernetics or at some other international meeting organized by RC51.

V. GOVERNING BODIES OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

13) The Board of RC51 is responsible for the overall organization and scientific production of the RC, and shall consist of:

- a president;
- a vice-president;
- a secretary;
- a treasurer;

- a past president;
- a minimum of one and a maximum of ten additional members, the exact number to be determined before the elections by the outgoing board, and each having a clearly described function.

14) The Board shall contain no more than three members of the same country, while an effort shall be made to ensure a fair regional as well as disciplinary and gender representation.

15) The Board may establish committees for specific purposes for a specified and limited duration that will remain accountable to the board.

16) For face to face meetings of the Board, the necessary quorum for voting purposes is 50% of members present. Unless otherwise stated in the statutes, motions put to the Board require a proposer and a seconder and a majority vote in favour to be passed. In the case of a tied vote, the chairperson has a casting vote. Only elected members of the Board have voting rights.

VI. ELECTORAL PROCEDURES OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

17) The Board members are elected by e-mail ballot before the end of the year in which the World Congress of Sociology is held, unless a quorum of two thirds of the regular membership in good standing is present during the World Congress, in which case, if practicable, the elections will be carried out at the Congress.

a) Two months before the World Congress, the secretary will e-mail all regular members in good standing with the request to suggest candidates for all Board positions - possibly including themselves.

b) Candidates must be willing to serve the full four-year term if elected and must have the initial written support of at least three regular members in good standing.

c) In order to ensure that there are sufficient candidates, the outgoing Board will either establish, or function itself, as a Nominating Committee and will draw up a list of candidates to be submitted to and discussed at the business meeting during the World Congress.

d) The outcome of the elections - per function (president, treasurer) or per group of functions (vice-presidents; other Board members) - will be determined by the number of votes received within a period of no more than two months after mailing the ballots.

e) In case a Board member dies or is incapacitated during his/her term of office or does not pay the dues, he/she will be replaced by the candidate for that function having the next highest number of votes. If this is not feasible, the Board can appoint another candidate or leave the function vacant.

f) Board members can serve no more than two consecutive four-year terms.

g) RC51 may have one or more honorary presidents who are life-time, non-voting, advisory members of the Board. Proposals for making someone an honorary president must be made in writing by at least five regular members in good standing, and must subsequently be approved by a 75% majority of the Board and, finally, by email ballot by a majority (more than one half) of the RC regular members in good standing. If, after the specified time limit, sufficient votes to declare a result have not been received, a further period can be designated by those organising the voting, with the message to constituents that a majority of votes cast will constitute approval of the proposal.

VII. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD MEMBERS

18) The responsibilities of the Board members are the following:

a) The *president* provides leadership with respect to the governance and ethos of RC51. He/she takes initiatives regarding the planning of the organizational and scientific activities of RC51; he/she chairs the Board and business meetings of RC51 and represents RC51 on formal occasions.

b) The *vice-president* replaces the president whenever necessary. He/she convenes and chairs the RC51 Scientific Quality Committee (SQC), a permanent body that monitors scientific quality and, taking advice from the SQC, convenes the abstracts committees appointed on a temporary basis for conferences.

c) The *secretary* closely cooperates with the president and vice-president in running the day-to-day affairs of the RC. He/she maintains the membership list, represents the normal channel for communication between the Board and the membership and is responsible for minutes of Board and business meetings.

d) The *treasurer* manages the account(s) of RC51. He/she maintains a record of members' payments both to the ISA and RC51.

e) The *past president* provides for continuity of administration and provides advice to the president and the other Board members.

f) Additional roles: The *Newsletter editor* has responsibility for collecting items for, editing, producing, and mailing the newsletter. The *editor(s) of the Journal of Sociocybernetics* aim to publish two issues of the journal per annum, assisted by the journal's editorial board. The *webmaster* is responsible for maintaining the RC51 website.

g) The other Board members assume specific roles, as decided by the outgoing board prior to the election of the incoming Board. If the need arises, the current Board can redefine and reallocate these roles during its term of office.

h) The organisers of interim conferences, the programme coordinator for the RC51 sessions at ISA World Congresses and the respective chairpersons of abstract committees for these events are co-opted as members of the Board until such a time as all relevant business has been completed.

i) The Board is responsible for electing two of its members to be the RC51 representative and alternate at meetings of the ISA Research Council.

VIII. FINAL REGULATIONS

19) These statutes were adopted by mail ballot in 1996 after discussion during the business meeting of the RC at the 10th International Congress of Systems and Cybernetics in Bucharest, August 28, 1996. They were slightly adapted to new circumstances after being discussed during the World Congress of Sociology in Brisbane, July 2002, and approved by mail ballot in late 2002. They were revised again after due discussion by the business meeting of RC51 at the XVIth World Congress of Sociology in Durban, South Africa, July 29, 2006, and approved by email ballot in February, 2008. Changes in and amendments of these statutes must be proposed in writing by at least five regular members in good standing, and must subsequently be approved by a 75% majority of the Board and, finally, by mail or email ballot by (as required by the ISA) a majority (more than one half) of the RC members in good standing. If, after the specified time limit, sufficient votes to declare a result have not been received, a further period can be designated by those organising the voting, with the message to constituents that a majority of votes cast will constitute approval of the proposals.
