

# Futures Research Newsletter

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Research Committee 07  
International Sociological Association



## Contents

1. Editor's Note 2
2. President's Message-Future Moves for Gothenburg 3
3. World Congress 2010: Call for Papers 6
4. South Africa: World Cup and Transport Futures-Sultan Khan 13
5. Technological Futures-Gerardo del Cerro 17
6. ISA Handbook in Contemporary Sociology 18
7. Is There Hope for Uncle Sam? 19
8. Members Write 21
9. Donations 22
10. Call for Newsletter Contributions 23
11. Renew Your Membership 23

## Editor's Note

Dear Readers:

I hope that you have seen our previous issue of the Newsletter. I have had some feedback from the members of RC07 for which I am thankful to them. This issue of the Newsletter, the second one of the year, comes to you in the wake of the forthcoming World Congress in Gothenburg in 2010. As you will see in the following pages Markus is planning a wide range of sessions for the members to participate in. Drawing inspiration

from the insightful message of Markus Schulz I am sure that we will all make use of this opportunity to attend and share the findings of our research with the wider community of the International Sociological Association. I also urge the members to motivate others to join our Research Committee, which will make us even stronger.

**Radhamany Sooryamoorthy**

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## President's Message

### Future Moves for Gothenburg

RC07's program for the next World Congress 2010 in Gothenburg, Sweden, continues in many ways the vibrant discussions from the Barcelona Forum. There is again an open platform for diverse approaches and a wide range of timely topics that include, but are not limited to, the futures of globalization, terrorism, environment, social movements, media, technology, cities, work, and leisure. The motto "Future Moves" is meant to resonate with the Congress's overall theme of "Sociology on the Move" and its concern for social change. The expression "Future Moves" has more than one meaning. It refers to the fact that the future is not something static but constantly moving. The future is moving as it is consumed by the present, and it is also moving as the actors in the present change their visions about what they deem possible, likely, or desirable. Furthermore, the motto also refers to sociology's own future moves, i.e. the next steps in its development as a discipline and its efforts to address the future. The Barcelona Forum emphasized sociology's relation to public debate; the Gothenburg Congress makes the

question of sociology's relevance central. To make sociology more relevant, more direct engagement with the future is needed.

In many of today's national sociologies, the future appears spectacularly neglected. Why is that so? Among the complex and locally varying reasons, one view seems to be particularly widespread. It holds against dealing with the future the fact that we cannot know anything about it. And since we ought not to talk about what we cannot know, we should hence better be quiet about it.

This position runs counter to the fact that we all lead our daily lives based on innumerable assumptions about the future, short-term and long-term, small and large. Whether we deem something to be possible or impossible, likely or unlikely, desirable or undesirable has consequences. Anticipation, aspiration, expectation, hope, imagination, planning, projection, and vision are all terms that refer to inherent aspects of future-oriented human action.

Once we accept the need for sociology to become more forward-

looking the tricky questions begin to emerge. How can we conceptualize the future? What are the most fruitful ways, and how do we assess competing modes of engagement? How do we identify the most relevant issues? What methodological tools are most promising for tackling the tasks ahead? Finding answers to these questions is a task to which a range of theoretical and empirical approaches can contribute.

In the past, the future was often assumed to be predestined, predetermined, or at least progressing in a certain direction and thus, with the proper approach, predictable. The religious beliefs in some future telos gave way to the positivist search for social laws, the knowledge of which sociologists in traditions from Comte to Durkheim thought to be useful for managing or administrating society. Marx shared similar assumptions when he pronounced the laws of history would be pointing to a necessary triumph of the oppressed proletariat over the bourgeoisie, though he did recognize in his more empirical-historical writings that there were no historical automatism but plenty of manoeuvring room for contingent action.

The belief in an open future is the hallmark of the modern consciousness of time. As the historian Reinhart Koselleck noted, the “space

of experience” and the “horizon of expectation” are increasingly disassociated. This fundamental contingency opens the horizon of the possible for social and political creation. What is could have been different. The existing reality could have been differently shaped through non-determined human action, in more or less reflexive as well as in more or less conflictive or cooperative ways.

This consciousness of the agency of the present is increasingly thematized in contemporary social theory through the inclusion of agentic social factors and multiple historical trajectories. The new consciousness found its expression in the emphasis on “imagination,” the “social imaginary,” “expectation, choice, and decision,” “the creativity of action” as well as in an explicit integration of the factor “human agency,” and in the conceptualizations of a “reflexive modernization” or “multiple modernities” (see works by Ulrich Beck, Wendell Bell, Walden Bello, the Bouldings, Cornelius Castoriadis, Shmuel Eisenstadt, Mustafa Emirbayer, Hans Joas, Eleonora Masini, Jan Nederveen Pieterse, Saskia Sassen, and Piotr Sztompka, to credit just a very few). The increasing insight into the contingency of social shaping has spread across the borders of most diverse theory types. Even systems theory recognized the

need to equip its “systems” with “dynamics” and an “autopoietic” capability that can autonomously conceive their respective futures (see Luhmann).

Sociology’s re-orientation toward the future can benefit from methodological pluralism and from a whole range of theoretical approaches, analytical and normative. Recent advances in action theories can help to overcome the positivistic restrictions and narrow instrumentalist rational choice models that seeped into futures research when its methodological toolbox was rebuilt in an attempt to increase scientific respectability. Theories of collective action and social movements can help recognize alternative visions formulated from the grassroots and to gain a better understanding of political contestation. Time-diagnostic approaches can help to discern pertinent trends of our time. Critical theories can help to pinpoint the value decisions at stake, unmask the working of vested interests, and identify differential consequences for different sectors of society.

Pressing problems of increasing social inequality, set-backs in human rights discourse, profound climate change and environmental degradation demand broader and

more forward-looking scholarship. The current economic crisis seems to have discredited narrow economic approaches that were dominant since the 1980s. Yet economics is still the primary discipline dealing with the future while a broader social-science perspective has not begun to fill the void yet. This is where sociology could bring in its ability to conceptualize the social making of and the changing relations between different social spheres, including markets, states, and publics. If sociology is to become more relevant it needs to embrace a more forward-looking orientation and engage with the critical issues of our time.

In this sense, the program for Gothenburg offers a space to reflect on society’s future moves and to orient sociology’s next steps. Several joint sessions are planned to promote encounters and dialogue with other RCs and to stem against the discipline’s trend toward fragmentation. Many thanks go to the members for sharing insights, contributing inspirations, and suggesting important session topics.

**Markus S. Schulz**

*President, ISA-RC07 Futures Research*



A decorative banner with a yellow background and red borders, featuring the text "Call for Papers" in red. The banner has a ribbon-like shape with pointed ends.

## Call for Papers

The International Sociological Association is organizing its **XVII World Congress of Sociology** in Gothenburg, Sweden, from July 11 to 17, 2010. The Research Committee of Futures Research (RC 07) invites proposals for papers and sessions.

### Future Moves Markets, Politics, and Publics in Global and Comparative Perspectives

What are the pertinent future trends? What are the forces that shape futures? What alternative visions are available? Which factors nourish the social imagination, and which factors restrict it? What are, or should be, sociology's own future moves to meet the challenges of our time? A broad array of sessions offers to engage with these and other questions by focusing on specific themes such as globalization, environment, social movements, state and insurgent terrorism, media and new technologies, urbanism, work

and leisure. Other sessions provide opportunity to concentrate on conceptual issues or to discuss policy matters and the experiences of practitioners. The program is meant to provide a platform for a broad spectrum of methodological, theoretical, and practical approaches, including interdisciplinary collaboration. We invite proposals for papers, posters, and sessions on any of the topics indicated below or other issues related to futures research.

**Deadline: October 15, 2009**

**Markus S. Schulz**

*Program Coordinator, ISA-RC07,*  
email: [isarc07@gmail.com](mailto:isarc07@gmail.com)

### Planned Sessions/Thematic Tracks

#### 1. Globalization: Futures After the Crisis

Organizer: Jan Nederveen Pieterse (UC Santa Barbara, USA)  
<[jnp@global.ucsb.edu](mailto:jnp@global.ucsb.edu)>

#### 2. Geopolitics, Smart Power, and Social Imagination for the 21st Century

Organizer: Timothy W. Luke (Virginia Tech, USA)  
<[twluke2@vt.edu](mailto:twluke2@vt.edu)>

### 3. Environmental Futures

Organizer: John Urry (Lancaster University, UK)

<j.urry@lancaster.ac.uk>

### 4. Future of State and Insurgent Terrorism

Organizer: Jeff Goodwin (New York University, USA)

<jeff.goodwin@nyu.edu>

Political violence against "innocent" civilians has generated a great deal of discussion and debate in recent years. What explains past episodes of state and/or insurgent terrorism? Are the two linked? How has the rhetoric of "terrorism" been used by political actors? Will we see more or less—or different kinds of—terrorism in the future? Papers on any of these concerns are encouraged.

### 5. Conceptualizing Future in Social Theory

Organizers: Elisa P. Reis (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

<epreis@alternex.com.br> and

Markus S. Schulz (UIUC, USA)

<isarc07@gmail.com>

How does sociology move towards the future after the death of determinism? How do different strands of social theory deal with the future? How do they conceptualize its relation to notions of structure, agency, power, expe-

rience, and imagination? How could theories that avoid the future be modified? What are the consequences for theories when a future orientation is brought in?

This session is meant to provide an opportunity for dialogue among scholars working in different modes of theorizing, including empirical, normative, micro, macro, etc.

### 6. Social Movements and the Future

Organizers: Markus S. Schulz (UIUC, USA) <isarc07@gmail.com>

and Benjamin Tejerina Montaña (Universidad del País Vasco, Spain) <cjptemob@lg.ehu.es>

The Research Committees on Future Research (RC07) and on Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Change (RC48) are planning one or more joint sessions on contentious politics and on how social movements shape futures. Questions may include (but are not limited to):

- How do social movements create, debate, disseminate, and attempt to implement projects and visions of the future?
- How do social movements invent new practices?

- How do social movements relate to old and new media?

- What factors influence the outcomes of social movement struggles?

## 7. Urban Futures

Organizer: Dieter Hassenpflug (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany) <hassenpf@archit.uni-weimar.de>

Mega-urbanization and urban hyper-growth in industrializing countries; progressing informal urbanization in low-growth countries, heterogeneous spatial restructuring processes that differentiate between shrinkage and growth and take place in advanced Western service societies; emergence of global cities and globalized regions, of edge or outer cities, of airports and shopping centers as attractive city-surrogates, etc.: How can these spatial phenomena be sociologically evaluated? Which social and societal demands toward space do they articulate? How do urbanized landscapes influence human coexistence and how do they impact traditional social practices? Will the habitats of the future consist of conglomerates of ethnic enclaves, segregated sociotopes of social and cultural parallel societies? Which scope of action for urban planning remains in the context of financial crisis, climate change, and scarcity of resources? What do the new urbanization tendencies imply for the theories of metropolitan life that have de-

veloped in the course of the emergence of the metropolis in the 19th and 20th century (Weber, Simmel, Chicago School, Lefébvre, etc.)? To which degree can theories of urban life today still be assigned to a particular discipline? In this regard, must we not consider operating from a 'postdisciplinary' situation?

## 8. New Media Futures

Organizers: Christiana Constantopoulou (Panteion University, Greece)

<chconsta@panteion.gr> and Markus S. Schulz (UIUC, USA) <isarc07@gmail.com>

The Research Committees on Futures Research (RC07), Communication, Knowledge, and Culture (RC14), and Sociology of Science and Technology (RC23) are planning to convene one or more joint sessions on the general theme "Future of New Media." Papers may explore from theoretical, empirical, or normative perspectives critical issues such as

- technological development,
- digital inequality,
- intellectual property rights,
- surveillance,
- mobility,
- online activism, or
- virtual publics.

Papers may address current trends, alternative future scena-



rios, policy implications, social consequences, or processes for imagining and shaping media futures.

### 9. Technological Futures

Organizer: Gerardo del Cerro, Cooper Union/MIT, USA, <gdelcerro@gmail.com> and Radhamany Sooryamoorthy, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, <sooryamoorthyr@ukzn.ac.za>  
Joint Session of Research Committees on Futures Research (RC07) and Sociology of Science and Technology (RC23)

Among the possible questions that may be addressed are: What are the future visions regarding nanotechnologies, biomedicine, and genetics? How do these and other new technologies impact social development and global inequalities? Considering the advances in robotics, informatics, and artificial intelligence, how will we be impacted when more and more decisions are being made by non-human entities? How does the current economic crisis affect technological innovations and the relationships between energy, capital, and information? What methodologies are best suited to approach the new technological futures? What role can public sociology play in the shaping of vi-

sions about new technologies, their regulation and utilization?

### 10. Sociology and Simulation of Social Realities

Organizer: Hermilio Santos (PUCRS, Porto Alegre, Brazil) <hermilio@pucrs.br>

This session focuses on the contribution that sociology can make to the simulation of realities. Simulation of future is a mechanism used by organization's and individual's decision-making in everyday life to organize interaction, since acting implies to consider not only the past and present acts, but also the potential future acts of those (individuals and organizations) involved in the interactive context. Special attention will be given to theoretical discussion on this issue as well as current interdisciplinary approximations exploring sociology's potential role in simulation of social realities.

### 11. Power, Politics, Publics: Sociological Experiences

Organizers: Raquel Sosa (UNAM, Mexico) <rsosa@servidor.unam.mx> and Markus S. Schulz (JIUC, USA) <isarc07@gmail.com>

How does sociology relate to policy, power, and publics? How do sociologists contribute to social projects and alternative views? What is the experience of sociologists who engage in "critical" or

"public" modes of doing sociology, including collaboration with social movements or public service? What can we learn from comparisons between different national experiences and different disciplines? What lessons can be learned from recent experiences in Latin America or other sites of the Global South? What is to be done to make sociology and the sociological imagination more relevant?

## 12. Gender, Science, Technology, Innovation, and the Future

Organizer: Solange Simões (Eastern Michigan University, USA) <ssimoes@emich.edu> and Radhamany Sooryamoorthy, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, <sooryamoorthy@ukzn.ac.za>  
Joint Session of Research Committees on Futures Research (RC07), Sociology of Science and Technology (RC23), and Women in Society (RC32)

The presence and absence of information and technology (ICT), as it exists today in different parts of the world, have opened up opportunities for scholars, including sociologists, to examine the ways technology is affecting society. As a fast developing realm of technology, ICT is inventing new means of communication (mobile and wireless, for instance) that

make the study of science communication both challenging and interesting. Although there is an overwhelming literature on science communication, still there are areas to be explored, researched, and understood. The divide—including region and gender—is apparent in science as well. The ways the disparities in this divide of access to and availability of ICT is affecting communication in science are not easy to comprehend either. Many new areas of inquiry have sprung up, contributing to the knowledge of science communication across the world. This joint session is to bring together such theoretical, empirical, and methodological knowledge about science communication including its varieties of patterns, types and forms.

## 13. Leisure: Future Perspectives

Joint Session of Research Committees on Futures Research (RC07) and Sociology of Leisure (RC13)  
Organizer: Scott North (University of Osaka, Japan)

<north@hus.osaka-u.ac.jp>

Are we having fun yet? In some ways the future of leisure looks grim: peak oil, warming climate, and economic instability threaten to transform life as we've known it. Will our appreciation for leisure be transformed as well? Amid

these changing circumstances, what forms of leisure will be possible, desirable, sustainable in the foreseeable future? How much of the leisure past will societies carry forward and what will they be compelled to leave behind? This session invites submissions that ex-

plore possible future trajectories and definitions of leisure, and their social impact. Papers on all geographic and cultural regions are welcome irrespective of methodological approach.

## Open Themes

Organizer: tba. Send proposals to: [isarc07@gmail.com](mailto:isarc07@gmail.com)

### Deadlines and Procedures

If you wish to present a paper, please send your proposal by **October 15, 2009** to the organizer(s) of your session with a copy to the repository at [<isarc07gothenburg@gmail.com>](mailto:isarc07gothenburg@gmail.com).

You may use, if your computer can run a recent version of the free Adobe Reader (at least version 7, better 9), the PDF submission form that you may find attached to this email or downloadable PDF from <http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2010/rc/rc07.htm> (The website for the free Adobe Reader is: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>).

Alternatively, you are also welcome to submit your information in the body of an informal email. In any other case, be sure to include in your proposal the author name(s), contact information, paper title, and

a brief description of the paper (150 to 200 words).

Paper proposals that do not fit to the topic of any of the planned sessions may be submitted to the RC07 Program Coordinator for integration in additional sessions or alternative arrangements.

### Some general hints

Please make your proposal as informative and specific as possible. Check whether your abstract provides the reviewers with answers to fundamental questions such as:

- What question or problem does your paper address?
- Why does this question or problem matter?
- How do you approach this question or problem (theoretical perspective, method, data set, body of literature, and the like)?

- What are your findings/research/arguments results?
- What are the implications of these findings/research results/arguments?

Session proposals are welcome too and shall include a title, a brief description of the topic, chair's name and contact information, and a list of four to five speakers. Session proposals may be in any of the ISA's official languages, English, Spanish, or French.

Notifications of papers accepted for presentation instructions will be sent to participants by the end of January 2010 along with more detailed instructions and practical tips on travel and logistics. It is anticipated that online registration opens in early 2010. May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 is the anticipated deadline for pre-registration and submission of accepted abstracts to Cambridge Sociological Abstracts (CSA) for inclusion in the congress catalogue.

### Grant applications

It is anticipated that there will be limited funding available to support RC07 members who are actively participating in the World Congress 2010 with a paper or as a session chair/organizer. There are types of grants:

(a) Travel/accommodation grants: Eligible are only RC07 members

from the generally less wealthy Category B or C countries as defined by the ISA (on the basis of World Bank data for Gross National Income per capita, see [http://www.isa-sociology.org/form\\_isa.pdf](http://www.isa-sociology.org/form_isa.pdf)). This type of grant may be used toward airfare and/or accommodation.

(b) Registration grants: Eligible are RC07 members from any country but strong preference will be given to applicants from Category B and C countries.

It is our past experience that funding is so limited that only a very few grants can be awarded. Participants are thus strongly encouraged to pursue alternative sources of support.

How to apply: Please send your application to <isarc07@gmail.com> with the keywords "Grant application ISA2010" in the subject line. Include in your application full contact information, country you are based in, title of the session, title and abstract of the paper, CV, and, if available, a copy of the paper. Please make sure that your membership with ISA and RC07 is current. The deadline for submitting grant applications is January 31, 2010. Successful applicants will receive notifications by mid-March.



## South Africa: World Cup and Transport Futures

**Sultan Khan**

*Sociology Programme, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*

The 2010 FIFA World Cup has provided the much needed impetus to get things moving with a sense of urgency and focus on the South African public transport sector if it is going to provide effective means of mobility for the anticipated 500,000-650,000 international football enthusiasts that are going to descend on its already overcrowded cities. South Africa's urban public transport system has been shaped and styled largely by colonial and apartheid social and spatial engineering to serve primarily the economic wants and social well-being of the minority white ruling class. It was a system designed to prevent the mixing of different race groups by physically confining them to isolated geographic areas so that the economic interests of the predominantly white ruling class was served. The majority of disenfranchised Black communities were denied an opportunity to social well-

being through a repressive system of control on their movement from monofunctional and dormitory styled townships to the major centres of economic production in and around the cities.

In the new democracy, transformation of the urban transport sector makes pressing demands on the state in keeping with national, provincial and local development priorities. This is unfolding in the context of complex political, economic and social dynamics involving a wide range of stakeholders with competing and opposing interests in the public transport sector. This diversity in interest has plagued the public transport sector since democracy which manifested itself in violent conflict, breakdown in regulation, inefficient use of resources and a source of threat to social and environmental sustainability.

With South Africa winning the 2010 Football bid this mega event is

perceived to be a panacea by urban planners, public policy makers and politicians to South Africa's historical urban transport woes with multiple public transport modalities being implemented amidst many contradictions and challenges from different stakeholders to meet the FIFA 2010 deadline. The state has taken a lead role by approving a Public Transport Strategy and Action Plan between 2007–20 in order to create a sustainable public trans-

port sector. In anticipation of the 2010 Soccer World Cup to date, 3.5 billion rands have been set aside for public transport and non-motorised transport infrastructure and systems investment, with priority to venues supporting the 2010 soccer events. As part of phase 1 of the Action Plan 12 cities (metropolitan and secondary) and 6 district municipalities are targeted. Nine of the targeted 12 cities are 2010 World Cup host cities.



One of the cornerstones of the integrated public transport system is South Africa's adoption of the Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) System. Cape Town and Johannesburg have to date adopted this system whereas Durban is still to consider after the World Cup. The transition to the BRT system given South Africa's history of dependence on the private mini bus taxi system, hailed as one the most successful Black Economic

Empowerment projects in the country, is not without political contestation. In Cape Town and Johannesburg, the mini bus taxi consortium has been in ongoing violent conflict with the respective municipalities on the implementation of the BRT system, citing a loss of revenue by small operators who eke a living out of this transport system. The reality is that many of the taxi operators are individuals and fear a loss of access

to transport routes when big taxi monopolies begin to dominate the BRT network. This conflict between the taxi operators and local governments is ongoing with violent clashes and threats to boycott the 2010 World Cup. In Johannesburg, the municipality was expected to undertake a test run of its inte-

grated transport system for this year's Confederated Soccer Cup to test its readiness for the 2010 event only to be marred by violent opposition and clashes with taxi operators. It was reported that the city came to a standstill with episodic clashes with taxi operators and the cities law enforcement officers.



Durban, however, has opted to wait and see as to what the outcome of the BRT will be both in the mother city and the gold city. It is struggling to revamp one of its major bus and mini taxi terminus which is a point of transit for some 200,000 commuters every day at the entrance of the city. It hopes to connect the bus transport system to an adjacent rail system through a mall on a historical site that records a rich history of Indian market gardeners and traders. The market traders are threatened

with eviction from this trading community and are opposing the municipality's attempt to bring in big investors to the area at the expense of local people to dress up the city for the 2010 event. Its public bus company, which was privatized in 2003, has come to the end of the road as the private company has collapsed financially due to serious allegations of corruption and maladministration. A new operator has now entered the beleaguered bus company this year and it has yet

to prove its diligence in meeting the 2010 challenges in this coastal city priding itself with its blue skies, white sandy beaches and Indian cuisine.

European soccer enthusiasts in Johannesburg are likely to lose out on local experiences if they chose not to travel by the popular mini bus taxi, bus or private cab to wealthy suburbs such as Sandton. South Af-

rica's first speed train named the Gautrain is anticipated to connect commuters from the Oliver Tambo International Airport in a matter of 12 minutes to exclusive apartments in Sandton city. However, feeder bus routes to former apartheid styled African townships are also in the making for the adventure seekers.



South Africa's public transport system undoubtedly has undergone major transformation and improvements in a short period of time. It is anticipated that post the World Cup event, South African urbanites would have settled into a transport system that breaks away from the apartheid legacy and will

promote efficiency, be cost effective, sustainable and, moreover, benefit the urban poor. However, getting there means having to endure a very bumpy ride for the different stakeholders in the South African public transport sector, but hopefully for the 2010 visitors they would not notice much the patch work is done well.





## Technological Futures

**Gerardo del Cerro Santamaría**

*Cooper Union/ Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA*

The deepest economic crisis in 50 years may alter the pace and reach of some ongoing technological innovations and yet the return of Keynesianism and President Obama's "fourth way" of managing capitalism by increasing public spending could provide a push to some others. The interrelationships between energy, capital and information that lie at the core of socio-economic systems may be significantly altered.

Technologies are increasing the complexity of our lives as human workers and competency is not keeping pace well enough to avoid disasters due to human error. Electronically enabled teams in networks, robots with artificial intelligence, and other non-carbon life-forms are increasingly making financial, health, educational, and even political decisions for us. What are the implications of the fact that more decisions are being made by nonhuman entities? What is the foresight on social robots and tele-robotics in the age of global interconnectedness?


Will the race for biomedical and genetic enhancement be in the 21st

century what the space race was in the previous century? Since urbanization is predicted to affect 60 percent of the world population by 2030, what would be the green technologies in place to make global/networked cities more sustainable? As more of the world's population lives in cities, will rapid development to accommodate them make existing environmental and socioeconomic problems worse and will epidemics be more common due to crowded dwelling units and poor sanitation?

In a context of increasing interest for alternative energy sources, will public transportation technology make a come-back? Will information/communication and biological technologies realize their potential in the network society and foster more democracy and social justice, or are we witnessing the rise of bio-violence/bioterrorism as emerging scientific disciplines such as genomics and nanotechnology become more accessible, and the expansion of surveillance technologies as ubiquitous unseen nano-devices begin to

provide seamless communication among people everywhere?

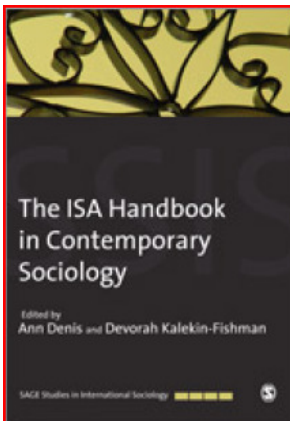
Finally, what methodologies do social scientists have to put in place to research the complex scenario before us? What should be our position both as scientists and public intellectuals considering that alternative Weltanschauungen provided for

example by life sciences and innovative technologies increasingly shape the public's views on social, political and economic issues? Is close collaboration between social scientists, engineers, scientists and even artists and architects possible not only during research practice but also when it comes to policy prescription? 

**NOW AVAILABLE**

## The ISA Handbook in Contemporary Sociology

**Ann Denis**  
**Devorah Kalekin-Fishman**



Just released is the much expected ISA Handbook in Contemporary Sociology, edited jointly by Ann Denis and Devorah Kalekin-

Fishman. The Handbook marks the state of international sociology at the beginning of the 21st Century and it will be an essential resource for scholars and students around the world for many years to come. It features up-to-date articles from virtually all major research fields of sociology, including articles by RC07 members Elisa P. Reis on “New Ways of Relating Authority and Solidarity: Theoretical and Empirical Explorations” and Markus S. Schulz on “Modes of Structured Interplay in the Modelling of Digital Futures”.

*“This Handbook is the first published by the ISA in this millennium; representing the fruit of in-depth dynamics it invites us to give all necessary attention to the concepts of conflict, cooperation and competi-*

*tion. By reflecting on the possible articulations of these concepts and attempting to apply them in diverse fields of social science the editors give voice to those who are studying the world as it is and perform the service of returning a set of concepts, approaches or paradigms to their legitimate place. I thank them warmly for offering us this fine volume, which, clearly, will be a milestone."*

**-Michel Wieviorka**, President, International Sociological Association

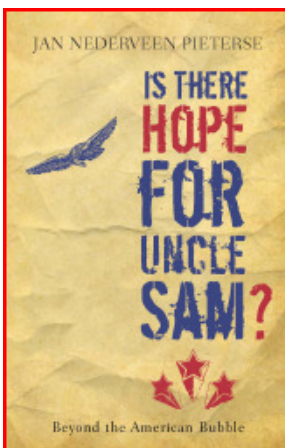
The ISA Handbook appeared at Sage as a hardcover with 504 pages

(ISBN: 978-1-4129-3463-3). The regular price is £90.00. **ISA members can save 45% by ordering online** <[www.uk.sagepub.com](http://www.uk.sagepub.com)> using discount code UK09OB001, or, if ordering from the US, Canada, South America, India or Australasia by mailing in a coupon available at <<http://www.isa-sociology.org/publ/coupons.htm>>. You may also contact Sage per voice +44 (0)20 7324 8703 or per fax +44 (0)20 7324 8700.



## Is There Hope For Uncle Sam? Beyond the American Bubble

**Jan Nederveen Pieterse**



Why has the dollar led the international credit crunch? Why is American military intervention increasingly unwanted and perceived as invasive? Why is American society so polarised and dissatisfied? How are the cornerstones of American social, political and economic organisation at fault, and how can they be rectified?

The 'American Bubble' has clearly burst. With the nationalisation of the last remaining invest-

ment banks and American world hegemony in decline for the first time in over a century, leading sociologist Jan Nederveen Pieterse explores where the US system has gone wrong, and what, if anything Americans can do about it.

In this provocative new title, Nederveen Pieterse examines the interlocking relationships between American money, status and power, the historic development of the 'American Bubble' and its roots in Dixie politics. Nederveen Pieterse argues that the decline can only be stemmed by dramatic new measures, such as a reintroduction of genuinely egalitarian New Deal-style politics and a complete rethinking of America's role in the international arena, attempting to address the roots of the problem. Nevertheless, the likelihood of these changes being accepted by the majority problematizes America's position further and highlights the need for swift, effective action. This comprehensive yet highly readable book gives a fascinating insight into the

mechanisms of American power today, how they grew up, fell down and affect our environment. Nederveen Pieterse also presents tenable solutions to the problems affecting the US and its relationship with the rest of the world, making this a key text for anyone trying to understand the meaning and practice of American power.

*"Jan Nederveen Pieterse brilliantly and engagingly depicts America's failing approach to global policy, and what might be done by way of correction. This lucid analysis deserves the widest possible readership and debate."*

**-Richard Falk**, Princeton University

*Is There Hope For Uncle Sam?* is published by Zed Books (Sept. 2008), £14.99, ISBN 9781848130234. For more information, please contact Ruvani de Silva on 020 7837 8466 or [ruvani.de\\_silva@zedbooks.net](mailto:ruvani.de_silva@zedbooks.net).



## Members write...

*Thank you for the very interesting RC07 Newsletter, which I was able to read only now, so please excuse me for the delay of this answer. The report gives a very good overview as well as an in-depth presentation of the entire conference and of each presentation. I wish to thank both you and Markus for such an excellent work.*

*Having been in RC07 since its very start in 1971 with Bertrand de Jouvenel, its founder and first president, and, later, as president myself until, my very good colleague and friend, Reimon Bachika, took over, my thanks and congratulations.*

*I see the Committee is becoming more and more well attended and with very competent participants. I see also with great joy, allow me to say so, how sociology and futures thinking are becoming more inter-related in the thinking of the participants in RC07, as is evident in their contributions, thus responding to social complexity. Immanuel Wallerstein had stressed, long ago, the need for sociologists to become less sub-divided in their specializations. This we all know, re-*

*quires at the same time, increasing interdisciplinarity. I wish you all to proceed in this direction as you are all aware of the growing interconnections of social changes at the world level as well as in different regions and countries*

*Thank you once more.*

**Eleonora Barbieri Masini**

*Professor Emeritus*

Faculty of Social Sciences, Gregorian University, Rome



## Donations

RC07 welcomes donations of any amount. Your donation can help support scholars from developing countries with soft currencies. International sociology depends on the dialogue among scholars from all world regions. ISA's limited funding is far from meeting the needs of the many scholars who would like to participate in meetings but are prevented by financial constraints. In addition, we would like to build an endowment to set-up a Best Student Paper Award that would honor the best future-oriented paper by a graduate student and help toward defraying the cost for participating in the world congress.

Donation can be sent directly to the RC07 Secretary-Treasurer : Dr. Hiroyuki Toyota, Center for International Education, Kansai Gaidai University, Osaka 573-1001, Japan. (Please make checks drafted in US\$ payable to HIROYUKI TOYOTA with 'RC07' in the purpose or comment line. Questions can also be emailed to <htoyota@yahoo.com>). Alternatively, donations can be made also via the ISA Secretariat, Faculty of Sociology, University Complutense, 28223 Madrid, Spain, with a note indicating 'For RC07'.



## Call for Newsletter Contributions

The newsletter appears in irregular intervals, approximately twice a year. The editor welcomes materials sent at any time, including but not limited to announcements of your recent or forthcoming publications and thought-pieces related to a publication, project, current topic that might be of interest to the membership. Contact: Radhamany Sooryamoorthy: sooryamoorthy@ukzn.ac.za

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