International Sociological Association

To the presidents of the Research Committees, Working and Thematic Groups of the ISA
To the RC/WG/TG Program Coordinators of the IV ISA Forum of Sociology

VP Research letter #5: The IV ISA Forum of Sociology goes online

Dear colleagues,

The IV ISA Forum of sociology will be held entirely online, from February 23 to 27.

The new coronavirus pandemic won't allow us to meet in person, as all local partners and many RC presidents confirmed no large international conference could be held in Brazil in 2021. Many of you have also written us suggesting the Forum should be virtual. This decision also follows various e-mails and informal exchanges where RC presidents or program coordinators expressed their wish to move the 2021 Forum entirely online.

The main results of the ISA Executive Council meeting held on September the 19th and of the in the following days are the following ones.

- The Forum will be held online, using Zoom online meeting platforms provided by the Confex agency.
- The *registration fees* will be reduced by 50%.
- Following a vote among the ISA VPs and the RCC, the Forum theme will remain unchanged: "Challenges of the 21st century: Democracy, inequalities, environment, intersectionality".

- Each RC will have the *possibility to adapt the schedule* of its sessions, notably to take into account different time zones.
- It will be possible to extend the dates of the Forum for a few days for RCs that wish to do so. The aim would be to avoid to have too many hours online panels a day or to schedule some sessions during the weekend, taking into account that February is a teaching period.

- The plenaries, semi-plenaries and common sessions will be maintained. The plenary sessions will focus on the contributions of sociology to understand the global pandemic

and the world that may come out of it. The organizers of these sessions may invite their speakers to adapt their talk to include the impact of the pandemic.

- Following the calendar of the Forum adopted in April, **RC program organizers will have the possibility to update their program and add new sessions** if there is a high cancellation rate in some of their sessions. Please follow the Forum calendar for new abstracts and registrations (see below).

- RCs may maintain the panels planed in their preconferences or organize other complementary panels. However, these panels would need to be self-organized by each RC and will not be hosted by the ISA Forum online platform.

The Forum calendar adopted and diffused in April has not changed. I copy it below.
October 15th is already an important deadline in the road towards the Forum. Three important tasks have to be completed before that date.

- A message will soon be sent by the ISA and the Confex platform to all the authors of selected abstracts inviting them to *confirm their participation to the Forum* before October 15th and informing them about the possibility to update their abstract and title in the congress platform, in consultation with their session organizers or RC program coordinators, before that date.
- **All the abstracts that have not been confirmed by October 15th will be removed from the Forum program** and later replaced by new abstracts.

- Session Organizers and Program Coordinators are encouraged to contact the participants and to ask them to confirm their participation before October 15th, 2020.

- Session Organizers and Program Coordinators will be granted access to the online platform (ConFex). Based on information about already cancelled presentations, they may **upgrade "distributed papers" and papers presented at a roundtable to "oral presentation" in a regular panel.** Session Organizers and Program Coordinator shall inform the concerned participants about the new status of their paper and ask them to confirm their participation in the Forum.

- Some consultations are still going on concerning the organizations of the roundtable sessions. It does not make sense to squeeze five panels at the same time online. We

expect most papers that were selected for these sessions to be "upgraded" to regular panels to fill the gap left by possible withdrawals. In that case, roundtable sessions could eventually be converted in regular panels.

The decisions adopted by the ISA executive committee result from a process of consultation and deliberations between different perspectives on this Forum, and from a commitment to ensure the sustainability of the ISA. I am very grateful to all the RC/WG/TG presidents, board members and program coordinators who sent me their suggestions and/or consulted their board to gather ideas for a lively and successful Forum. I have been amazed by your commitment to work for the ISA and by the quality of your ideas and proposals. I have relayed them in the meetings of the ISA Research Coordination Committee and Executive Committee. I am more convinced than ever that the dynamism of our RC/WG/TG and their ability to come up innovative and yet concrete proposals is the best asset of the ISA. I look forward to attending some of the insightful sessions you have been preparing for this Forum. It will gather sociologists from all continents to analyze how deeply our lives have been shaken by the pandemic and how our societies have been transformed by this multidimensional crisis.

Geoffrey
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IV ISA Forum calendar for registration and new abstracts
Adopted in April 2020

End of September to October 15th.
- A message will soon be sent by the ISA to all the authors of selected abstracts inviting them to confirm their participation to the Forum and informing them about the **possibility to update their abstract and title in the congress platform, in consultation with their session organizers or RC program coordinators, before October 15th, 2020.**
- **Session Organizers and Program Coordinators are encouraged to contact the participants and to ask them to confirm their participation** before October 15th, 2020.
- Session Organizers and Program Coordinators will be granted access to the online platform (ConFex). Based on information about already cancelled presentations, they may **upgrade "distributed papers" and papers presented at a roundtable to "oral presentation" in a regular panel.** Session Organizers and Program Coordinator shall inform the concerned participants about the new status of their paper and ask them to confirm their participation in the Forum.
- RCs new calls for abstracts may start circulating during this period.

15 October 2020: Final day to confirm participation by authors of the already accepted abstracts. ***The abstracts that have not been confirmed by this date will be automatically deleted from the program.***
Authors of confirmed abstracts have until December 15th to register at the "early registration rate".

16 - 25 October 2020
- Based on the updated program, Session Organizers and Program Coordinators may re-organize panels, move some participants from one session to another and merge two sessions in order to open a new panel.
- Distributed papers or roundtable presentations may be upgrade to oral presentations during this period too.
- The ISA secretariat and the RC/WG/TG publish and circulate the calls for new abstracts.

26 October – 12 November 2020: Submission of new abstracts
The ConFex platform will be open for new abstracts.
- Authors may indicate in which session of the RC/WG/TG their proposal would better fit.
- The new abstracts proposals will be submitted to a single "bucket" session for each RC. (i.e. all the new proposals will be sent to the same session. Program coordinators will then allocate them to specific sessions).
- Organizers of sessions with several withdrawals are encouraged to advertise their session and to invite colleagues who work on the session's topic to submit abstracts.
- Invitations may be issued to speakers for Common Sessions and Semi-plenary Sessions to replace speakers who will not be able to attend the Forum.
- Program Coordinators should encourage presenters to pay registration fees before November 15th, 2020 in order to have more clarity about sessions' programs.

12 November 2020: Deadline for new abstract submissions

13 – 17 November 2020: Selection of the new abstracts by Session Organizers and Program Coordinators
18 – 22 November 2020: Program Coordinators re-arrange sessions based on the selected abstracts.

24 November 2020: Authors and co-authors are notified about the acceptance or rejection of their abstracts

15 December 2020: Presenters final registration deadline
Early registration fees will apply.
Confex sends out the last reminder to register. Presenters who have failed to register will be automatically deleted from the program.

18 December 2020 - 8 January 2021: Final modifications
- Session Organizers modify sessions based on withdrawal of non-registered presenters.
- Chairs and discussants are assigned from among the registered participants.
- Program Coordinators complete sessions' schedule according to the conference timetable.

In case the type of an individual's presentation is changed, or if a presentation is transferred to a different session, Confex will send notifications to authors with final session and presentation details after December 15th, 2020.

27 January 2021: Online program published