

STATUTES OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE 51 ON SOCIOCYBERNETICS of the INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION - ISA RC51 Sociocybernetics

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I. NATURE OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

§ 1) The Research Committee bears the name: Research Committee on Sociocybernetics, and is a Research Committee with the number 51 within the organizational structure of the International Sociological Association (henceforth to be called: RC51).

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

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

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

§ 4) These funds consist of (see § 10):

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

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE:

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

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE:

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

- a) to encourage individual and collaborative research in the field of sociocybernetics (as defined in section II);
- b) to stimulate international collaborative research, especially of a comparative nature;
- c) to promote publication of research results;
- d) to publish a regular Newsletter, at least two issues per annum, as required by the ISA, e-mailed to all members in good standing, to keep them informed of ongoing and planned activities;
- e) to publish online the Journal of Sociocybernetics, two issues per annum;
- f) to initiate and/or support networking: within the RC51 community; between RC51 and other ISA RCs; between RC51 and other relevant associations outside the ISA;
- g) to foster interdisciplinarity by involving scientists from disciplines other than sociology (e.g., psychology, philosophy, political science, economics, anthropology and so on ..);
- h) to organize sessions at the ISA World Congresses of Sociology and at other conferences dealing with sociocybernetics and related areas;
- i) to organise at least one international conference on sociocybernetics between the ISA World Congresses of Sociology (mid-term conference, resp. interim conference if more than one);
- j) to have a global perspective and encourage and facilitate the participation of members from all parts of the world, especially those from Third World countries.

IV. MEMBERSHIP IN THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

§ 7) Any bona fide social scientist, working in any of the fields described in article 5, can be an individual member of RC51, provided he/she accepts the statutes and observes them. Membership in RC51 is possible as

- a) a regular member, i.e., a member both of RC51 and of the ISA,
- b) or as an affiliated member, i.e., a member of RC51 only, with limited rights in accordance with article 4.6a of the ISA statutes.

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

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

§ 10) Members of RC51 are obliged to pay fees for the four-year period in between World Congresses of Sociology. The membership fees are set by the Board subject to a majority vote of two thirds of RC51 regular members. Currently, they are set at:

- USD 25 for individual members of countries within ISA Category A;
- USD 15 for individual student members of countries within ISA Category A;
- USD 10 for individual members of countries within ISA Categories B and C;
- life members: one payment of a double fee after reaching the age of 60 according to country category;
- a variable amount for institutional members, depending on the size of the institution concerned.

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

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

All members in good standing have the right:

- b) to vote every four years for Board elections;
- c) to participate in all scientific activities of RC51;
- d) to receive the RC51 Newsletter and the Journal of Sociocybernetics free of charge;
- e) to obtain a reduction on other RC51 publications;
- f) to ask for support in all matters directly or indirectly relating to their professional lives (e.g. letters of recommendation for tenure at their university, for publishers to publish their manuscripts, for travel grants to attend RC51 meetings, etc.);
- g) to volunteer for membership in special committees (see § 15).

§ 12) The members are expected:

- a) to accept and observe the statutes;
- b) to pay their membership fees;
- c) to fill out occasional questionnaires, an indispensable instrument for the Board to determine its policy, and return them promptly;
- d) to send relevant news items (book reviews, announcements of upcoming meetings, proposals for research projects, possibilities for grants, etc.) to the Newsletter editor, to contribute to the Journal of Sociocybernetics, and to take an active role in the affairs of RC51;
- e) to produce a paper at least once every four years, whether at the World Congress of Sociology, one of the annual International Conferences of Sociocybernetics or at some other international meeting organized by RC51.

V. GOVERNING BODIES OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

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

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

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

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

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

VI. ELECTORAL PROCEDURES OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

§ 17) The Board members are elected by e-mail ballot before the end of the year in which the World Congress of Sociology is held, unless a quorum of two thirds of the regular membership in good

standing is present during the World Congress, in which case, if practicable, the elections will be carried out at the Congress.

- a) Two months before the World Congress, the secretary will e-mail all regular members in good standing with the request to suggest candidates for all Board positions – possibly including themselves.
- b) Candidates must be willing to serve the full four-year term if elected and must have the initial written support of at least three regular members in good standing.
- c) In order to ensure that there are sufficient candidates, the outgoing Board will either establish, or function itself, as a Nominating Committee and will draw up a list of candidates to be submitted to and discussed at the business meeting during the World Congress.
- d) The outcome of the elections – per function (president, treasurer) or per group of functions (vice-presidents; other Board members) – will be determined by the number of votes received within a period of no more than two months after mailing the ballots.
- e) In case a Board member dies or is incapacitated during his/her term of office or does not pay the dues, he/she will be replaced by the candidate for that function having the next highest number of votes. If this is not feasible, the Board can appoint another candidate or leave the function vacant.
- f) Board members can serve no more than two consecutive four-year terms.
- g) RC51 may have one or more honorary presidents who are life-time, non-voting, advisory members of the Board. Proposals for making someone an honorary president must be made in writing by at least five regular members in good standing, and must subsequently be approved by a two thirds majority of the Board and, finally, by email ballot by a majority (more than one half) of the RC regular members in good standing. If, after the specified time limit, sufficient votes to declare a result have not been received, a further period can be designated by those organising the voting, with the message to constituents that a majority of votes cast will constitute approval of the proposal.

VII. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD MEMBERS

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

- a) The president provides leadership with respect to the governance and ethos of RC51. He/she takes initiatives regarding the planning of the organizational and scientific activities of RC51; he/she chairs the Board and business meetings of RC51 and represents RC51 on formal occasions.
- b) The vice-president replaces the president whenever necessary. He/she convenes and chairs the RC51 Scientific Quality Committee (SQC), a permanent body that monitors scientific quality and, taking advice from the SQC, convenes the abstracts committees appointed on a temporary basis for conferences.
The vice-president will assume the responsibilities of the president of the board in the case of the death, incapacitation, resignation, or other inability of the incumbent to carry out his/her responsibilities.
- c) The secretary closely cooperates with the president and vice-president in running the day-to-day affairs of the RC. He/she maintains the membership list, represents the normal channel for communication between the Board and the membership and is responsible for minutes of Board and business meetings.
- d) The treasurer manages the account(s) of RC51. He/she maintains a record of members' payments both to the ISA and RC51. A statement of financial affairs will be given by the treasurer at least every four years to the board of RC51 and to the business meeting assembly. The treasurer must be discharged of his/her financial responsibilities by the business meeting assembly.
- e) The past president provides for continuity of administration and provides advice to the president and the other Board members.

- f) Additional roles: The Newsletter editor has responsibility for collecting items for, editing, producing, and mailing the newsletter. The editor(s) of the Journal of Sociocybernetics aim to publish two issues of the journal per annum, assisted by the journal's editorial board. The webmaster is responsible for maintaining the RC51 website.
- g) The other Board members assume specific roles, as decided by the outgoing board prior to the election of the incoming Board. If the need arises, the current Board can redefine and reallocate these roles during its term of office.
- h) The organisers of interim conferences, the programme coordinator for the RC51 sessions at an ISA World Congress and the respective chairpersons of abstract committees for these events are co-opted as members of the Board until such a time as all relevant business has been completed.
- i) The Board is responsible for electing two of its members to be the RC51 representative and alternate at meetings of the ISA Research Council.
- j) The Board is responsible to prepare and hold a business meeting assembly every 4 years (preferably at the ISA World congress) and at every interim conference (i.e. International Conference on Sociocybernetics between the ISA World Congresses, see § 6i).
- k) The business meeting assembly is chaired by the president or by the vice-president of the RC51.
- l) Votes in the business meeting assembly can only be cast by regular and affiliated RC51 members in good standing who are present at the meeting.
- m) The duties of the business meeting assembly are
 - to evaluate and approve the four year (or interim, see § 18j) report,
 - to discharge the outgoing board of its responsibilities, including the financial statement
 - to discuss and carry motions on any other point that may arise.
- n) Decisions in a business meeting assembly are taken by simple majority.

VIII. FINAL REGULATIONS

§ 19) These statutes were adopted by mail ballot in 1996 after discussion by the business meeting assembly of the RC51 at the 10th International Congress of Systems and Cybernetics in Bucharest, August 28, 1996. They were slightly adapted to new circumstances after being discussed during the World Congress of Sociology in Brisbane, July 2002, and approved by e-mail ballot in late 2002. They were revised again after due discussion by the business meeting assembly of RC51 at the XVIth World Congress of Sociology in Durban, South Africa, July 29, 2006, and approved by e-mail ballot in February, 2008. They were again revised according to ISA requirements and after due discussion in the business meeting assembly of the RC51 at the XVIII ISA World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama, Japan 2014, and approved by e-mail ballot in March 2015.

- a) Changes in and amendments of these statutes must be proposed in writing by at least five regular members in good standing and received by the board at least one year before the next ISA World Congress resp. the next RC51 interim conference with a scheduled business meeting assembly.
- b) The proposal will be circulated among all RC51 members, together with an explanation of its rationale, at least four month before the next World Congress resp. the next RC51 interim conference with a scheduled business meeting assembly. The board will be entitled to propose amendments, to be circulated at least two months before the next World Congress resp. the next RC51 interim conference with a scheduled business meeting assembly.
- c) The proposal must first be approved by a two thirds majority of the Board and, subsequently,
- d) by mail or e-mail ballot by (as required by the ISA) a two thirds majority of the RC regular members in good standing.
- e) If, after the specified time limit, sufficient votes to declare a result have not been received, a further period can be designated by those organising the voting, with the message to constituents that a majority of votes cast will constitute approval of the proposals.