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## THE SECOND ISSUE OF 2025

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## President's Letter

At the end of 2025 we look back upon the successful 5th Forum of the ISA in July in Rabat, where RC02 presented its largest program ever. The past year also marked a significant increase in our membership to over 250 members. More important is how the increase in membership has added voices from all world regions to the activities of RC02. This global reach was clearly evident in Rabat, where we welcomed new members from the MENA region and South Asia. Panels addressed themes such as theorizing migration regimes in South Asia and the Gulf states, as well as pioneering inter-regional analyses of care labour in Latin America and Southeast Asia, authoritarian capitalisms, world-economic change and waves of social protest, revisiting revolutions, and contested financial imaginaries.

The research of RC02 members pushes geographical and analytical boundaries beyond mainstream economic sociology, and in doing so, builds theory and methodologies for a dynamic and relevant sociology of the global economy. Exemplary of RC02 members' research are the publication plans of the research group FEMME on the *Feminists Political Economy of the Middle East and North Africa* by Valentine M. Moghadam, the report and of the *Caste as Practice Research Network* by Jusmeet Singh Sihra, Manali Desai and Priyanka Kotamraju, both in this newsletter, and the call for contributions by the African doctoral researchers group [PRESILIENT Reimagining informal economies and practices across Africa](#) in a recent RC02 digest post. A consequence of the global constitution of RC02 is the prominence of topics long neglected in the study of economy and society. These begin with our now well-established commitment to intersectional and macro-sociological analyses of gender, race, and the impacts of colonialism, and extend to research on carbon economies and environmental sustainability, violence in the economy, the political economy of care, and imaginaries and mobilizations for alternatives to capitalism and productivism. Characteristic of RC02 activities are the tight ties with other Research Committees, Working and Thematic Groups, also manifesting in joint panels at ISA meeting and the multiple RC, WG, TG affiliations of our members, rendering RC02 a microcosm of the ISA.

In 2025 we mourned the loss of RC02 member and past ISA President Michael Buraway. Together with RC44, we organized a tribute in Rabat focusing on the meaning of public sociology for understanding the wars, conflicts, inequalities and disruptions of the world we live and research. Following a series of ISA tributes this year, [Global Dialogue](#) has published an issue this month devoted to the work of Michael Buraway.

This year we witness an acceleration rather than a mitigation of the wars, humanitarian crises, and environmental destruction this causes in the Ukraine, Gaza, the Sudan, and Ethiopia. As I write, another democratic government in Latin America (Chile) has elected a right-wing authoritarian opponent. US hegemony remains evident in political attacks on diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and on academic freedom, shaping how we all teach and conduct research. Struggles to end antisemitism are weaponized to divide progressive humanitarian coalitions within and beyond the academy. Universities, educators, and researchers bear a

responsibility for advancing international cooperation for democratization and justice. As actors with more resources and voice than many others, exercising this responsibility is urgent.

The debates surrounding how best to mobilize against genocide and injustice were strong and present in Rabat, a sign that we in the ISA community are thinking, not reacting, questioning, not acquiescing, arguing, not remaining silent. At the RC02 business meeting in July this year we engaged in an exceptionally productive discussion of the ad hoc decision of the ISA Executive to suspend the collective membership of the Israeli Sociological Association. RC02 is committed to continue to discuss how best to mobilize the knowledge we generate for peace and justice.

In the New Year 2026 RC02 renews its commitment to balancing academic rigor with normative orientations in supporting research that matters for social change and well-being. In 2026 RC02 endeavours to follow-up on plans that emerged from the discussions in our business meeting in Rabat to better support early career and all researchers in the Global South. In 2026 we will also begin building a program for the World Congress of Sociology in Gwangju, South Korea. My personal aim is to develop a programme that reflects our global membership, the plurality and relevance of our research themes, and that strengthens our collective capacity to imagine and realise sustainable and democratic futures.

In the New Year 2026, I call on RC02 members to continue contributing to the RC02 newsletter, the weekly digest, and to the many activities announced in these channels for networking and collaboration. In 2026, as RC02 members, we will also lay the groundwork for electing a new RC02 Board and Executive Officers. I therefore encourage members to consider standing for these roles.

Wishing all RC02 members a restful end of the year 2025, and a happy new year 2026!

**Karen Shire**

President, RC02 Economy and Society

*December 19, 2025*



**Caste as Practice Research Network at the University of Cambridge****Jusmeet Singh Sihra, Manali Desai & Priyanka Kotamraju***Department of Sociology, the University of Cambridge**Email: [jss82@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jss82@cam.ac.uk)*

The Caste as Practice (CAP) research network seeks to understand the enduring role of caste in contemporary South Asia through interdisciplinary collaboration across the social sciences and humanities. Despite significant economic and political changes in India, caste remains a persistent marker of inequality and identity, woven into every aspect of social life. Explaining its resilience and resurgence poses a key challenge, given that many influential accounts had predicted its demise over time. Our network brings together established and emerging scholars to rethink existing analytical frameworks on caste. Additionally, viewing caste as a multi-dimensional and interlocking structure of oppression offers new insights into global discussions on race and racialisation.

The network is currently convened by Manali Desai (Professor of Sociology), Jusmeet Singh Sihra (British Academy International Fellow) and Priyanka Kotamraju (PhD Candidate) in the Department of Sociology at the University of Cambridge.

We started this initiative in 2024 as a reading group in Cambridge Sociology, meeting monthly to explore sociological and anthropological classics in the field and the latest cutting-edge research on caste. From there, it evolved into a collaborative research network with Ankur Barua (Senior Lecturer in Hindu Studies) at the Faculty of Divinity. The network was supported by the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities and the Global Racisms Institute for Social Transformation. Other doctoral students in Sociology – Vishal Vasanthakumar and Damni Kain – have also been involved at various stages of the network.

We invite 3-4 speakers two to three times per term for our thematic discussions. These curated panels feature speakers who bring distinct disciplinary, methodological, or epistemological perspectives to the central question under consideration. The persistence and transformation of



caste is at the core of our collective inquiry. To explore this puzzle, we have brought together political scientists, historians, geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, scholars of religion, social activists, writers and filmmakers from across the globe. Our aim is to produce a holistic account of the debate at hand and to identify new pathways of research. Two points are worth noting: (1) we do not consider any debate 'settled' and are keen to revisit older debates with new eyes; and (2) our discussions across different generations of scholars are forward-facing, especially for young researchers beginning to sketch their own interests around caste.

The first iteration of the network in 2024-25 focused on understanding caste through majoritarianism and the politics of marginalisation, Dalit feminism, affective theories, space and sensoria, textual sources and an engagement with Louis Dumont. We hosted eminent scholars such as Susan Bayly, Christophe Jaffrelot, Manuela Ciotti, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Hugo Gorringe, Gopal Guru, Jon Keune, Ananya Vajpeyi, Ankur Barua, Joel Lee, Joel Robbins and Surinder Jodhka, early career scholars Rupali Bansode, Priyanka Kotamraju, Srilata Sircar, Bhawani Buswala and Jusmeet Singh Sihra, and writer Meera Jatav and filmmaker Jyotinisha.

The second iteration in 2025-26 is supported by Cambridge Sociology and the Global Racisms Institute for Social Transformation. We started by exploring caste in historical perspective, with Divya Cherian, Ramnarayan Rawat and Chinnaiah Jangam followed by a highly topical discussion on the Caste Census with Trina Vithayathil, Christophe Z Guilmoto and Yogendra Yadav. Audiences worldwide may expect in the near future to find sessions on politics and democracy, social mobility, endogamy, a comparative session looking at caste across South Asia, a revisit of the classic writings of M. N. Srinivas, McKim Marriot, and B. R. Ambedkar among others.

We firmly believe that these critical conversations must move beyond the confines of western academic spaces. This is why we run our sessions in hybrid mode – to ensure wider participation and engagement. Our sessions have drawn audiences from over a dozen countries. Subject to consent from our speakers, all our recordings are available on our YouTube channels of [the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities](#) and [the Department of Sociology](#). We encourage anyone interested in the subject, including those who were unable to attend our sessions, to explore the recordings online.

For any enquiries, please reach out to Jusmeet Singh Sihra at [jss82@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jss82@cam.ac.uk) or Priyanka Kotamraju at [pk514@cam.ac.uk](mailto:pk514@cam.ac.uk). We hope to extend the network by providing more avenues to discuss new books and works in progress of early career scholars. Please consult our website [here](#) to keep up to date with our events. We look forward very much to welcoming you at our next event in January 2026.

## **Spotlight on Emerging Voices: Report on the Special Panel for Early Career Researchers, ISA Rabat 2025**

**Sandhya A.S**

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On Monday, 7 July 2025, the ISA RC02 hosted the ‘Special Panel for Early Career Researchers’, a dynamic morning session that shone a spotlight on ten emerging sociologists presenting their work across four thematic clusters. Running from 09:00 to 12:45, the morning session formed part of RC02’s broader initiative to elevate the voices of early career researchers and foster meaningful scholarly exchange across generations.



*Photo of session participants.*

Continuing the RC02 tradition, first organized before the 10th ISA World Congress of Sociology in Melbourne, the panel provided a welcoming space for young scholars to share their research and preliminary theoretical insights. The presentations addressed a wide range of emerging topics related to the Economy and Society, including labor, valuation, digitization, inequality, and markets. The presentations were clustered together into these themes based on a preliminary reading of the abstracts.

Ezgi Elmas (University of Duisburg-Essen) examined the segmented healthcare sector for migrant physicians in Germany, focusing on skilled-migrants from Turkey, while Kadir Engil (University of Duisburg-Essen) explored how transnational higher education connects with cross-border labor markets.

Frederike Brandt (Technical University Berlin) discussed the material conflicts surrounding lithium extraction in Argentina, and Elisabeth Schmidt (Bielefeld University) analyzed how

global knowledge flows and labor mobility shape creative careers in the contemporary circus industry.

Helena Geisler (Swiss Federal University for Vocational Education and Training) presented on employers' hiring criteria; Duaa Kattana (University of Duisburg-Essen) examined the health outcomes of displaced children in Nigeria; and Aamir Ali (University of Bielefeld) explored the resilience strategies of Indian migrant workers in Gulf labor markets.

Ardita Osmani (University of Duisburg-Essen) studied how Chinese migrants in Italy navigate mobility and inequality; Annette Gailliot (University of California, Berkeley) introduced an innovative method for reaching informal home care workers; and Michał Szewczyk (University of Warsaw) reflected on how a Polish-developed "Smile Counter" technology reshapes emotional labor.

The presentations by young scholars, across these thematic clusters, were enriched by depth and dialogue provided by our esteemed faculty discussants. As the organizer of this panel, I would like to thank *Gracia Liu-Farrer* (Waseda University), *Aaron Pitluck* (Illinois State University), *Sanjeev Routray* (Universiti Brunei Darussalam), and *June Wang* (The City University of Hong Kong) for their insights on the work-in-progress of our young sociologists. Drawing on the full papers submitted by the presenters, the discussants provided generous and constructive feedback that encouraged critical reflection and inspired lively discussion. The session also benefited from excellent moderation provided by *Mark Simon* (Bielefeld University), who ensured that the session ran smoothly and that each presentation received thoughtful engagement and discussion. Lastly, I would like to thank *Karen Shire* (RC02 President, 2023-2027) for her continued support and encouragement to the organization of the workshop.

I will conclude this piece by sharing the feedback received from early career scholars on the importance of this workshop for their careers.

*"I really enjoyed the format of the conference as it was a great opportunity to get detailed feedback on my paper. I also like that it was right at the beginning of the conference so that I could concentrate on all of the other presentations much better. I would definitely recommend this to other early career researchers, especially those who are new to presenting to conferences as I was, because it offered a reassuring (less terrifying) way to gain experience in presenting at conferences."* - Elisabeth Schmidt

*"Participating in the 5th ISA Forum of Sociology was a special experience for me, as it was my first major conference. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to present my project in the Special Panel for Early Career Researchers before starting my fieldwork. This allowed me to receive valuable feedback, reflect on my methodology, and refine my fieldwork plan. The discussant format was particularly fruitful, as I received insightful comments on my project from an experienced scholar. I also had the chance to meet other researchers at a similar career stage, learn about their projects, and engage in inspiring discussions."* - Kadir Engil

*"The Early Career Workshop was an enriching experience that not only gave us the opportunity to receive detailed feedback from discussants on our papers, but also provided a valuable platform for exchanging ideas with our peers. I would highly recommend the workshop to other young scholars who are looking for engaging discussions and meaningful academic connections."* - Ezgi Elmas

*“I participated in the 5th ISA Forum of Sociology in Rabat, where I presented a work-in-progress research in the early-career researcher panel. As my first international conference, the Forum offered valuable exposure to diverse sociological subfields—labour markets, urban planning, digitization and governance, and development from a subaltern perspective. The most significant outcome for me as an early-career PhD scholar was the targeted, constructive feedback provided by the panel discussant, which will directly inform the next iteration of my paper. I strongly encourage scholars globally—and particularly colleagues from the Global South—to consider presenting at future ISA meetings and, where feasible, to engage with the ISA’s Research Committees.” - Aamir Ali*

## Insights from the Workshop on the Feminist Political Economy of the Middle East and North Africa

**Valentine M. Moghadam**

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The planned *Handbook of Feminist Political Economy of Middle East and North Africa* (hereafter MENA), a project of the network known as FEMME, originated by political scientist Gamze Cavdar, was the basis for a hybrid workshop that convened in mid-September 2025 at the University of Arkansas, with generous funding from the King Fahd Center. The book will fill an important gap in the literature on women and work in the Middle East and North Africa region, spanning the disciplines of economics, sociology, and political science.

Over two decades ago, the late Professor Mine Çınar edited *The Economics of Women and Work in the Middle East*, which appeared in 2001 (and in which I have a chapter). Nadereh Chamlou and Massoud Karshenas also edited, and contributed to, *Women, Work, and Welfare in the Middle East and North Africa* (published in 2016), to which I also contributed. Since then, many excellent journal articles and policy papers have appeared, but Gamze and I felt that it was time for a new, updated book that could cover a wider array of themes: patriarchy, varieties of gender regimes, and women's work; patterns and trends in female labor-force participation (FLFP) within and across countries; and institutional influences, including the role of family laws, social policy, military spending, overseas development aid, gender-responsive budgeting ), and attitudes and values toward women, work, and family. Countries covered include Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Israel. We envision a book with 12 chapters authored or co-authored by experts in their respective fields.

Some 13 social scientists took part in the conference, whether in person or virtually, with rich discussions of the issues presented, enabling identification of similarities and differences across the papers. For example, the papers presented showed low and declining FLFP in Egypt, Iran, and Jordan, especially among women with less than secondary schooling. This has occurred despite rising educational attainment, lower fertility, and rising costs of living. This is what political economists of the region call the “gender paradox.” Rana Hendy and Caroline Krafft focused on Egypt, Alma Boustati examined Jordan, and I addressed Iran.

In addition, the highest FLFP rates are found among university-educated women – including the Israeli-Palestinian (presented by Amalia Sa'ar) and Turkish women (by Emel Memiş and Yavuz Yaşar) discussed in two separate papers – but these rates include high female unemployment. In other words, the supply of (educated) women is considerable, but the demand side is weak. In many cases, the absence of generous welfare policies for work-life balance, women tend to drop out of labor force after marriage and there is a tendency toward early retirement, partly to care for grandchildren.

Morocco is an interesting case of an Arab state integrated in the world-economy and aligned with the capitalist democracies of the West (as well as a signatory to the controversial Abraham Accords) (1). It enjoys a degree of foreign investment as well as aid, and has been a regional leader in adoption of gender-responsive budgeting, which is promoted by Western partners. And yet its female and youth unemployment rates remain high, along with high rates of reported

violence against women. The case of Morocco was analyzed by Nadia Mannaoui and Thera Van Osch during the workshop.



*Photo of some of the workshop participants who attended in person: from left to right, Valentine M. Moghadam, Jennifer Olmsted, Caroline Krafft, Amalia Sa'ar and Adem Elveren*

The region is further characterized by states with off-the-charts military spending as well as GDP, and large populations of migrant workers (the Arab sheikhdoms), along with peripheral, aid-dependent economies (Jordan, Yemen), and states with higher incomes and large populations (e.g., Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Turkey). In most cases, military spending has a crowding-out effect on the social expenditures that benefit women and their families as discussed by Adem Elveren. All MENA states are characterized by a considerable population of young people in what the ILO calls NEET – not in education, employment, or training. What is more, continued oil production and exports produce carbon emissions that affect local populations and ecology and beyond. One wonders how women in the STEM disciplines might be able to tackle these issues – if they had more access to productive research opportunities or decision-making positions in both public and private sectors.

The workshop also examined broader regional issues, including the impact of ODA and humanitarian aid on gender inequality (Jennifer Olmsted), trends from the Arab Barometer surveys (Amaney Jamal), and varieties of gender regimes (Ece Kocabiçak). The forthcoming book, titled *Handbook of Feminist Political Economy of Middle East and North Africa (2027)*, will fill a crucial gap in understanding women's work in the MENA region, bringing together insights from economics, sociology, and political science.

Our thanks go to Dr. Shirin Saedi, who provided the generous funding for the workshop, and her associates at the Center.

**Endnotes:**

- (1) The Abraham Accords are a set of agreements that established diplomatic normalization between Israel and several Arab states, beginning with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

## Le Global et le Local dans l'Anthropocène

**Zineb Jorfaoui**

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l'ISA Forum of Sociology 2025 est l'un des événements capitaux organisé dans la région maghrébine, et plus particulièrement dans un pays connu pour être au carrefour des civilisations de la Méditerranée, du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique. Au Maroc, Rabat a réuni des sociologues du monde:

- un nombre totalisant 4842 chercheurs et chercheuses dont 57% de sexe féminin, 37% masculin et 1261 étudiant(e)s
- multiple nationalité dont les plus représentatives (celles ayant dépassées centaine): 432 de l'Italie, 391 de l'Allemagne, 358 de l'USA, 290 de R.U, 241 de l'Espagne, 202 de la France 196 du Maroc (dont 36% étudiant(e)s), 191 de l'Inde, 167 de Brésil, 155 de Canada, 123 de Mexique, 118 de la Turquie, 117 de la Pologne, 103 de l'Australie.

« Connaitre les Justices dans l'Anthropocène », une thématique provocatrice et qui doit interroger le sociologue au quotidien et dans son quotidien plus que les autres. Tout d'abord la connaissance doit être situer dans son contexte d'intérêt : à qui profite cette connaissance ? Si ce n'est pour l'homme et son bien être en abstraction des normes construites, ordonnées, institutionalisées et imposées par le pouvoir des hommes. Un pouvoir trouve sa légitimité dans le silence relatif de l'homme qui se transforme en silence absolu de l'homme et manifeste la complicité de l'homme. Un homme qui réclame son individualisme et revendique son collectivisme, ses origines ses affiliations ses appartenances. Face à des hommes au sens institutionnel s'il faut le préciser : structure, système, ordre, ceux qui expriment un engouement illimité sur des espaces à ressources limitées et malgré les chiffres affichés à différents échelles. Extraire, exproprier, produire, industrialiser créer de la valeur ajoutée et contribuer à la quantification des grandeurs macroéconomiques et le rayonnement à l'échelle planétaire. Un homme à qui une connaissance profonde de son dedans, connaît sa terre même désertique à travers son usage, où la valeur d'usage échappe aux comptes d'échange. Une connaissance spatiale et sociale est le produit de son vécu qui façonne son identité fractionnelle, communautaire, tribale et même personnelle.

A quoi sert la sociologie ? elle ne servira à rien si l'homme entant qu'expérience personnelle et collective -ses récits, sa mémoire ses dits et contre dits, son silence et son agir et son processuel évolutionniste- est pris dans une seule réalité à la marge de l'ordre des structures des hommes. Tandis que le « scientifiquement utile » peut rejoindre le « socialement utile », les raisons de cette alliance ne doit nécessairement pas assouvir l'intention des hommes aveuglés par le sens commun et l'intérêt personnel (1). Si le sociologue s'est enfermé dans le modèle scientifique durkheimien et ne constitue pas la réalité qu'à la limite des chiffres autorisés à l'exploitation, les images partiellement diffusées et documentations à explorer sous enseignements d'applaudir. Comme Durkheim était un citoyen et un politique il se cachait derrière Durkheim savant, le premier se voulant à la science, le second voulant en tirer des enseignements pour le bon fonctionnement de la société (1). Le sociologue qui se lance dans sa recherche doit se déterminer par rapport à sa position, il est d'abord un citoyen appartenant aux hommes ou à l'homme, sa position vis-à-vis les phénomènes sociaux auxquels a été exposé doit être claire et

nette. Malgré les batailles ontologiques pour mesurer la fameuse distance -jamais atteinte- vis-à-vis son objet de recherche, la maniaque objectivité, son devoir de poser le doigt sur la justice dans les injustices ou les injustices dans la justice paraît accablant.

La vie dans l'anthropocène est une évidence que nul ne peut dénier. L'anthropocène est devenu l'univers d'actuel tremplin d'un futur lointain ! C'est un espace qui est socialement produit si on privilège la démarche lefebverienne de critique de l'espace. C'est un conçu des hommes stratèges, le perçu des techniques, et le vécu de l'homme par son usage au quotidien. Un processus dialectique à l'infini. Bien que l'espace socialement généré est localisé géographiquement, le global et le local furent un modèle. Deux espaces qui s'articulent entre eux mais qui génèrent des résultats différents selon la localisation géopolitique et historique des sociétés. Un local où l'homme doit être la finalité ultime de la machine sociétale en profitant des retombés de la machine globale. Mais comment allier entre le dedans (local) et le dehors (global) ? si cette alliance sera majoritairement limitée davantage pour l'utilité planétaire en écoutant l'utilité scientifique, l'utilité sociale doit prendre en charge l'utilité localement publique. Tel qu'il est le cas des pays « en course pour le développement ».

Le rapport Greenpeace Moyen-Orient et Afrique du Nord intitulé «*De la sécurité énergétique à la souveraineté : trajectoires de transition juste en Égypte, en Tunisie et au Maroc*» (2) alerte sur le fait que la transition énergétique au Maroc, en Tunisie et en Égypte privilégie les intérêts des investisseurs internationaux et des marchés européens, au détriment des bénéfices concrets pour les populations locales et du renforcement de la souveraineté nationale sur les ressources (3). Le rapport indique que «*les projets d'énergies renouvelables développés dans la région restent soumis à une logique du profit et des marchés extérieurs, reproduisant ainsi les mêmes déséquilibres de pouvoir qui ont caractérisé des décennies de dépendance aux combustibles fossiles*» (4).

La connaissance à laquelle sont appelés les sociologues ce n'est pas juste la recherche selon les méthodes scientifiques héritées à l'itinéraire d'une charte conventionnelle de la logique des liens entre le global et le local. L'intérêt est d'évoquer le « comment » sur une large sphère spatiale et sociale « lieux des projets » est un lieu de vécu de l'homme, doit assumer et subir les implications des actions étroitement tissées localement pour en rayonner à l'extérieur ? Limitons nous à la seule partie de la phrase concernant les projets de l'énergie renouvelable, pour répondre aux exigences de décarbonation « conventionnées » à l'échelle global, afin de favoriser une production verte sur toute la chaîne de valeur. Des projets verts, instaurés sur des territoires souvent considérés ruraux, alors que la ruralité est une vie sociale sur un espace produit par les paysans et pour leurs bien être. Des hommes ont choisi par leur plein gré de vivre à un mode de vie hérités par le transfert de la propriété de la terre. La terre est le sol est le foncier, un espace naturel source de toutes les ressources, la terre est l'objet de tous les symboles, est le contenu du collectif.

Le collectif (ancien, actuel, potentiel) dépossédé de sa propriété privée de son sol peu importe la procédure juridique d'acquisition ou d'expropriation, il est exposé bien évidemment à la dispersion et la disparition sans que l'indemnisation soit d'une valeur à la compensation. Le déplacement involontaires, la dispersion violente et la disparition du collectif est assimilée à une génocide organisée à défaut du consentement moral. Un consentement co-construit entre les parties, après consultation des ayant droits, les propriétaires des sols ciblés pour localiser les projets à utilité global, où la co-construction doit être un matériau de succès tant qu'au local qu'au global. A défaut du consentement moral qui ne peut pas être occulté par la loyauté des

procédures juridiques et jugements judiciaires, l'utilité globale demeure une dissimulation à l'utilité locale. A cet effet, un processus de ruralité exprimant le mode de vie d'un collectif opprimé est largement observable dans les périphéries de l'urbanité, un urbain qui se ruralise en continu par des pratiques qui réclament l'invisibilité politique par la visibilité sociale. Les chariots à mulet à âne reconfigurent le paysage de la ville au quotidien.

En revanche le collectif avait une identité, celle de leurs fractions entre les bras de la tribu. L'emblème onomastique constitue un élément fondamental de l'identité de la fraction qui s'approprie d'un territoire des ancêtres. L'héritage est une terre, pour la sécurité la stabilité l'enracinement et l'histoire. « Mais que reste à raconter à nos successeurs en diaspora ! », crie un vieux témoin des drames des déplacements forcés au motif de l'utilité global. Le vieux a tenté de rivaliser ses racines par le seul moyen qui lui reste est l'écriture, faisant appel à sa mémoire pour restituer les chocs, les troubles, et le traumatisme des années 80-90. La fraction a été dispersé, la tribu a été détruite sans retour. Le vieux a pu trouver sa consolation dans le recensement des membres de sa fraction de haut en bas en esquissant l'arbre généalogique de sa fraction contre l'oubli.

Le collectif sera caractérisé par des traits traduisant les actions auxquelles sont frappées : la privation de la terre, le déplacement involontaire, compensation médiocre, ce qui se traduit par un processus de déracinement. Ce collectif nous doit une identification devant une identité perdue. Cette identification est à l'expression de S. Freud : « *premièrement l'identification constitue la forme la plus primitive de l'attachement affectif à un objet ; deuxièmement, à la suite d'une transformation régressive, elle prend la place d'un attachement libidinal à un objet, et cela par une sorte d'introduction de l'objet dans le moi ; troisièmement, l'identification peut avoir lieu chaque fois qu'une personne se découvre un trait qui lui est commun avec une autre personne, sans que celle-ci soit pour elle un objet de désirs libidineux. Plus les traits communs sont importants et nombreux, et plus l'identification sera complète et correspondra ainsi au début d'un nouvel attachement* » (5). C'est vrai que Freud n'a pas défini son concept sur la base d'un conflit, mais tend à défendre un horizon ouvert à la subjectivité à partir des traits communs issus d'expériences collectives et éducationnelles (6).

Enfin dans une logique de structurer l'utilité globale par le sacrifice de l'utilité locale, un homme est déraciné de ses origines afin de faire preuve d'une loyauté pervers aux normes prescrites par des hommes. Comment peut on établir une connaissance juste et parfaite des injustices dans l'anthropocène où les économies politiques légitiment le déracinement local pour s'enraciner à l'univers du global?

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## A Positive Turn in Economic Sociology? Reflections from the ESA RN09 Midterm Conference 2025

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In early September, Berlin buzzed with sociological energy as scholars from across Europe and beyond gathered at the Weizenbaum Institute for the 2025 Midterm Conference of the European Sociological Association's Economic Sociology Research Network (RN09). Over three lively days (from 3rd till 5th of September), participants came together to explore a timely and hopeful theme, titled "*Exploring Solutions to the Challenges of Our Time: A Positive Turn in Economic Sociology?*", asking how their discipline might not only critique the world, but help to change it. Hosted in one of Europe's most vibrant research hubs, the event marked a moment of intellectual renewal for a field long renowned for its critical insight into the social foundations of economies.

At a time of intersecting crises, from social inequalities to climate change, technological disruption, global health emergencies and so on, the conference invited participants to reflect on how economic sociology might not only diagnose but also remedy the fractures of contemporary capitalism. Over three intense days of keynotes, panels, and early-career workshops, the question resonating through the Weizenbaum Institute's corridors was: *Can economic sociology become a discipline of solutions as much as critique?*

### **A Call for a “Positive Turn”**

The conference theme framed this challenge as a call for a “positive turn”, or put it simply, an invitation to reimagine the discipline’s role in shaping equitable and sustainable economies. While economic sociology has traditionally excelled at uncovering the embeddedness of markets in social structures and cultural/moral frameworks, the organizers encouraged participants to think beyond critique. The aim was to “provide a platform where critical analysis seamlessly intersects with creative problem-solving.” This ambition was reflected in the five thematic tracks that structured the conference: Ethics, Value, Green, Work, and Digital. Together, they outlined a comprehensive agenda for a “sociology of the economic” attuned to questions of justice, sustainability, and digital transformation. Across panels, participants debated how to design moral frameworks for markets, redefine value in the era of financialization, empower labour in precarious industries, steer the digital economy toward inclusion, and accelerate just transitions in the face of ecological crisis.

### **From Relational Money to the Polycrisis**

The intellectual centrepiece of the event lay in its three keynote lectures, each addressing the role of economic sociology in navigating what Jens Beckert later termed the “polycrisis.”

Opening the conference, Mark Davis (University of Leeds) set the tone with a talk provocatively titled “*How Can Zelizer Solve the Climate Crisis and What Does That Mean?*” Drawing inspiration from Viviana Zelizer’s relational approach to money and valuation, Davis argued that economic sociology’s nuanced understanding of relational work and earmarking could offer tools for rethinking finance and sustainability. His examples, from a UK community crowdfunding to

household decarbonization projects Davis initiated, demonstrated how sociological insights can translate into actionable design for (green) transitions.



*Photo of Workshop participants (Photo by: Weizenbaum Institute staff)*

On the second day, Jens Beckert (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies) delivered a keynote on *“The Economic Sociology of the Polycrisis.”* Beckert questioned how the discipline can maintain Weberian value neutrality (*Wertfreiheit*) while addressing urgent issues like democratic erosion and ecological breakdown. His talk captured a central tension of the conference: how to combine analytical rigor with normative engagement. By reframing economic sociology as a field that must grapple with both moral and institutional failures of capitalism, Beckert invited scholars to consider a sociology that is not only interpretive but also interventionist.

Finally, Andrea Maurer (University of Trier) closed the conference with a powerful reflection on *“How Can Economic Sociology Become Relevant for Practice and What Tools Can It Use for This?”* Maurer urged scholars to move beyond markets and hierarchies to study—and even strengthen—alternative forms of organizing economic life, from commons-based governance to sustainability-oriented institutions. Her call for (again a Weberian) “action-based explanations” anchored the conference’s practical aspirations: to theorize the conditions under which alternative economic forms can emerge and endure.

Each thematic track served as a laboratory for these ambitions:

- The “Ethics” panels explored how civic innovation, taxation, and public engagement can reconfigure markets toward justice and inclusion. Discussions ranged from illicit economies and moral frameworks to the sociological design of fair infrastructures.
- The “Value” track examined the moral and institutional foundations of valuation, debt, and financial innovation. Papers on household indebtedness, moral finance, and algorithmic governance reflected a shared interest in reimagining the politics of value creation.

- The “Green” sessions placed sustainability and resilience at the forefront. Topics such as energy communities, corporate responsibility, and spatial inequalities in housing and logistics underscored the sociological dimensions of ecological transition.
- The “Work” panels confronted the realities of precarious employment and industrial reorganization. Scholars traced how digitalization, project-based management, and global uncertainty reshape labour strategies and collective action.
- Finally, “Digital” panels probed the infrastructures of data, payments, and platforms. Presentations on digital economies, fintech, and algorithmic governance showcased how technological mediation is transforming markets and social relations alike.

### **Toward a Sociology of Possibility**

If there was one unifying sentiment emerging from the conference, it was optimism blended with, of course, a sociological realism. The “positive turn” did not signify a retreat from critique, but rather its reorientation toward constructive engagement. Across sessions, participants asked how sociologists might design markets, institutions, and technologies differently instead of merely interpreting market failures. As the closing remarks suggested, the 2025 RN09 Midterm Conference marked not only a gathering of researchers but also a collective experiment in rethinking the purpose of economic sociology itself. By blending theoretical imagination with practical concern, the Berlin meeting reaffirmed the network’s central mission: to understand the economy as a profoundly social phenomenon—and, increasingly, to help make it better.

## The Structural Neglect of Child Work in Society

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This short essay presents the core findings of my 2025 article '[Child work, care and neglect in farmworker homes: An empirical critique of Social Reproduction Theory](#)' (hyperlinked). The article draws on a rigorous empirical study which moves beyond description to identify a devastating, structurally mandated 'child care deficit' in society (1).

The analysis reinforces the relevance of the social theory of unpaid work in homes that is Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) 'and supports its goal to develop a 'unified theory of work' (Vogel, 2014; Hopkins, 2017). However, it critiques SRT's transformative-emancipatory approach to women's studies. Moreover, argues against SRT theorists' abandonment of SRT (Leach, 2016; Ferguson, 2017) for the axiological approaches (Morgan, 2014) of the ethico-political theory of Social Reproduction Feminism (Crivello & Espinoza-Revollo, 2018) and the "theoretico-political" Theory of Social Reproduction (Rocha, Beltrão & Oliveira, 2025: 4). Instead, this article supports the evolution of SRT into a unified scientific theory of work by its grounding in the scientific methodology of dialectical materialism (Bhattacharya, 2017; McNally, 2017). This scientific methodology (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Ritzer, 2010; Greene, 2012) strengthens the scientific study of society that is sociology (Comte, 1830) and its capacity to formulate and contribute to actionable social policy and legislative solutions.

International and national social policy frameworks require all children, unless emancipated, to be under the care of primary or proxy caregivers or the de facto care of the State (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011). The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, in General Comment No. 13, reflected in national policy such as South Africa's (Department of Social Development, 2019: 26) explicitly links a "lack of adequate substitute care"—whether due to the absence of adult supervision or supervision by children—to legal conceptualisations of child "physical neglect" (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011: 9).

The scale of the 'social state of child neglect' forms the central empirical contribution. The article reveals a profound, state-sanctioned misalignment between adult employment and child education mandates. While parents are typically employed for 50 hours per week, schoolchildren's education spans 22.5 to 27.5 hours weekly, depending on age cohort. This regulatory chasm creates a legislated weekly 'child care deficit' ranging from 22.5 to 27.5 hours, a structural phenomenon which is the basis of the 'social state of child neglect'.

The study finds an empirical 'care gap' spanning 21.2 weekly hours on average, particularly acute for younger schoolchildren (ages 6–12) whose weekly neglect averages 24.7 hours. During this unsupervised period, schoolchildren are neglected in homes compelled to conduct socially necessary work for themselves and sometimes other children. This essential work arises directly from the regulatory failure to synchronise adult and child work schedules.

A critical and poignant finding is the spatial distribution of this systemic social issue. While the care gap indicates a 'social care deficit', it is empirically profound in townhomes as compared to farmhomes. This paradox is attributed to employer-subsidised child after-school services on farms. In town contexts, in contrast, state social services are acutely absent, resulting in the bequeathing of the structural care deficit burden to the most vulnerable individuals:

children. This neglect subjects schoolchildren to severe work and social insecurities, qualitatively manifested in poor educational outcomes, teenage pregnancy, juvenile crime, child accidents, abuse and kidnapping.

The conclusion is clear: this ‘social state of child neglect’ is a measurable, pervasive societal outcome of the structure of state-sanctioned labour and education policies—a direct consequence of the regulatory misalignments between the mandated 50-hour adult and ~25-hour schoolchild work week. This underscores the argument that the ‘social state of child neglect’ is systemic to social policy frameworks, not individual parental shortcomings. The policy requirement is therefore immediate legislative action to provide the legally mandated socially necessary child care protection to address this qualified social insecurity and quantified social crisis.

In sum, my study confirms that the sustained structurally mandated practical ‘social state of child neglect’ is inevitable without decisive state intervention to align legislative employment and education work schedules.

**Endnote:**

- (1) Author’s note: ‘Childcare’ is the service. ‘Child care’ is the action of providing care to children. The article notes the absence of state ‘childcare services’ and critiques the lack of ‘child care’ theorising a ‘child care gap’.

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## The profiles of some of our new members

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**Jacinto Cuvi** is a sociologist doing work at the intersection of political and economic sociology. Most of his research so far has focused on informal labor. He recently published the book *The Edge of the Law* with Chicago University Press. He is associate professor at the Université libre de Bruxelles.



**Zineb Jorfaoui** est doctorante en sociologie ses recherches se situent à l'intersection de la sociologie de la migration la géographie humaine et l'économie. Ses recherches de thèse portent principalement sur la migration internationale et les espaces miniers (phosphatiers), la reconstruction sociale et spatiale suite à l'expropriation.

**Zineb Jorfaoui** is a doctoral candidate in sociology whose research lies at the intersection of the sociology of migration, human geography, and economics. Her dissertation research focuses primarily on international migration and mining areas (phosphate mines), and on social and spatial reconstruction following expropriation.