



**FUTURES RESEARCH**  
Newsletter of the  
International Sociological Association  
Research Committee 07 on Futures Research  
(ISARC07)

**No. 41 (Spring 2016)**

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## Message From the President

Dear Colleagues,

as we get closer to the realization of the Third ISA World Forum of Sociology, I would like to share with you the program of our scheduled sessions for Vienna. I look forward to meeting you there. For those who will not be able to attend the Forum I hope the RC07 program will provide you an idea of the wide range of issues we will cover as well as a glimpse of the exciting topics we will be discussing.

I take this opportunity to thank our program coordinator, Andre Salata, for the great job he has done. Salata and I counted with the precious help of many of RC07 members, and with the concourse of several newcomers whom I hope will soon be active participants in our Research Committee. My deep gratitude to all of you who dedicated your valuable time to contribute to an exciting program.

The deeply sad note of this Newsletter is the untimely death of John Urry. RC07 was privileged to benefit from his friendship, brilliant mind, immense generosity and enthusiasm. We will honor Professor John Urry memory in a session dedicated to commemorate his great work.

I ask you to bear in mind that we will deliver RC07 Prize to the best paper presented by a young scholar at the Vienna Forum. I ask the session conveners to send her/his nomination to us as soon as possible so that we can redirect the nominated papers to the prize committee for their analysis.

I want also to inform you that RC07 will organize a social gathering for those present at the Vienna Forum. Alternatives are being explored and we will notify the exact time and place of a happy hour, as well as the range of individual costs for this event. We will circulate information on that as soon as possible.

Please, do not forget that our Business Meeting will take place on Thursday, July 14th at 16:00 in Horsaal BIG 1 in the Main Building. Let us take the time to discuss our current issues, plans for the Toronto Congress in 2018 and other relevant themes to Futures Research.

I am looking forward to welcome you in Vienna.

Regards,

Elisa Reis

The Futures We Want: Global Sociology  
and the Struggles for a Better World



July 10–14, 2016  
Vienna, Austria



## Final Program of RC07 Futures Research

**Program Coordinator:** Andre SALATA (Pontificia Universidade do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil)

### **Contested Futures of the South**

**Organizer:** Dieter NEUBERT

**Chair:** Elisio MACAMO

During the last years we observe a renaissance of social protest movements in the South. They do not only challenge their government or existing economic structures but express their own concepts of a (better) future – the future they want. Examples are the “Arab Spring”, the Brazilian protest movement before and after the football world cup, protests in Burkina Faso after an army take over or movements for consumer rights in India. Their concepts for the future may be directed towards freedom or development, may express the desire for better conditions of living or consumption, or the concepts may refer to tradition religion or claim moral standards. However, even when the movements represent considerable parts of the societies, they are hardly uncontested. The visions of the future are at stake, intensively debated and more often than not in conflict with other visions.

### **Scenarios and Future Societies**

**Organizer:** Chia-ling LAI

This session will examine the relevance of scenarios in developing understanding of how societies of the future will be organised. Papers are invited both from those who have been involved in scenario developments and from those who wish to analyse conceptually what is involved in scenario work in sociology. The presumption of this session in thinking futures is that they are sociomaterial, that is not simply technological but also not “purely” social.

## **New Directions on Social Movements, Contentious Politics, and Futures Research**

**Organizer:** Geoffrey PLEYERS

Social movements are major actors of our societies and contribute to shaping possible futures. This panel welcomes both concrete analysis and theoretical contributions on how progressive or conservative social movements imagine, shape and implement alternative futures.

## **Social Movements and the Future They Want**

**Organizer:** Jeffrey GOODWIN

**Chair:** Ionel SAVA

Social movement scholars can make a significant contribution to the third Forum of the ISA entitled “The Futures we Want: Global Sociology and the Struggles for a Better World”. Social movements are major actors of our societies and contribute to shaping possible futures. This session welcomes both concrete analysis and theoretical contributions on how progressive or conservative social movements imagine, shape and implement alternative futures. We notably welcome contributions on how social actors and social movements imagine and contribute to shape alternative lifestyles, policies and sociability in the global age, increasingly shaped by both global interdependency and the finitude of the planet.

## **Elites, the Poor and the Welfare State in Unequal Democracies**

**Organizer:** Felix LOPEZ

Social science typically expects democracy and distribution to correlate and yet we now live in an era of democracy with increasing inequality. We remain unaware of the reasons why elites moved toward highly distributive welfare states in early democracies but not in more recent democracies, such as the ones in Latin America, Africa and South Asia. Furthermore, we now observe how elites in established welfare states begin to cope with inequality once again in North America and Western Europe. As several authors have argued, distribution is in many ways affected by the reactions of elites to the poor.

As argued by Swaan (1988), it was the acknowledgment of the interdependence between rich and poor that triggered the creation of welfare policies in Europe and in the US. And yet this pattern has not been replicated in the developing world. What are the preferences and perceived incentives behind such contrasting attitudes? What do they suggest as future trends for distribution patterns?

This session will look at the relationship between elites and the poor, and its consequences for future welfare policies. We will discuss the results of recent surveys with political and economic elites in Latin America and South Africa, and welcome sociologists and political scientists engaged in empirical research or conceptual work on elites and distribution, elites and social policy, elite reactions to the poor, comparisons between elite and mass opinions and perceptions, ethnic and symbolic dimensions of elite-mass conflicts, historical developments of the welfare state, and other related subjects.

### **Commemorating John Urry's Work**

**Organizer:** Chia-ling LAI

**This special session is dedicated to the memory of professor John Urry, and will celebrate his great work.**

### **Looking at Past and Present Inequalities for a Less Unequal Future**

**Organizer:** Elisa REIS

Equality and social justice have always been on the agenda of sociology. Meanings attributed to them remain the subject of philosophical and ideological debates. Yet these two values are deeply rooted in the practice of our discipline. We look at the social distribution of material and symbolic goods aiming to make them more efficient, more productive, more just – i.e., to a large extent, we trust sociology may concur to better developments in the future.

At the same time, research on social inequality has been circumscribed by the focus on the nation-state. Studies of global inequality overwhelmingly consist of comparisons of wealth and income between nations. Yet neither a focus on patterns of global stratification nor towards spatial relations across national boundaries follow from such studies. Nor has the innovative potential of feminist theorists' demands for full-fledged incorporation of gender inequalities and supra- and subnational inequality contexts substantially transformed the analytical framework of studies of social inequalities. New conceptualisations largely leave structural inequalities of gender, race, and ethnicity untouched and, in the process, maintain the nation-state framework to which the classical dimensions of class and status were tailored.

The session will therefore inquire how sociologists have conceptualized equality, how they explain historical patterns of inequality, and what questioning the nation-state framework and consideration of structural gender, racial and ethnic disparities do to our efforts to promote more just patterns of distribution in the future. Theoretical and empirical approaches to such questions and critical analysis are welcomed.

### **The Future of University Research and the National Innovation Systems**

**Organizers:** Jaime JIMENEZ GUZMAN and Elisa REIS

Since the inception of the National Innovation Systems in the 1990s, universities have been subjected to direct some of their efforts to satisfy the scientific and technological needs of industry and service agencies in general. Universities have been assigned a central role in fostering societal development and national economic prosperity. This was supposed to boost university-industry cooperation, technology transfer and patenting by universities. New organizations and activities to speed up the commercial utilization of academic research were

established, including technology transfer offices, more industry sponsored research projects, and spin-off companies.

Has this given rise to a distortion of the mission of the university? Particularly, has the mission of enhancing knowledge for knowledge sake been hampered? Some researchers complain they do not get enough financial support for projects when research is not related to applications. In sum, what is the future of university research and national innovation systems? Can we expect a proper balance in the sponsorship of applied and not applied research? Could not applied long-range research be properly supported regardless of its inapplicability? Should universities become the technological arm of big corporations?

### **Alternative Futures of the South**

**Organizer:** Florian STOLL

**OBS: In this session RC07 joins RC09 (Social Transformations and Sociology of Development), the host committee**

### **Class Consumption and Wealth Distribution: Trends and Perspectives for the Future**

**Session Organizers:** Celi SCALON and Chunling LI

This session is focused on the debate about social stratification, income, consumption and class structure, with special attention to emerging economies. In this sense, our aim is to discuss the paths and trends that can shape the future of a world facing geopolitics and geoeconomics transformations. The key question is: To what extent can the changes in the last decades point in the direction of a global scenario in which societies can become more inclusive and less unequal?

### **Diagnosis of the Times: Tendencies in Education and Society**

**Organizer:** Lars Geer HAMMERSHOJ

The session sets out to explore diagnosis of the times as an analysis strategy of diagnosing tendencies in current society. As the pace of change in society accelerates, diagnosis of the times becomes increasingly important as a tool of orientation in order to determining the tendencies in society. This is especially the case with education as education by definition is about preparing the new generation for living and working in future society. Thus, education appears to be a privileged field of diagnosis.

Diagnosis of the times can be traced back to the founding fathers of sociology and the intersection of philosophy and sociology. It is in the words of Foucault about looking for a difference: “What difference does today introduce with respect to yesterday?” That is, diagnosis is the precarious endeavor of interpreting indications in society (tendencies) of transformations of conditions of the times (that constitute today).

Despite the increased need and request of diagnosis of the times, there appears to be a lack of methodological reflection of this kind of analysis strategy with a few exceptions – notably sociologist Ulrich Beck and social-analyst Lars-Henrik Schmidt.

The session engages in the discussion hereof including on how diagnosis of the times differs from the description of society of social sciences and from projecting developmental trends and future scenarios of future studies. To illustrate, specific diagnosis of the relation of tendencies in education and society are presented and discussed.

### **Imagining Futures through the Visual**

**Organizer:** Gary BRATCHFORD

**Chair:** Emanuela C. DEL RE

**OBS:** In this session RC07 joins WG03 (Visual Sociology), the host committee

This session invites papers on research and case studies that consider how futures are being presented, mediated, performed, designed, narrated or imagined through a range of visual practices. Emphasizing the importance of visibility and communication, the session will consider:

- 1 How sociology and visual studies combined can be used to conceptualize current relations between vision and visibility.
- 2 The representation of varying social spheres, communities, environments, social movements, state and non-state actors on and offline.

As such, this session welcomes research that investigates what Schulz (2015) refers to as “future moves” within the discipline, as well as future visions in addition to research dealing with the assembly of visual material that point to an understanding or re-reading of our potential futures.

### **Identity and the Future**

**Session Organizer:** Mariolina GRAZIOSI

The rapid social change known by contemporary society has deeply influenced the process of formation of individual identity and the type of individual identity formed. In traditional society, individual identity was the result of a collective project, therefore the individual identity was socially determined. The transition to modern society, in particular the process of individualization, made central the question “Who am I?”, making identity an individual project. With the radicalization of the process of individualization, and the process of globalization, the individual identity has become more and more an individual project that can change periodically, making identity fluid, segmented and fragmented.

Sociologists like Anthony Giddens or Zygmunt Bauman have analysed the new forms of identity that characterize the late modernity. Giddens spoke of self-identity as a reflexive project, while Bauman spoke of liquid identity. Today we need to reflect on these two models and see if they are still valid.

I believe it is crucial to answer the following questions: can we still speak of the need of an identity or are we back to the idea of a mask that the person wears according to the social settings? Should we speak of a fluid identity that changes over time and space? Which are the effects of the fluid identity on the inner life of the individual?

## **The Politics of Conflict, Reconciliation, Memory, and Trauma: Paving a Path for the Present and Future**

**Session Organizer:** Lynn RAPAPORT

What are the possibilities and limitations of depicting traumatic memory? How is the past related to the present, and how does it impact the future? How do groups remember past atrocities? Does the past exist in the past, or does it exist in the present when we think about things that have passed? How do memories of past conflict impact the future?

Memory provides the linkage between the past, present, and future. This session will address issues of conflict, reconciliation, memory and trauma, paying attention to how the aftermath of violence affects the present and future. Can traumatic memory be represented? If so, how and by whom? Who has the legitimacy to represent the trauma, and what are the political ramifications of various means of commemoration and representation? How has trauma, particularly from the aftermath of violence, served the politics of remembering and forgetting, the politicization of suffering, the use and abuse of representation, and impacted the discussion of future reparations and/or reconciliation?

The session will showcase sociologists dealing with any aspect of the memory of conflict, trauma, and/or reconciliation in the aftermath of collective violence – war, genocide, or terrorism. Papers that deal with the representation of traumatic memory by victims, ethnic groups, the media, nation states and/or museums are welcome. Papers could also be about memory and memorialization, commemoration, memory and identity politics (constructing victims and perpetrators), political sites of memory, or how memory impacts future negotiations of retributive justice, forgiveness and forgetting.

## **Care and Careworkers: Intersectional and Comparative Perspectives. Exploring the Future of Social Inequalities**

**Session Organizers:** Bila SORJ and Nadya GUIMARAES

Societies are experiencing a strong rise in the number of elderly people, albeit at different paces and in response to different dynamics. This aging process generates new demands and is reconfiguring traditional care activities. Care services have become a significant area of paid work, resulting in an expanding professional labor market. Careworkers combine the experience of multiple forms of inequalities, both in North and South countries. How a construction of care in different socio-cultural environments will shape at large society's future well-being?

This session welcomes comparative analysis and the diversity approaches, focusing on the interaction between gender, race, age, nationality and migratory status in order to better understand how inequalities operate in the institutional domain (on employment conditions, careers, organization, public policies) and the subjective meanings carers give to their own work. We also welcome papers dealing with issues like professional training and border disputes, emotional labor and intimacy, care in the context of immigration and transnationalism, and care policies.

## **Future of Education**

**Session Organizers:** Gabor KIRALY and Zsuzsanna GERING



In our rapidly changing societies tertiary education is faced with different, often interrelated challenges. On the one hand, social factors affect its significance, such as losing its traditional social and economic roles, the accelerating and often abrupt nature of social changes and the uncertainty as a natural consequence of these changes. These social transformations seem to devalue professional bodies of knowledge in contrast to generalized skill sets. On the other hand, our new technological environment also deeply influences educational spaces and practices. Phenomena such as students' different style of information processing and altered concentration span, the omnipresence of information and communication technologies, as well as the appearance of new, digital forms of learning and teaching (like MOOCs) all challenge educational patterns and the established routines of both lecturers and management staff.

In relation to these aspects, a diverse and widespread discourse emerged from the feeling of an ongoing severe role change in order to identify new functions and practices for higher education. This session aims to contribute to this discourse through exploring the future trends of higher education.

## **RC07 BUSINESS MEETING**

**Thursday, 14 July 2016**

**TIME: 16:00 to 17:30**

**VENUE: Hörsaal BIG 1 (Main Building)**

### **Paths to Social Justice in the BRICS Countries**

**Session Organizers:** Jayanathan GOVENDER, Tom DWYER, Kiran ODHAV and Mokong Simon MAPADIMENG

Social justice is a global project but not an absolute concept. It is theorized and proposed for experiences of inequality; systems of power; geo-politics of wars and conflicts; production and consumption capabilities; discriminatory and exclusionary praxes; monetization of the environmental and global resources; social politics of feminism, gender and sexualisation; and skewed ICT landscape. Individually and collectively, these factors contribute globally to intense oppressive processes and attendant struggles.

The efforts towards some idea of social justice are ideologically, geographically and socially varied, contested and claimed. These efforts span global institutions, social movements, civil society formations and even individuals.

The session seeks to recognize the varied paths, mechanisms and processes towards social justice in the BRICS countries. It hopes to provide an opportunity to share conceptual understanding, knowledge, and social commitment towards current and future social justice dispositions, movements and projects.

### **Futures of Inequality and Collective Action**

**Session Organizer:** Jan P. NEDERVEEN PIETERSE

This session attempts to discuss recent developments regarding inequalities and collective action. In doing so, the main objective is to analyse cases and evidences that could indicate tendencies for the future.

**Chair:** Antonio ALVAREZ-BENAVIDES

### **Socio-Ecological Struggles and Emergent Innovations in the Sociogenesis of Democratic Futures**

**Session Organizer:** Jose CASTRO

This session invites papers focused on the interrelations between social struggles against socio-ecological inequality and injustice (e.g. lack of access to essential goods like clean air and water or the violent displacement of populations caused by large-scale human interventions), and the emergence of social (including socio-technical) innovations aimed at overcoming inequality and injustice and fostering substantive democratization to bring about desirable futures.

We welcome papers that have a comparative-analytical approach, and that address the imagining and construction of futures in a historical-sociological and comparative perspective. The papers can be theoretical and empirical, and may address problems located at different temporal and spatial scales such as the interaction between single events and broader, longer-term processes, as well as innovations developed to foster progressive social transformations at different scales, from local to global.

### **The Cultural Dimension of Innovation Processes**

**Session Organizer:** Massimiliano RUZZEDDU

In the current debate, innovations seem to be exclusively the object of economic studies. The importance of innovation processes mainly consists of the possibility of value production for entrepreneurs, political authorities and citizens. Innovation is desirable because it can contribute to the development of a given geographical area, raise the occupational levels and improve the commercial balance. However this idea is based upon the theoretical frame of the goal-oriented action, for which social actors are supposed to act according to rationalistic criteria and always try to enlarge the gap between cost and income, with no regard to their own emotions, values and beliefs.

On the contrary, in order to understand and enhance the innovation processes, it is necessary to also take into consideration the cultural dimension. For instance, the unprecedented pace of innovation, which began with the Second Industrial Revolution in the 1800s, does not only have economic roots: it also depends on the scientific revolution, the end of traditional societies and a widespread faith in the progress that had set a favorable environment for innovation, especially in terms of acceptance of new technologies by large masses.

This framework might help to understand, for instance, the cases of failed innovation: where social representations of science and technology are negative, and the common idea of time does

not consist of beliefs in historical progress and evolution, the introduction of new technologies might be problematic.

This session will accept papers, both theoretical and empirical, that highlight the relationship between culture and innovation processes.



**International Sociological Association  
Research Committee on Futures Research (ISA-RC07)**

President: Markus S. Schulz <isarc07@gmail.com>  
Secretary-Treasurer: Hiroyuki Toyota <htoyota@kansai.ac.jp>  
<http://www.isa-sociology.org/rc07.htm> and <http://futures-research.org/>

**Membership Form**

This form is for new and current RC07 members with already updated ISA membership. Please **send the completed form** directly to the ISA secretariat per **email: isa@isa-sociology.org** or **fax: +34-913 524 945** or **postal mail to:**

**ISA, Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociología, Universidad Complutense, 28223 Madrid, SPAIN**

In case you are not yet a member of ISA, then please use the general form to join both ISA and RC07 available at:  
<[http://www.isa-sociology.org/memb\\_i/index.htm](http://www.isa-sociology.org/memb_i/index.htm)>.

You have also the option to sign up online via ISA's secure site at: <<https://secured.com/~f3641/formisa.htm>>.

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RC07 membership fees cover a period of four calendar years. Applications received before October 15 will be processed for the current calendar year. Applications received after October 15 will be processed for the following calendar year. Please indicate your selection:

Supporter US\$40 (voluntary)

Regular US\$20

Discount US\$10 (for students from any country and members residing in a category B/C country, including:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, American Samoa, Angola, Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Rep, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Russian Fed., Rwanda, Samoa, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, S. Tome & Principe, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Is., Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, West Bank & Gaza, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Lifetime Member (only available to ISA Lifetime Members aged 65+ years):

US\$80 (voluntary)  US\$40  US\$20 (discount for residents in category B/C country, see list above)

Donation to RC07 activities: You can, if you wish, make a donation to the ongoing activities of RC07.

Donation amount: USD  10  20  30  50  75  100  150  Other USD \_\_\_\_\_

I agree that my postal address may appear in public communications:  Yes  No

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Both this form and your payment must reach ISA Secretariat in order to validate your membership. Cancellation of payment is not possible; ISA reserves the option to adjust the amount charged to correct inadvertent errors.

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# **International Sociological Association**

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The International Sociological Association Research Committee 07 Futures Research (ISARC07) was founded in 1971 and is dedicated to the promotion of future-oriented social research. A newsletter with details of ISARC07's activities is published about twice a year. For more information on ISARC07 and on how to become a member, please visit our websites at:

<<http://www.isa-sociology.org/rc07.htm>> and <<http://futures-research.org/>>.

Contact email: <[isarc07info@gmail.com](mailto:isarc07info@gmail.com)>