



International Sociological Association

Research Committee on Social Transformations and Sociology of Development
RC-09

RC09 Newsletter Summer 2008

Remarks from the RC09 Chairs

Dear colleagues,
Before you is a Summer 2008 Issue of the RC09 Newsletter, which includes a list of recent published works and several book reviews that we hope you will find of interest. We would also like to update you on the two most important activities that have been concluded in the first part of 2008: the revision of RC09 Statutes and the organization of the RC09 Midterm Conference to take place at the First ISA Forum of Sociology in September in Barcelona.

Update of RC 09 Statutes

One of the biggest task for our committee in the past year was to update the RC 09 Statutes. In response to ISA Vice-President for Research Professor Arturo Rodriguez Morato’s request that all ISA Research Committees evaluate their statutes for possible updates and revisions, the Executive Board found that RC09 Statutes, last amended in 1996 , when the committee had only about 25 members, should be revised to better conform to contemporary ISA practices and standards.

In May of 2007, the co-chairs of RC 09, Ulrike Schuerkens and Nina Bandelj, drafted a set of revised statutes, which were then submitted to the entire Executive Board for additional input. After careful consideration and feedback, the RC 09 Executive Board prepared and approved a revised set of RC 09 Statutes. The revised statutes were then submitted to the entire RC 09 membership for a vote of approval. According to the most up to date membership list in September 2007, RC 09 had 128 members in good standing who were entitled to vote on the Statutes. The electoral committee received a total of 42 ballots, which represents one third of RC 09 members. Of the submitted votes, one person abstained and one person did not express support. All other votes were in favor of the revisions. Thus, the amended Statutes went into effect in January 2008.

Barcelona Midterm Conference

In summer 2007, the co-chairs, Nina Bandelj and Ulrike Schuerkens, asked the board members to make suggestions for the RC 09 Midterm Conference during the First ISA Forum of Sociology in Barcelona. In total eight session topics were suggested and sent to the ISA to be included in the Forum Call for Papers. In addition, TG 02 “Historical and Comparative Sociology” and RC 13 “Sociology of Leisure” proposed to RC 09 to each organize one joint session. The call for papers was also announced in the RC 09 Newsletter to RC 09 members and on the RC 09 website. The number and quality of submissions confirmed again the enormous interest in the RC 09 activities. We selected 125 papers for sixteen paper sessions, thirteen RC09 sessions and three joint RC09 sessions with TG02 and RC13.

Now we look forward to meeting with many of you who are coming to Barcelona and to hearing your presentations. We look forward to a great membership turnout. We would also like to invite you to the RC 09 Business meeting that will take place on Sunday, September 7, from 18:00-20:00 at the Faculty of Philosophy, Geography and History, University of Barcelona, Montalegre, 6, 08001 Barcelona, where all RC 09 sessions will take place. After the business meeting we hope you will join us for a get-together cocktail at 20:30 at the following address:

Hotel Espana
9-11 de la Calle Sant Pau
Center of Barcelona
www.hotelespanya.com/situacion.htm

We wish all of you a pleasant summer and hope to see you in Barcelona!

With our best wishes,

Nina Bandelj
Ulrike Schuerkens
Co-chairs RC 09

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Join us in Barcelona!

RC 09 Business Meeting will take place on Sunday, September 7, 18:00-20:00 at the Faculty of Philosophy, Geography and History, University of Barcelona.

A cocktail reception will follow at 20:30 at the Hotel Espana.

RC09 Session Schedule

All sessions are held at the Faculty of Philosophy, Geography and History on the University of Barcelona campus. As information on presenters and papers is updated, it will be posted on the following site: <http://isa2008.aimit.se/default.aspx>.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

15:30-17:30

Public Sphere and Capital Cities in Asia: Competing Claims over Religious and Democratic Space (room 221).

Postsocialist Transformations and International Influences (room 222)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

09:00-11:00

Leisure, Social Transformations and Development (Joint session with RC13) (room 405).

Transformations of Social Inequality and Globalization I (room 221)

Migrant Organizations in the Transnational Era (room 222)

11:30-13:30

Transformation of Social Inequality and Globalization II (room 221)

Understanding Economic Transformations in Postsocialism (room 222)

15:30-17:30

Human Rights Paradigms and Movements: Third World Perspectives and Challenges I (room 221)

Understanding Postsocialist Transformations: The Role of New Actors and New Institutions (room 222)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

09:00-11:00

Multiple Modernities, Sociology of Development, and Postcolonial Studies I (Joint session with TG02) (room 408).

The State and Development I (room 221)

Constructing the Cultural Wealth of Nations (room 222)

11:30-13:30

Multiple Modernities, Sociology of Development, and Postcolonial Studies II (Joint session with TG02) (room 408).

The State and Development II (room 221)

Converting Cultural Wealth into Economic Capital (room 222)

15:30-17:30

Human Rights Paradigms and Movements: Third World Perspectives and Challenges II (room 221)

18:00-20:00

RC09 Business Meeting, University of Barcelona (room 221)

20:30-

Cocktail reception at Hotel Espana

Committees and Groups Participating in the First ISA World Forum of Sociology Barcelona, September 2008

Research Committees

Economy and Society (RC02)

President: Sylvia Walby, University of Lancaster, UK,

Society and Education (RC04)

President: Ari Antikainen, University of Joensuu, Finland

Ethnic, Race and Minority Relations (RC05)

President: Peter Ratcliffe, University of Warwick, UK

Futures Research (RC07)

President: Markus Schulz, New York University, USA

Social Transformations and Sociology of Development (RC09)

Co-Chairs: Nina Bandelj, University of California, USA
Ulrike M.M. Schuerkens, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France

Participation, Organizational Democracy and Self-Management (RC10)

President: Heinz Suenker, Wuppertal University, Germany

Sociology of Aging (RC11)

President: Sara Arber, University of Surrey, UK

Sociology of Law (RC12)

President: Anne Boigeol, IHTP-CRNS, France

Sociology of Leisure (RC13)

President: Ishwar Modi, University of Rajasthan, India

Sociology of Communication (RC14)

President: Chryssoula Constantopoulou, University of Macedonia, Greece

Sociology of Organizations (RC17)

President: Paul du Gay, Open University, United Kingdom

Political Sociology (RC18)

President: Piero Ignazi, Università di Bologna, Italy

Sociology of Regional and Urban Development (RC21)

President: Kuniko Fujita, USA

Sociology of Religion (RC22)

President: Roberto Blancarte Pimentel, Mexico

Science and Technology (RC23)

President: Jaime Jiménez, IIMAS, UNAM, México

Environment and Society (RC24)

President: Raymond Murphy, University of Ottawa

Sociotechnics, Sociological Practice (RC26)

President: Georgeos Tsobanoglou, The Aegean University, Greece

Sociology of Deviance and Social Control (RC29)

President: Biko Agozino, University of West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago

Sociology of Work (RC30)

President: Diane Gabrielle Tremblay, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

Sociology of Migration (RC31)

President: Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, CERI, France

Sociology of Women in Society (RC32)

Co-Presidents: Margaret Abraham, Hofstra University, USA, Esther Ngan-ling Chow, American University, USA and Evangelia Tastsoglou (Chair for the 2010-2014 term), Saint Mary's University, Canada

Sociology of Youth (RC34)

President: Ngan-Pun Ngai, Chinese University of Hong Kong

Conceptual and Terminological Analysis (RC35)

President: Volker Schmidt, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Alienation Theory (RC36)

President: Lauren Langman, Loyola University, USA

Sociology of Arts (RC37)

President: Jeffrey Halley, University of San Antonio, USA

Biography and Society (RC38)

President: Gabriele Rosenthal, Georg August University of Göttingen, Germany

Sociology of Population (RC41)

President: Encarnación Aracil, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain

Social Psychology (RC42)

President: Cecilia Ridgeway, Stanford University, USA

Housing and Built Environment (RC43)

President: W. Dennis Keating, Cleveland State University, USA

Labour Movements (RC44)

President: Robert Lambert, University Western Australia, Australia

Rational Choice (RC45)

President: Yoshimichi Sato, Tohoku University, Japan

Sociology of Social Class Social Movement (RC47)

President: Henri Lustiger Thaler, Ramapo College, USA

Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Class (RC48)

President: Benjamin Tejerina, Universidad del País Vasco, Spain

Mental Health and Illness (RC49)

President: Reinhold Kilian, University of Ulm, Germany

Sociology of Childhood (RC53)

President: Doris Buehler-Niederberger, University of Wuppertal, Germany

Working Groups

The Body in the Social Sciences (WG03)

President: Bianca Maria Pirani, University of Roma La Sapienza, Italy

Social Indicators (WG06)

President: Heinz-Herbert Noll, ZUMA, Germany

Thematic Groups

Time Use Research (TG01)

President: Michael Bittman, Australia

Historical and Comparative Sociology (TG02)

President: Willfried Spohn, Free University Berlin, Germany

Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty (TG04)

President: Jens O. Zinn, University of Kent, UK

**First ISA World Forum
of Sociology
Barcelona, September 2008**

Scientific Committee

Michael Burawoy, United States

Manuel Castells, Spain

María Ángeles Durán, Spain

Jan Marie Fritz, United States

Salvador Giner, Spain

Hans Joas, Germany

Devorah Kalekin-Fishman, Israel

Emma Porio, Philippines

Elisa Reis, Brazil

Arturo Rodríguez Morató, Spain (Chair)

Saskia Sassen, United States

Ari Sitas, South Africa

Michael Wieviorka, France

Sergio Zermeño, Mexico

Member News and Publications

- Arjomand, Said A., ed. 2008. *Constitutional Politics in the Middle East*. London: Hart Publishing.
- Genov, Nikolai, ed. 2007. *Comparative Research in the Social Sciences*. Paris and Sofia: ISSC and REGLO.
- Genov, Nikolai. 2007. *Upgrading the Rationality of Organizations*. Berlin: Institute of Eastern European Studies.
- Genov, Nikolai, ed. 2007. *Patterns of Interethnic Integration*. Berlin: Institute of Eastern European Studies.
- Shie, Vincent H. and Craig D. Meer. (forthcoming). "Is This the Asian Century? China, India, South Korea, and Taiwan in the Age of Intellectual Capitalism." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*.
- Pitluck, Aaron Z. 2008. "Moral Behavior in Stock Markets: Islamic Finance and Socially Responsible Investment." Pp. 233-55 in *Economics and Morality: Anthropological Approaches*, Society for Economic Anthropology (SEA) Monographs, edited by K.E. Browne and B.L. Milgram. Lanham: AltaMira Press, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

This article addresses the puzzle of why the inclusion of non-financial social justice or religious criteria by professional fund managers has been so popular in Malaysia and yet has had to date relatively little influence in the United States stock market. Drawing from over 125 ethnographic interviews with financial workers in Malaysia, this paper argues that moral investment behavior in stock markets is shaped primarily by 'market structure' rather than by 'mandates.' In both countries mandates are a weak form of social control of fund manager's behavior. This is because mandates are not principal-agent contracts but are primarily marketing exercises and cultural tools. Social investing in the United States is weak because it relies solely on mandates to communicate clients' ethical desires to their fund managers. Islamic and Ethical finance in Malaysia is strong because Islamic social movements have reformed the Malaysian stock market's structure. Specifically, a uniform interpretation of Islamic investing was institutionalized with the creation of a nearly-unique quasi-governmental body. As a consequence, Islamic principles systematically influence the behavior of corporations listed in Malaysia, at present narrowly, but with the potential for wider influence in future. The paper closes with implications for social investment in the United States. Offprints are available from the author (aaron.pitluck@ilstu.edu)

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wants
to hear
from
you!**

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submit
your
news!**

**Send information you would like to be published
in the Newsletter to
Wade Roberts at
wroberts@coloradocollege.edu**

New Titles in the Field

- Adepoju, Aderanti et al. (eds.) *International migration and national development in Sub-Saharan Africa: viewpoints and policy initiatives in the countries of origin*. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Antons, Christoph and Volkmar Gessner (eds.). *Globalisation and resistance: law reform in Asia since the crisis*. Oxford, Portland: Hart, 2007.
- Bandelj, Nina. *From Communists to Foreign Capitalists: The Social Foundations of Foreign Direct Investment in Postsocialist Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Bargh, Maria (ed.). *Resistance: an indigenous response to neoliberalism*. Wellington, N.Z.: Huia, 2007.
- Bercusson, Brian and Cynthia Estlund (eds.). *Regulating labour in the wake of globalization: new challenges, new institutions*. Oxford; Portland: Hart Pub., 2008.
- Burgess, John and Julia Connell (eds.). *Globalisation and work in Asia*. Oxford: Chandos publishing, 2007.
- Cole, Jennifer and Deborah Durham (eds.). *Generations and Globalization*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.
- Derichs, Claudia and Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg (eds.). *Gender dynamics and globalization: perspectives on Japan within Asia*. Münster: Lit, 2007.
- Dibie, Robert A. (ed.) *Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008.
- Domingues, José Mauricio. *Latin America and contemporary modernity: a sociological interpretation*. London, New York, Routledge, 2008.
- Edwards, Richard and Robin Usher. *Globalisation and pedagogy: space, place and identity*. London, New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Freeman, Richard B., Joni Hersch and Lawrence Mishel (eds.) *Emerging labor market institutions for the twenty-first century*. Chicago, London, University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Goodman, James and Paul James (eds.) *Nationalism and global solidarities: alternative projections to neoliberal globalization*. London, New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Hernandez, Valeria et al. (eds.). *L'action collective à l'épreuve de la globalization*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007.
- Hobson, John M. and Leonard Seabrooke (eds.) *Everyday politics of the world economy*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Homann, Karl et al. (eds.). *Globalisation and business ethics*. Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate, 2007.
- Keane, Michael et al. *New television, globalization, and the East Asian cultural imagination*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007.
- Khudori, Darwis (ed.). *Rethinking solidarity in global society: the challenge of globalization for social and solidarity movements: 50 years after Bandung Asian African Conference 1955*. Petaling Jaya (Malaysia): Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2007.
- Moore, David (ed.). *The World Bank: development, poverty, hegemony*. Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007.
- Munck, Ronaldo. *Globalisation and contestation: the new great counter-movement*. London, New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Nolan, Peter. *Integrating China: towards the coordinated market economy*. New York: Anthem Press, 2007.
- Orbie, Jan (ed.) *Europe's global role: external policies of the European Union*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- Payne, Richard J. and Jamal Raji. *Politics and culture in the developing world: the impact of globalization*. New York, San Francisco, Boston: Pearson Longman, 2008.
- Portes, Alejandro and Josh De Wind (eds.) *Rethinking migration: new theoretical and empirical perspectives*. New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2007.
- Snowdon, Brian. *Globalisation, development and transition: conversations with eminent economists*. Cheltenham, Northampton: E. Elgar, 2007.
- Soulet, Marc-Henry. *La solidarité à l'ère de la globalization*. Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2007.
- Tuyizere, Alice Peace. *Gender and development*. Kampala: Makerere University: Fountain Publ., 2007.
- UNCTAD (ed.). *Development and globalization: facts and figures*. New York, Geneva: United Nations: 2008.
- Wan, Guang Hua (ed.) *Understanding inequality and poverty in China: methods and applications*. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan and UNU-Wider, 2008.
- World Bank. *World development indicators 2007*. Washington DC: World Bank, 2007.
- Zhang, Heather Xiaoquan et al. (eds.). *Marginalisation in China: perspectives on transition and globalization*. Aldershot, Burlington, Ashgate, 2007.

**Know of good books? Let us know. Email suggestions to
wroberts@coloradocollege.edu**

Book Reviews

Njoh, Ambe J. *Tradition, culture and development in Africa: historical lessons for modern development planning*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

By Madina Regnault, PhD Student at the EHES

This review presents some ideas of the book of Ambe J. Njoh who is Professor of Government & International Affairs at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg (USFP). This book is part of the "Heritage, Culture and Identity" series (edited by Brian Graham, School of Environmental Science, University of Ulster, UK), which explores notions of heritage on different levels, from the global to the local.

Among the eleven chapters of the book, seven are clearly concerned by tradition, which is the cornerstone of Njoh's book. Referring back to the definition of "tradition" elaborated by the Africanist Kwame Gyekye (1997), Njoh demonstrates that many aspects of African traditions have survived in spite of the rough phenomena of acculturation activated by the colonial authorities or the Christian missionaries.

The book explores the hypothesis of a relationship between colonial heritage and development in sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose of Njoh's book is not to treat, *per se*, the causes of underdevelopment in Africa. Focusing on Africa's cultural roots, Njoh establishes instead a link between the topics of tradition or culture and the notion of socioeconomic development. He situates his approach in a diachronic perspective and analyses development on a long-term scale, as the French historian Fernand Braudel did. The similarity with the 'Braudelian' approach is characterized by a perception of history not just spanning a long time period but also covering transversal and varied subjects. Njoh understands the colonial period as a pivotal moment in African history.

The conclusion of this book is that there is a direct correlation between colonial heritage and human development, but not between colonial heritage and the ability to translate economic gains into improved conditions. According to the author, the differences in human conditions can better be explained by inter-country variables in individual and local autonomy than by state actions specifically aimed at improving these conditions.

Njoh wishes to restore the "prestige" of the African culture. Clearly and strongly criticizing Euro-centrist studies, Njoh sets out to show that number of indigenous African customs and traditional practices can positively contribute to development planning efforts on the continent (rather than their western equivalents). This challenging perspective is certainly the reason why Professor and Dean Valentine U. James from Fayetteville State University said that Njoh's book 'is thought-provoking, engaging and offers a platform to interrogate ideas in development in Africa'.

The most crucial point of this book is that, by positioning himself against the Euro-centrist doctrine, Njoh is constantly close to adopting an Afro-centrist approach; a perspective that was strongly criticized, for instance, by Mary R. Lefkowitz (1996) or by Stephen Howe (1998). Dealing with Africa by systematically questioning western contributions seems simplistic and epistemologically erroneous. As other Africanist authors do, it would have been more useful to study the impacts of the West on localized societies in greater depth, which would have contributed to a better understanding of the changes in societies and traditions that have taken place as a consequence of these cultural connections.

In my opinion, Njoh's originality stems from the fact that he is sometimes close to Africanist theorists and at other moments close to Afro-centrist theorists – although Asante Kete Molefi (1990) thought that this was incompatible.

As a last criticism, I would say that the book's subtitle, *Historical lessons for modern development planning*, gives the reader false hopes of finding suggestions regarding future developments of African societies. Focusing more on the past than looking at the future, this book does not suggest clear and feasible leads in terms of development strategies.

However, the book has some positive aspects. The author proposes, notably at the beginning of the work, some axes of historic reflections that are relatively unvoiced. The work is also arousing interest by the fact that it explores numerous fields; it analyses a lot of examples concerning several African societies and many African States, and that it adopted an interdisciplinary approach.

References

- Gyekye, K. (1997). *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Howe, Stephen (1998). *Afrocentrism: mythical pasts and imagined homes*. London: Verso.
- Lefkowitz, Mary (1996). *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History*. New York: Basic Books.
- Molefi Kete Asante (1990). *Kemet, Afrocentricity and knowledge*. Africa World Press.
- Schuerkens, Ulrike (2003). 'The Sociological and Anthropological Study of Globalization and Localization'. *Current Sociology*, 51: 209-222.

Notes

- 1 Tradition is defined by Gyekye as "any cultural product that was created or pursued, in whole or in part, by past generations and that, having been accepted and preserved, in whole or in part, by successive generations, has been maintained to the present." (p. 221).
- 2 See the postface of Njoh's book.
- 3 As Ulrike Schuerkens (2003:212) writes: "Anthropology and sociology, which tackle as social sciences developments in countries of the South, have to treat local answers to global patterns in a changing international world. The traditions which we can find in these societies are thus no longer static ones, but have to be adapted by each new generation."

Marc Abélès, *Anthropologie de la globalisation*, Paris, Éditions Payot & Rivages, 2008.

By Tereza Kalogeropoulou, EHES

In his last book entitled *Anthropologie de la Globalisation*, Marc Abélès has elaborated an interesting analysis of globalization while considering anthropology according to a global perspective. Far from exaggerating the ampleness of the phenomenon of globalization, the book points out that globalization, even if it does not inaugurate a completely new era or a new paradigm, has induced cultural and social consequences that are real, and that ask for new important research fields. In a changing global world, social anthropology faces new challenges of a methodological nature: its object – culture – is threatened by homogenization and modernization processes of a global character. What is more, in a highly interconnected world, social anthropologists are more than ever confronted with the fictitious nature of the isolated anthropological Other.

The main thesis of Abélès is that anthropology has an important role to play provided that it abandons any essentialist vision of culture in favor of interpretations based on concepts such as *métissage* or hybridization, and that it considers “multi-site” fieldwork (G. Marcus) as a new method, concentrating on the changed meaning and practices of politics, the latter being the quintessence of the phenomenon of globalization today: we are experiencing a policy shift towards a politics of the survival model that is characterized by an evocation of insecurity, due to natural or civil catastrophes. In such a political landscape, the role of states is reduced, giving place to upcoming actors, such as international organizations, NGOs and civil society. In this context, political anthropology, due to its focus on finding power “where it is exercised” (M. Foucault), or “embedded” in the social sphere (K. Polanyi), independently of its legal or institutional form, can offer precious insights. Social anthropology by transforming its subject what is required by new challenges, can thus transform our way of studying and understanding globalization.

Zygmunt Bauman: *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts*, Cambridge: Polity, 2004

By Jessica Colleu, EHES

Zygmunt Bauman has written a book entitled *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its outcasts* where he focuses on contemporary societies. He tackles new issues raised by modernity, taking into account the advent of globalization that breaks with the industrial period, called Fordist society. In his book, the author shows that this new modernity has deeply disrupted our societies because it has transformed our ways of thinking and our mental landscapes, in short, our culture. Such an assertion questions our reflection on society and hence the whole theoretical framework built by the social sciences created years ago by industrial society. Each concept coined by sociology must now be redefined. What is this modernity, who are the “outcasts” and what is the character of the disruptions present in our mental representations?

tions present in our mental representations?

For Bauman, the “rejected one” that is to say the inevitable production of waste opposed to the construction of order, is the keystone. The author shows that globalization has led to the so-called “fullness of the planet”, with an overproduction of material and human waste. He lets us keep in mind that modern society is characterized by the production of social links that involve the construction of order. Setting reality into order means operating a separation that implies a distinction between good and bad or “knowing what is pure and what is impure”, as wrote Mary Douglas, quoted by Bauman. Each society has always tried to separate the good from the bad in order not to be submerged by the waste that it has produced. In a society characterized by the market, where life strategies change, migrants are the excluded ones who are perhaps hidden and moved away from society. Thus, modernity is similar to a factory of human waste. There are ghettos, where individuals are physically present without being there socially.

The “culture of the outcast” as Bauman calls it corresponds to a rupture in our social representations and our ways of thinking life, that results from a new configuration of social space that has become global. Indeed, modernity has shown a second social space, which happens to be linked to the first: the worldwide space. And this is problematic for States that have only got local power. Consequently, we witness a political disruption where the State seeks in vain to be regarded as legitimate by its citizens. Indeed, the State fails to create links between individuals through representations, moral order and laws. The State thus seems to offer local solutions to global issues. The group’s mind disappears to the benefit of the individual conscience. This new configuration of what is political and what is social in our everyday lives has an impact on our conscience and tells us a lot about our ways of reflecting our lives and society. It finally transforms collective representations. The individual does no longer insist on the creation and the conservation of social groups, but on his own survival and maybe that of his children.

Galibert, Charlie. *L’anthropologie à l’épreuve de la mondialisation (Towards an anthropology of globalisation)*. Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007, 298 p.

By Pénélope Calmejane, EHES

Charlie Galibert holds a PhD in anthropology and philosophy. As part of his work as a senior researcher in the *Centre Interdisciplinaire: Récit Cultures Langues et Sociétés* of the University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis, he has conducted a number of anthropological studies on Corsica, insularism and the epistemology of anthropology.

In this book, Charlie Galibert presents an epistemological deconstruction of the notion of Otherness. His current work suggests a comparison of two very different fields: social anthropology, as an empirical and theoretical discipline, and philosophy, as a means of reflection on the human condition. Charlie Galibert begins his book by retracing the differ-

ent steps that have characterized the history of the topic of Otherness according to philosophical and anthropological viewpoints. From Antiquity to modern times, huge progress has been made in western philosophy and imagery to develop ideas on Otherness as a characteristic of mankind.

The author's goal is to ask what the Other is. The Other stakes its claims and refuses the positions linked to him. Considering the concept of Otherness within the boundaries of mankind has become a necessity for social anthropologists who have to consider every society, including their own, as partly alien. The same is true for philosophers who have to think the Other not simply as the subject's counterpart, but rather as the prerequisite for their own existence.

Social anthropology thus becomes the encounter 'of two alienating perceptions'. In this respect, the problem is not so much to identify mankind through the categorisation of species and genres but rather through putting oneself in an encounter with the Other, i.e. as the origin of one's own future. 'The topic of mankind is not, despite Kant's question, "What is humane?" but rather "How does a human being live?"

Global encounters and dialogues take the shape of a generalised social anthropology where ethics and epistemology play an important role. Charlie Galibert favours a constructivist approach of the notion of Otherness and tries to identify possible grounds of a joint production of knowledge where the actor takes a more active stance by being propelled into the role of a co-producer. As such, the author aims at developing a field theory that would make for a combination of social and cultural approaches, though still leaving some room for field observation. This new theory would permit ethnologists to come across several viewpoints. Social facts would be contemplated as communicational acts. Anthropological theory looks thus for a balance between the universal and the singular, the actor and the spectator, closeness and detachment.

Even the most insular societies are linked to the Other in the global world. Today the researcher is faced with a new challenge: to rethink macro and micro processes as well as their articulations. To further illustrate his point, the author explains that he had to travel overseas in order to fully understand the peculiarities of Corsican insularity. Galibert also questions the partition between ethnology and history, field activities and archives, as well as the great divide between "warm" and "cold" societies, by defining the study of mankind as the ethnology of modern history. The author considers the cross examination of various disciplines, actors and fields, as an essential part of the construction of his research object. He recommends an experimental approach that would eventually lead to devise new methods in order to study new objects.

Galibert witnesses the rise of a globalising system that takes into account, for the first time in human history, the full diversity of cultures that make up mankind. Using its capacity to look much closer on what is far and to push further away what is familiar, social anthropology can access global expressions of local values. It is thus possible to read this book as a warning: social anthropology must tackle the globalization of the Otherness, and consider its relationship with western

thinking. The discipline has to take heed of the consequences of globalization insofar as all societies have to accept rules of the global economy. The social anthropologist could thus become 'a means to inter-understanding', a global knowledge worker.

Inspired by Heidegger's and Lévinas' phenomenological thinking, Galibert's work stands for a retranslation of the issues of social anthropology into a philosophical language. He underlines a phenomenological approach as one of the building blocks of the coexistence of both men and communities. Some researchers have hailed Galibert's ambition to link ethnology and philosophy. Yet, the way the author has handled this reunion has caused much debate, mostly because it was considered being too abstract. The fact that the issue of commercial globalization is almost absent from the book has also raised a certain number of questions.

Would you like to have
your book reviewed?

Would you like to review a
book for the newsletter?

Contact Wade Roberts at
wroberts@coloradocollege.edu.

Join us in Barcelona!

RC 09 Business Meeting will take place on Sunday, September 7, 18:00-20:00 at the Faculty of Philosophy, Geography and History, University of Barcelona.

A cocktail reception will follow at 20:30 at the Hotel Espana, 9-11 de la Calle Sant Pau, Center of Barcelona

Executive Committee of the ISA Research Committee on Social Transformations and Sociology of Development 2006-2010

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