



Economy and Society

RC02 2020 QUARTER 4 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

My last letter to you in August was a time of enormous uncertainty. The ISA Forum had been postponed to February and it was frankly unclear whether it would be held in person (yes, some were still campaigning for this), on-line, in a hybrid format, postponed again, or simply cancelled.

The ISA Vice President for Research, Geoffrey Pleyers of Université Catholique de Louvain, had few good choices to choose from and many constituencies within the ISA with conflicting interests. On behalf of RC02, the Board and I provided our input in an attempt to shape the Forum to be helpful for Research Committees like our own—large, active, geographically diverse, and with members from radically different income levels. The ISA chose to have the ISA Forum in an entirely online format, but centered in the Porto Alegre time zone, and on almost the exact same days as an in-person conference. Frankly, the execution of the Forum continues to be an ongoing experiment with many of the details yet to be worked out.

I'd like to publicly thank my ISA Forum Co-Program Coordinator, Nadya Araujo Guimaraes of Universidade de São Paulo, for her enthusiasm, time commitment, and flexibility. Before COVID-19, she had taken the lead role in organizing our one-day ISA Forum Pre-conference, “Cultural

Analyses of the Economy,” with several excellent sessions and opening and closing plenary speakers (Philippe Steiner of Sorbonne Université and Frederick Wherry of Princeton University). When the conference was postponed, and then moved online, it became logistically impossible for RC02 to host the pre-conference online. Fortunately, Nadya was able to help shepherd several of the Pre-conference papers into the ISA Forum, and both Fred and Philippe graciously agreed to move their plenaries to the ISA Forum.

I would also like to thank our 30 session organizers who, often under very tight deadlines, had to re-organize their sessions under challenging circumstances as friends, family, and colleagues were confronting COVID-19 and its avalanche of social consequences. It is a testament to their hard work that we only lost a net of four sessions, while gaining some superb sessions, such as Steiner's and Wherry's plenaries.

Please mark your calendars for the **RC02 Business Meeting on Sunday, February 28, 14:15-15:45** (Porto Alegre time zone, 17:15-18:45 UTC). Usually our business meetings are held at the Forum or Congress, and therefore one must attend the conference to participate. At the Forum, to promote democratic engagement and transparency, we will have the Business Meeting be open to all regardless of whether one has registered for or is attending the conference. Details on how to access the Business

Meeting will be emailed to members as we get closer to the event. That said, I acknowledge that the time is highly inconvenient for members located in Asia and the Subcontinent.

If you have any ideas on how to promote connections within RC02, or if you have an

initiative that you'd like to volunteer for, please don't hesitate to reach out to me (Aaron.Pitluck [at] IllinoisState [dot] edu).

Aaron Pitluck
RC02 President (2018-2022)
Illinois State University

PANDEMIC OBSERVATIONS

Earlier in 2020, We asked RC02 Members to write short essays on how the COVID-19 pandemic might incite lasting social change, and other issues at the intersection of the pandemic and economy & society. We welcome further contributions related to the pandemic. Please send essays to the RC02 Secretary and Newsletter Editor, Dustin Stoltz (dss219 [at] lehigh [dot] edu).

THE RISKS OF UNTRUSTWORTHY TRIALS

BY Donald W. Light

We hear a lot these days about the possibility of stopping the clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccine candidates early and rushing the vaccines to market. But stopping trials before the full trial is completed could downplay or altogether hide the potential health risks, mainly because adverse effects tend to show up later in the testing process. By relying solely on preliminary results, one gets a falsely positive view of the vaccine.

A Kaiser Family Foundation [survey](#) in September found that 62 percent of Americans worry that political pressure will lead the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to approve a COVID-19 vaccine before making sure it is safe and effective. Therefore, the public should strongly oppose ending clinical trials before they are completed. During an unprecedented health crisis, greater prudence is called for, not less.

Having vaccines tested by the companies who develop them and stand to make windfall profits is a conflict of interest that also fosters distrust. In the

past, companies have used the following four well-known techniques for biasing Phase III clinical trials—the stage of drug development that involves human test subjects to measure efficacy and safety. The FDA and regulators assess these results before deciding whether or not to approve a treatment.

Besides the first technique of stopping trials early, a second technique used by companies is to choose a trial's benchmark of success (called an end-point) that is easier to achieve than proving real clinical benefit. An example is benchmarking success to mild COVID cases rather than serious ones. This causes a vaccine to seem more effective than it really is. A third technique is to exclude more vulnerable, higher-risk people from the population sampled. Then, when a random sample is taken, it does not represent the whole population. A fourth way is to hide or bury evidence of adverse effects so that they do not show up in the statistical analysis. These are important reasons why independent scientists are demanding that companies openly share the details of both their trial designs and statistical protocols.

Vaccines are the most universal public health good in medicine. They are developed and injected into a healthy population and therefore should be extremely safe. William Schultz, who directed policy

for the FDA, [recently stated](#) that “a coronavirus vaccine for the general public should be required to meet the traditional safety and efficacy standards, not ones potentially compromised by haste.” Only then can a vaccine be an effective tool to join already proven methods to minimize infection. Whole nations have shown that isolation through travel restrictions and quarantine, masking, testing, and monitoring can drive down rates of infection and death to very low levels. Responsible treatments can in turn accelerate the pace at which the economy and consumer spending can be revived and jobs restored.

The calls for universal, safe, effective and affordable vaccines to address the current pandemic reflect a philosophy and ethic of proactive treatment that applies to all of health care. Fulfilling this promise depends on well-designed, transparent, and trustworthy clinical trials.

Donald Light is a visiting scholar at the Institute for Advanced Study and a professor of health policy at the Rowan School of Osteopathic Medicine. He is a faculty affiliate of the NYU Division of Medical Ethics.

INTERVIEW

A CONVERSATION WITH DENNIS MCNAMARA, Georgetown University

Dustin Stoltz: What was it about political economy and economic sociology that initially attracted you?

Dennis McNamara: When I started graduate school, Theda Skocpol was the graduate director and just finished *Bringing The State Back In*, along with Orlando Patterson, Ezra Vogel, and Harrison White, there were a number of people doing political economy — weren't really thinking about “economic sociology” directly at the time. But, in addition to that, there were a number of scholars from abroad, especially from Europe and Israel, who were at the forefront of this effort to move beyond sociology, touching other areas like political science and economics. Within the Harvard sociology department, we were encouraged to do languages, and as we did it, it drew us into more language specific humanities, like the history

department. I did my dissertation on the historical, socio-economic development of Korea in the late 19th century, and that was really welcomed in the sociology department.

There was this movement into these other disciplines, to see not just how sociology contrasted, but also how it fit in with these other disciplines. The people the department brought in we're going in these different directions, and were so attractive that there was no way that you wouldn't go with them. It was that interaction with these scholars and the openness of sociology — the openness to sharing with other disciplines — that made it all possible. And, Paul DiMaggio was there, two years ahead of me, and he's done great work related to economic sociology, Tom Gold, who did work on Taiwan and the developmental state, John Lee and his work on development in Korea — I could go through the whole list of people, but it's just reflective of the kind of ambitions and opportunities that were presented to us at the time. It's always fascinated me that Stanford is often seen as the beginning of economic sociology — and it

certainly was. But, Harvard also played an important role.

DS: From your perspective, what were the main interests in RC02 when you first got involved in the late 80s?

DM: There were two sides to that. First, is the American Sociological Association, and the second is the International Sociological Association. In RC02, it was really fascinating to hear the work from scholars in Canada, which tended to be a kind of bridge for American sociologists to French sociology and German sociology. The ASA — the American side of economic sociology — was really more focused on socio-economic development, and sometimes dialoguing with institutional economists. American sociology was really focused, whether conscious or not, on asking “Why don’t you develop like the United States?” Until Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and dependency theory began to have an influence in the United States. But, the Europeans were different. They also knew languages. They knew theory. They weren’t beholden to the American model. They saw the United States as one model, but they also had Germany, they had France. And, they were already engaging with the development of Latin America.

It was a very exciting time to be involved with RC02. Between the ASA and the ISA, it was like working in two different worlds for me. And, of course, RC02 was deeply influenced by scholars at the University of California, Berkeley. As I came in, Neil Smelser was stepping out of the leadership role, but Harvey Makler was continuing the influence from the West Coast, with wonderful contributions from the Berkeley folks. RC02 was the second oldest research committee. When you came to the international conference, there was a certain gravitas associated with RC02 — people recognized RC02, it served as a foundational piece

in the organization.

DS: How has your experience with RC02 shaped or helped your own research agenda?

DM: In the 70s and 80s, I was doing work on socio-economic development, focusing on East Asia. There was a whole group forming around these ideas. Peter Evans, of course, and Chalmers Johnson, a political scientist with a strong sociological background — these scholars spawned a wonderful group working on development theory, and in particular development issues in East Asia. This group was strong when I was at Harvard and when I did a postdoc at Berkeley, and I was very much influenced by them. One of the reasons I got involved with ISA was to really tap international conversations—and especially the European scholars—which were a little more focused on socio-economic development with a stronger theoretical base. And, I certainly got that at ISA.

With the ISA, and especially with RC02, I would say the thing I really got was collegueship. Harry Makler, Arnaud Sales, and Alberto Martinelli encouraged me from the beginning to strengthen ties with scholars of Asia in the Committee. I developed a network of people that I knew I was going to see, they knew the concepts, they knew the conversations, and the exchange started the moment we met. They were very supportive of my work and that is especially important for younger scholars. Both encouraging and just a fertile environment, because you get so many different perspectives in the same room. That is one of the reasons I found RC02 really critical to my work.

DS: What do you see as the biggest unanswered questions at the intersection of economy and society?

DM: we face such a profound transition, right now. Following Thomas Piketty's book on global inequality (*Capital in the 21st Century*), we're in the center of this huge dialogue that is suddenly taking hold of even the most convinced capitalist in the United States. If I look back on my own career, early on we were working with world systems, and were really struggling to get that into the mainstream, get people thinking about that — I don't think that's going to be a problem now!

The interaction of state and civil society in the economy have gained a lot of attention. Civil society and its balance with the state was really the foundation of development and the economy. I think these bases have eroded. But, what do we do about this erosion? For the younger scholars, the issue is: do we have any answers? Here in Washington, DC, the politicians are looking to the universities and saying "you're not giving us much help." These questions are so profound, they're not easy. People are definitely working on it, but we have a lot of unanswered questions. There's much work to be done.

Dennis McNamara is the Park Professor of Sociology and Korean Studies in the Department of Sociology at Georgetown University. His research interests related to socio-economic development of East Asia, particularly Japan, South Korea and, more recently China and Thailand.

His earlier publications tracked models of development in the textile industry, and more recently he has study knowledge networks. He is currently completing a study of China's state-led innovation system in a foreign-invested local electronics hub. A second strand of research follows the "education diplomacy" of Japan and China in Southeast Asia, as both nations compete to extend production networks into deeper

knowledge networks.

McNamara received his B.A. from Saint Louis University ('69), and an M.A. (Sociology) from Fordham University ('74). He also pursued studies in theology, earning a Master of Divinity from the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley ('76). McNamara completed his doctorate (Sociology) at Harvard University ('83) where he worked with Daniel Bell, Theda Skocpol, and Ezra Vogel. Vogel, his graduate advisor, encouraged him to study East Asia. His dissertation was titled, "Imperial Expansion And Nationalist Resistance: Japan In Korea, 1876-1910." Donald Warwick chaired his dissertation committee, while Paul Starr, Orlando Patterson, and Edward Wagner served as readers.

Following the completion of his doctorate, McNamara joined the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley as a postdoctoral fellow. He joined the faculty at Georgetown University in 1984, and was appointed to an endowed chair in 1995 as Park Professor of Sociology and Korean Studies. He was awarded multiple Fulbright research fellowships for study in Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia, as well as a grant from the National Science Foundation..

His oeuvre includes six books, including *The Colonial Origins Of Korean Enterprise: 1910-1945* (1990, Cambridge), in which he argued that the concentration of economic activity in the tight-knit conglomerates (*chaebol*) in South Korea stretched back to the early colonial period (1910-1945), this was in stark contrast to those suggesting this concentration resulted directly from policies implemented during the 1970s. He continued with two monographs on political economy, *Textiles And*

Industrial Transition In Japan (1995, Cornell), and *Trade and Transformation in Korea, 1876-1945* (Westview Routledge, 1996). His turn toward theoretical issues was evident in *Corporatism And Korean Capitalism* (1999 Routledge), and *Market and Society in Korea - Interest, Institution and the Textile Industry* (2002, Routledge). More recently, he has come to focus on knowledge

networks and innovation with a volume titled, *Business Innovation in Asia - Knowledge and Technology Networks from Japan* (Routledge 2011). McNamara joined RC02 at the Delhi World Congress in 1986, was elected executive secretary of RC02 in 1994, and then president in 1998. He organized the RC02 program for the World Congresses at Bielefeld (1998), Brisbane (2002), and Sydney (2000).

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The following is a short note on the recent member publication: "[Pharmaceuticals as a market for lemons](#)," by Donald W. Light and Joel R. Lexchin published in *Social Science & Medicine*.

'LEMONS' AS A CORRUPTION OF MARKETS

BY Donald W. Light

When markets do not meet the stringent requirements that economists set for a perfectly functioning market, which is most of the time, sociological and institutional factors come into play. Contributing to his Nobel Prize in economics, George Akerlof developed the theory of so-called lemons, based on used cars with hidden risks or flaws that sellers did not disclose to unwitting buyers. This is one form of mis-named "market failure," which does not mean the market breaks down on the side of the road but rather lets [sellers exploit buyers](#) based on information asymmetry or other forms of power that allow sellers to shape markets to their preferences.

Sociologists could do much more with the many markets for lemons. Each must be studied empirically to document how different stakeholders respond to problems of information asymmetry, secrecy, and power. In markets for lemons, sellers also attempt to

bend laws and regulations to their interests, even making hidden risks legal. Buyers, whose interests are less concentrated may try to organize and institute practices such as guarantees, warranties, and recalls to deal with lemons.

In "Pharmaceuticals as a market for [lemons](#)," the widely cited physician and policy analyst, Joel [Lexchin](#), and I first revise Akerlof's theory and then apply it to pharmaceuticals as the world's largest market for 'lemons.' Many people may not realize that medicines approved by the U.S. FDA or EMA (European Medicines Agency) as safe and effective and properly prescribed are a leading cause of hospitalizations and deaths. This is only possible because the drug companies have worked for decades to shape regulations so that risks of harm can be under-reported or suppressed and measures of efficacy do not require evidence that new medicines are clinically better than the 15,000 drugs already in use. Orphan drugs approved for rare diseases are especially devoid of clinical evidence of safety and effectiveness.

These industry-led regulations enable companies to develop new drugs and minor variations of existing ones with untested and hidden risks of harm. In other words, the huge pharmaceutical research enterprise, following the rules, regulations, and procedures of society's regulators, develops drugs often without evidence that they are clinically safe or effective and may have hidden risks of harm. All of them, however, warrant patents for price-protected marketing, and new patents are [the main product](#) of pharmaceutical

R&D. This is hardly what people want or think they are getting.

Donald Light is a visiting scholar at the Institute for Advanced Study and a professor of health policy at the Rowan School of Osteopathic Medicine. He is a faculty affiliate of the NYU Division of Medical Ethics.

PROGRAM

RC02 ECONOMY AND SOCIETY IV ISA FORUM OF SOCIOLOGY

FEBRUARY 23-27, 2021 ONLINE IN PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL

RC02 Plenary: Cultural Analyses of the Economy

Session Organizers:

Nadya GUIMARAES, University of São Paulo, Brazil

Aaron PITLUCK, Illinois State University, USA

Prior to the postponement of the ISA Forum, RC02 had organised a full-day pre-conference titled *Cultural Analyses of the Economy*. Due to the pandemic, we were forced to cancel the pre-conference. Fortunately, our two plenary speakers have kindly agreed to share a plenary session in the ISA Forum. 30 minutes is reserved at the end for discussion of Steiner's and Wherry's research agendas, as well as the broad topic of cultural analyses of the economy.

Philippe STEINER, Sorbonne Université, France

Culture and the Economy: From Horkheimer to Bourdieu and Beyond

The critical theory of Adorno and Horkheimer, but also of Benjamin, faced the question of the relationship between economy and culture to point out a "cultural industries" that downgrade culture, as opposed to high culture and the unique oeuvre that requires effort, that preserves aura. Later on, Bourdieu accommodated the relationship between culture and economy according to the nature of the capital involved, and relegating the relationship of the "economic" economy to mass culture, while Zelizer proposes to multiply the "trade circuits" channeling economic and cultural transactions. Beyond this reminder of the canonical forms with which social sciences take into account the relationship between culture and economy, my presentation seeks to enrich our understanding of popular culture in its close association with the economy. Accordingly, I rely on the Polanyian tripartition of the economy (market, reciprocity and redistribution) in order to avoid believing that the economy is reduced to the market alone. On the other hand, I use an ongoing inquiry of popular street festivals in the south of France to show the complexity of the mutual relations between these economies and popular culture.

Frederick WHERRY, Princeton University, USA

The Weight of Debt, the Dignity of Debtors

Household debt is heavy, not only in its quantity but also in its relational qualities. These relational weights along with ensuing relational damages impugn the dignity of debtors, generating costs that are material but that also lie beyond materiality. In this talk, I will draw on collaborative work with Parijat Chakrabarti, Isabel Jijon, and Katie Donnelly as well as work with Robin Lee, Dalié Jiménez, Lois Lupica, and Jeff Reichman to demonstrate the range of damages wrought by debt collection practices and the distribution of damaging debt collection actions on racialized communities. I will then turn to the lack of infrastructure for justice and describe how my new Debt Collection Lab is beginning to build data and artistic infrastructures to track, analyze, and depict the weight of debt collection.

Latin American Structuralism, CEPAL, and Economic Sociology in Historical and Contemporary Perspective

Session Organizers:

Nadya GUIMARAES, University of São Paulo, Brazil

Aaron PITLUCK, Illinois State University, USA

This invited session is an early excavation to begin to better understand the influence of Dependency Theory and Latin American Structuralism on contemporary Economic Sociology. Specifically, this invited session explores the influence of ECLA/CEPAL (the Economic Commission for Latin America / La Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)). Torres from CEPAL begins the conversation by looking backward and looking forward. He proposes three broad historical structural methods that CEPAL has contributed to Latin American (if not world) sociology and contemplates how neo-structuralism can understand the hyperglobalization of the 21st century. Kluger, Wanderley and Barbosa continues the conversation by investigating how CEPAL was forced to create comparative national frameworks for analysis in its short-lived partnership with the Brazilian National Bank for Economic Development. We conclude with Almeida reflecting on the intellectual contributions of CEPAL, based in part on her own experiences with CEPAL as a young researcher.

Solidarity Economy Projects in Diverse Social Contexts

Session Organizers:

Melanie E BUSH, Adelphi University, United States

Withney SABINO, Associação Sócio Cultural Horizonte Azul, Mozambique

In this Invited Session presenters examine solidarity economy projects in diverse social contexts and through different lenses. Our papers explore the impact of involvement in these initiatives for youth development; the perspectives of young Mozambican feminists about what types of structures of solidarity are most aligned with deep resistance and transformative practices; the shaping of collective and personal narratives and the articulation of the kind(s) of society(ies) that members envision in the long run.

Presenters originate in Mozambique, Angola, Mexico and the United States, residing in Canada and Portugal, Mozambique and the United States. We bring intergenerational (ages 23-63) feminist, scholar-activist, critical race and decolonial perspectives about contemporary initiatives and the possibilities they represent. We are interdisciplinary with academic roots in sociology, political science, critical youth studies, anthropology, business, and community economic development. All presenters are involved in scholarly as well as community projects.

Through discussion of multiple settings, we collectively consider the question of how we “be the change” in relationships and structures and pursue an understanding of what principles and practices most firmly embed solidarity and the common good in contemporary efforts aimed at radical social transformation. This session engages participants and attendees in thinking about *Challenges of the 21st Century: Democracy, Environment, Inequalities, Intersectionality* through a discussion of ideas and energies in action.

Economic Protectionist Impulses and Divergent Politics in Late Neoliberalism

Session Organizer:

Cory BLAD, Manhattan College, USA

The expansive growth of far-right nationalist politics, a resurgent interest in socialist and communist political mobilization, scrambling efforts to revitalize centrist politics, and apathetic or quiescent withdrawal are defining features of political environments in the contemporary era. This panel looks to shed light on the various ways (left, right, centrist, other) in which national populations have sought political mitigation (or given up on such mitigation) of economic hardships and adversities and how efforts to maintain neoliberal conditions have contributed to, and perhaps relied on, this political fragmentation and withdrawal.

Trends and Counter-trends in the Fight for a More Egalitarian Society in Latin America

Session Organizers:

Alejandra SALAS-PORRAS, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, FCPyS, Mexico

Guillermo FARFAN, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico

Pedro MENDES LOUREIRO, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Aiko IKEMURA AMARAL, King's College London, United Kingdom

Poverty and inequality declined substantially in Latin America between 2000 and 2015, particularly under certain left-wing governments. Although neoliberal strategies were not completely abandoned, social and economic policies were introduced to reconstruct welfare and developmental institutions. Foreign relations were diversified away from the United States and organizations were created to advance cooperation among South American countries, leading to broadly acknowledged democratic achievements. Recently, however, Latin American transnational elites have organized a counter-movement, often with certain popular support. Strategies were implemented to undercut the legitimacy of left-wing regimes, including an ideological attack on the so-called populist and charismatic political elites. As a result, they have been brought down by right-wing forces entrenched not only in political parties, but also in organizations encompassing key sectors of the population and civil society. Poverty and inequality trends have thus stagnated or reversed, retrenching racialised, gendered, and class-inflected patterns of privilege and exclusion.

The present session aims at understanding the origins and scope of the democratic accomplishments progressive forces in South America achieved, the limitations and failures they could not overcome, and the reaction they elicited from right-wing forces, both inside and outside the countries. We particularly invite contributions that explore the fall and the recent rise in Latin America's social and economic inequalities, in which race, class, and gender emerge as mutually-enforcing, structuring factors. While we encourage the use of intersectionality as an analytical tool, we are open to other approaches to these problems.

Class Analysis: In Honor of Erik Olin Wright

Session Organizer:

Gay SEIDMAN, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

Papers will discuss empirical work on workers, labor struggles, and community alliances around the world, drawing on Erik Olin Wright's class-analytic tradition, and using their research to interrogate and expand some of his core concepts.

Global Inequality: Emerging Dynamics in a Deglobalizing World

Session Organizers:

Christopher CHASE-DUNN, University of California-Riverside, USA

Yoshimichi SATO, Tohoku University, Japan

Hiroko INOUE, University of California, Riverside, USA

The session discusses new forms and dynamics that are exacerbating global inequalities. The session is interested in examining the issues of global inequality under deglobalizing trends from historical, comparative and structural approaches. Papers may provide theoretical, empirical, historical, or methodological discussions centered around the theme.

Corporate Power, Fossil Capital, Climate Crisis

Session Organizer:

William CARROLL, University of Victoria, Canada

This session explores the intersections between (a) networks, structures and practices of capitalist class power (and resistance to it), as centred in large corporations; (b) the political economy of fossil capital as a way of life that has reached global scale; and (c) the accelerating climate crisis, whose urgency seems to be matched by its intractability at least within the strictures of capitalism itself. Papers should address all three of these concerns, but can focus on any of a range of power modalities, including the following: corporate networks and elites, corporate ownership and control, the financing of fossil capital, corporate social responsibility discourses, think tanks and corporate advocacy, business activism and lobbying, soft denialism and green capitalism, carbon energy commodity chains, flashpoints of resistance.

Towards an Economic Sociology of the Environment

Session Organizers:

Ian CARRILLO, University of California Santa Barbara, USA

Silvio Eduardo CANDIDO, Federal University of São Carlos - UFSCar, Brazil

Despite increased scholarly attention to local and planetary environmental crises, economic sociologists have focused little attention on the relations between society, economy and nature. While economic sociologists often concur with Karl Polanyi's foundational insight that the economy is embedded in society, they tend to neglect his related claim that the separation of society from nature is a key aspect of market fundamentalism. Polanyi's assertion that there exists a dialectical relation between the material aspects of nature and its social representation presents promising research avenues for economic sociologists. Researchers can interrogate not only how nature is a contested terrain that shapes the institutional foundations of markets, but also how to build more sustainable markets that balance the interests of society and nature. In addressing the social and environmental embeddedness of markets, economic sociologists can utilize a rich set of frameworks including, but not limited to, path dependence, institutional inter-locks, network analysis, actor-networks and cultural-political approaches, varieties of capitalism, and financialization. In seeking to develop an Economic Sociology of the Environment, and thus cross-fertilizing two vibrant areas of the discipline, we welcome theoretical and empirical papers that use a wide range of conceptual and methodological approaches.

Elite Perceptions of Inequality Compared I: Policy, Institutions and the State

TBD

Elite Perceptions of Inequality Compared II: Identity, Practices and the Legitimation of Wealth

Session Organizers:

Alice KROZER, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Katharina HECHT, London School of Economics, United Kingdom

These two sessions aim to bring together researchers of ‘elite’ perceptions of economic inequality. We are particularly interested in exploring and comparing the context-specific, spatially and historically embedded elements of wealthy environments, and how these are considered in elites’ accounts of their own privileges. For instance, while elites in Brazil or Mexico utilise historic events particular to their national context, like colonialism, to explain and possibly legitimise their privileges, their peers in the UK rely predominantly on market-based explanations.

Previous work on elite perceptions has highlighted the importance of meritocratic ideas and of considering views towards inequalities of gender, ‘race’ and ethnicity. We aim to understand how these different dimensions of inequality influence elite perceptions, moving beyond a one-dimensional idea of privilege to understand how a ‘web of privileges’ is experienced. To that end, it is important to relate current perceptions to the history of place in which ‘elites’ find themselves in. Moreover, with few notable exceptions (e.g. Reis and Moore 2005), the growing body of literature on elite perceptions towards inequality has not yet focused on international or inter-place comparisons. However, to implement successful poverty and inequality reduction policies, it is crucial to understand contextually embedded elite perceptions. Therefore, we aim to scrutinize the role of context through a comparative lens to understand local particularities. Not all contributions will be comparative, but we are particularly inviting scholars keen to relate their own work on ‘elite’ perceptions of inequality to those of other scholars in different parts of the world.

Entrepreneurship and Its Challenges to Sociology: Accounting for Failure, Achieving Success

Session Organizers:

Jessica SANTANA, Stanford University, USA

Lúcia MÜLLER, Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul - PUCRS, Brazil

Studies of entrepreneurs inform us of their challenges in launching, achieving success and even their revival from failure. Comparisons among Latin American countries find that entrepreneurs work the market, playing one lender off against another to obtain optimal loans with few encumbrances. Research in poorer communities (*favelas*) in Brazil indicates that while entrepreneurs receive support from government and NGOs such as foreign and religious organizations and political parties, alliances also occur with informal investors and non-law groups such as gangs. Yet at the end of the day if entrepreneurs are not successful, if they tumble do they resurrect? Does entrepreneurial spirit endure? A recent study finds that it does. Via the internet a researcher learned how entrepreneurs accounted for their failure and what they did to restore their initiative. Information technology, by sourcing the internet, offers new methods to study entrepreneurship and to what extent it contributes to the wealth and welfare of nations.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Its Impact on Corporate Governance: Achievements and Limits

Session Organizer:

Arnaud SALES, University of Montreal, Canada

Corporate Social Responsibility is a dynamic movement spearheading a transformation project challenging traditional and outmoded forms of corporate governance that frequently pose troublesome ethical issues. Since the mid-1990s, this movement has developed into a strong and rich institutional domain through at least 4 main sources: academic research; civil society movements; non-governmental standardization organizations and business corporations assisted by a large constellation of accreditation, auditing and control consulting firms. Many people and organizations are now involved in a vast loosely integrated network of human and corporate actors that elaborate, promote, defend and implement the different versions of the CSR regulatory model in a framework of power relations. This session explores empirical and theoretical work in this area.

Varieties of Care Work Under Persistent Gender Inequalities: Exploring National Differences

Session Organizer:

Heidi GOTTFRIED, Wayne State University, USA

Care work, a form of unpaid and paid labor performed primarily by women, is a major site of job growth across both the developing and developed world. The study of care has moved to the center of contemporary debates about the stakes of social, political, and economic transformations taking place in the world today. New research on care work reveals the centrality of the phenomenon and the international diversity of its forms. This session explores convergences and diversities observed between countries in the global North and South, to highlight the dynamic processes that influence the social organization of care and new forms of care work. Delineating different types of care and its institutional and geographic location matters in explaining the current complexities of care.

Migration, Mobility and Labour Markets

Session Organizers:

Nadya GUIMARAES, University of São Paulo, Brazil

Aaron PITLUCK, Illinois State University, USA

This session brings together three papers that describe migration and mobility in labour markets through space and position. The first and second paper examine the subjective experiences of workers. Zani's research examines the social and emotional lives that Chinese migrants in Taiwan create together online. Campos Bicudo examines the subjective experiences of employers, immigrant prospective employees, and hired immigrants in a socially embedded labour institution in São Paulo that promotes Decent Work, called Missão Paz. The third paper, by Silva and Martins, examines the social forces pushing youth into peripheral Brazilian universities and the labor market, but rather than focusing on these students' subjective experiences, it uses multiple correspondence analysis (ACM) to infer the social resources and economic, symbolic, moral, and political dilemmas that shape their mobility trajectories.

Cultural Analyses of the Economy

Session Organizers:

Aaron PITLUCK, Illinois State University, USA

Nadya GUIMARAES, University of São Paulo, Brazil

This session draws on cultural analyses to examine diverse socio-economic phenomena. The first two papers focus on Brazil. Guimaraes & Lima argue that employers and job candidates are matched by a job intermediation system with distinctive actors, devices and regulations. They document how this job intermediation chain has changed over time since the 1960s. Duarte & Candido use Boltanski & Chiapello's framework to theorize the dominant business model in Brazil by researching content created by Brazilian digital influencers on LinkedIn. The third paper investigates the twin cities located on the borderland between Germany and Poland. Rogowski & Frąckowiak's paper explores how border closures caused by government responses to COVID-19 have impacted economic practices, identities and the borderscape.