Remarks on the upcoming ISA Forum and RC09 Midterm Conference from Ulrike Schuerkens and Habibul H. Khondker, Co-Presidents of RC 09

As we are planning for our Midterm conference coinciding the ISA Social Forum in Vienna on behalf of RC 09 Social Transformation and Sociology of Development; the world is undergoing transformations whose impacts are imploding in Europe and exploding in the Middle East sending shockwaves to the rest of the interconnected world. Our calls for abstracts are out seeking to capture some of these momentous changes and their impacts in society.

Having completed our very successful set of RC09 sessions in Yokohama, Japan in July 2014, the RC 09 Board moved almost immediately to the planning of our next major conference and our participation, for RC 09’s mid-term conference, in the ISA Forum in Vienna, Austria on “The Futures We Want: Global Sociology and the

Vienna, Austria on the Danube River
Struggles for a Better World", to be held on July 10-14, 2016. Although that seemed a long time ahead in to the future, now is the time to propose abstracts for our mid-term conference. The abstracts can be sent first to the session conveners before you upload them to the ISA website. We are looking forward to receiving exciting proposals of abstracts—from our RC 09 members.

There are important topics that we are proposing in our call for abstracts reflecting the conditions of our time. To some extent they call for comparative studies. Sometimes, however, the answers to our questions are to be found in more detailed studies of particular cases. We also wonder about the impact on our questions of the recent political and financial events in Europe and in particular in Greece, of the globalized spread of ideas, goods, and expectations on possible futures of the world economy, on the one hand, and social inequality and what Saskia Sassen calls ‘expulsions’ that have become more pronounced around the globe, on the other.

We are eager to include in our mid-term conference topics that address questions that are of particular interest within Europe, challenges of economic integration, immigration and diaspora. One of the objectives of an ISA-Forum (as distinct from an ISA World Congress) is to strengthen links between sociology and the public sphere, and RC 09 is eager to contribute to this as well: your suggestions about how we might do so are welcome. We hope that your trip to Vienna will include an opportunity to learn more about this interesting city and its rich cultural heritage, and more broadly, about Europe and its social and economic transformations, and we look forward to seeing you there in July 2016.

Best wishes for the coming months and enjoy the rest of the Summer.

Ulrike Schuerkens
Habibul Khondker
RC 09 Co-chairs
The session will be interested in examining how macroscopic political economic changes are impacting the development studies in various regions or countries of the world. By employing a sociology of knowledge approach to review a number of cases of rapidly developing economies in the present world, this session will examine whether these development experiences are affecting the paradigms and theories of development; whether such impacts are modifying and refurbishing theories of development; and what could be the possible implications of these changes. How useful is it today to talk about the “World Systems Theo-
ry”? Or how useful is it to use a blanket category such as “neoliberalism” as the dominant development paradigm? What is broadly understood as neoliberal development “theory” can be at best a meta-theoretic presupposition. Within the ambit of a neoliberal frame multiple and specific development theories and strategies are at work. This session explores the theoretical and contextual specificities of the interplay of development (or underdevelopment) or stagnation at work and conceptualization and theoretical innovations of sociology of development from the examples drawn from a variety of societies in the Global South.

Session Organizer:

**Habibul KHONDKER**, Zayed University, UAE, United Arab Emirates, [Habib-ul.Khondker@zu.ac.ae](mailto:Habib-ul.Khondker@zu.ac.ae)

**Contested Futures of the South**

RC07 Futures Research (host committee)

RC09 Social Transformations and Sociology of Development

During the last years we observe a renaissance of social protest movements in the South. They do not only challenge their government or existing economic structures but express their own concepts of a (better) future – the future they want. Examples are the “Arab Spring”, the Brazilian protest movement before and after the football world cup, protests in Burkina Faso after an army take over or movements for consumer rights in India. Their concepts for the future may be directed towards freedom or development, may express the desire for better conditions of living or consumption, or the concepts may refer to tradition religion or claim moral standards. However, even when the movements represent considerable parts of the societies, they are hardly uncontested. The visions of the future are at stake, intensively debated and more often than not in conflict with other visions. The session aims to analyse these conflicts and the contested concepts and visions of the future in the Global South. Examples of questions that we would like to be addressed in this session are:

- What are the conflicting visions and concepts of the future in particular countries or regions?
• Who are the carriers of these concepts and visions?

• Do we observe particular regional or global trends, or waves of particular concepts and visions?

• Under which societal conditions do particular concepts and visions emerge?

Session Organizer:

**Dieter NEUBERT**, University of Bayreuth, Germany, dieter.neubert@uni-bayreuth.de

**Crafting Insurgent Urbanism and Democratic Spaces: Transforming Citizenship and Governance Systems in Cities**

Poor, migrant households and groups have always claimed and recreated spaces in vacant private/public lands in cities of the global south, making it their homes and communities as well as sites of their struggles/assertions before local governments, central state agencies, landowners (private sector) and the larger society. But evictions, vagrancy and anti-squatting laws, to name a few, that are embedded in urban development plans/programs, continue to thwart these claims. Meanwhile, marginalized groups have also crafted strategies, including mobilization of local-national government institutions and civil society to counteract these forces, giving rise to selective spaces of empowerment as well as disenfranchisement in the metropolis. Over time, mobilizations of urban poor communities to negotiate for effective participation and eventually better allocation for resources including their right to space/home in the city, have transformed the social-spatial fabric of these communities and local-national institutions of governance and of the city as a whole. Some advocates of democratized and decentralized governance have argued that overall these strategies have allowed the poor to claim their rightful place in the city. This session calls for papers that address the debates and issues surrounding the crafting of democratic spaces/structures in cities amidst challenges brought about by capitalist incursions through large development projects, mediated by the state but heavily challenged by civil society groups.

Session Organizer:

**Emma PORIO**, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines, eporio@ateneo.edu
Development, Social Transformations and New Gender Relations

The different development policies introduced worldwide in the last decades have transformed our societies. Mainly generated by economic growth, these development policies had impacts on different economies, and other areas such as culture, society, identity, and the environment. Gender relations, in particular, have significantly changed. For example, the increasing incorporation of women in poorly paid economic activities requiring an unskilled labor force, and the growing concurrence of men and women around the same jobs because of precarious labor situations have triggered changed gender relations. The public and the private, and the work and domestic spheres have affected men’s and women’s mutual relationships. New gender distributions of tasks both at work and at home, new gender representations, and new social positions for men and women are some of the recent schemes that development often hides. This session will discuss transformations in gender relations in the light of the different development-driven strategies of recent decades. It will address the following questions: Which new gender relations can we identify today, arising from the different development policies that have been implemented? How have these development policies transformed gender relations? To what extent are these changes in gender relations the expected outcomes of development? How are these new gender relations currently characterized? This session invites the submission of original papers, using qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. We especially encourage the submission of comparative case studies.

Session Organizers:

Tamara HERAN, École Hautes Études Sciences Sociales, France, tama-rahameran@gmail.com
Rae LESSER BLUMBERG, Virginia University, USA, rb9b@virginia.edu

Futures of Individualization in Local, Regional and Global Contexts

Instead of discussing “individualization in general” the discussions in this session will be focused on commonalities and differences of the manifestations of individualization in particular action spheres and under different local circumstances. Instead of regarding individualization as characteristic of post-modern societies alone the participants in the session will be expected to elaborate on individualization as a global trend with deep historical roots in the division of labour. Instead of limiting the debates on phenomena of individualization in
Western Europe and North America the discussions will take challenges of individualization in other parts of the world into account as well. Instead of the predominant theoretical approach to individualization the participants in the session will be encouraged to present development and application of indicators for measuring advancements and decline of individualization. Instead of the typical cognitive orientation of the discussions on individualization the session will be guided by the need to draw recommendations for efficient steering of processes in European and in non-European societies. Papers from different regions of the world representing a variety of theoretical and empirical research are welcome.

Session Organizer:

Nikolai GENOV, School for Advanced Social Studies, Slovenia, nikolai.genov@fuds.si

Gender-Technology Interface: Implications for Social Transformation and Development

RC09 Social Transformations and Sociology of Development (host committee)

RC32 Women in Society

The later part of the 20th century along with the first decade of the 21st century have proven beyond doubt that the nature of social transformation and development can never be grasped both nationally and transnationally until and unless we focus on the complex gender-technology interface intensely. The purpose of this joint session is to highlight the relationships between gender and technology for exploring and explaining the ostensible neutrality of digitization of every sphere of everyday life both nationally and globally. Do “Digital technologies, based on brain rather than brawn, on networks rather than hierarchy, herald a new relationship between women and machines” (Wajcman, 2009)? This joint session intends to articulate the veiled embedded fact that technologies, even the newer ones like Domestic, ARTs and ICTs are not gender-neutral. And the multiple intersecting sources of subordination/oppression and a transnational character of the differential, contradictory and contested entitlements and burdens of these new technologies can be evident. The differences among women make perceptible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to any development or social transformation. The session aims to encourage bringing forth comparative analyses of lived experiences especially of women both from the Global North and the Global South by drawing insights from intersectional paradigm within the broader framework of hyper-capitalism, i.e. globalization along with its embedded transnational character for the future. This session would also signal pos-
sible means and ways of using the new digital technology to create a more inclusive, equitable and freer world.

Session Organizers:

**Habibul KHONDKER**, Zayed University, UAE, United Arab Emirates, [Habib-ul.Khondker@zu.ac.ae](mailto:Habib-ul.Khondker@zu.ac.ae)

**Bula BHADRA**, University of Calcutta, India, [bulabhadra@gmail.com](mailto:bulabhadra@gmail.com)

**Global Pharmaceuticals, Development Policies and Local Rationalities: Innovative Ways for Sociology to Bridge the Gaps?**

Globalization as a social process has led to the reconfiguration of life events as opportunities for development policies as well as the pharmaceutical industry. Acknowledging this, sociology and anthropology have built on concepts to articulate local and global rationalities through the analysis of exceptional claims, development policies and everyday practices. This practice questions the role of sociology. On the one hand sociology has to rethink its basic concepts such as society and community in light of the fragmented networks linking medications, rationalities and policies. On the other hand, sociology has to make sense of and account for new forms of social transformation through experimental pluralism (extending Rosemann’s concept) with regard to medications and technologies. “Global pharmaceuticals” have been promoted and designed on the basis of a global rationality. However, the daily use of medications and bio-objects does not produce and reproduce a global normalizing power that is challenged by local health practices, such as the use of alternative medications (plants, herbs or homeopathic treatments). Exploring spatial and temporal dimensions of pharmaceutical use as an experience but also as an experiment in daily life is important to investigate the social processes underlying the making of the medication use as a plural social experiment and the engine of local and global social transformations. This session aims at gathering innovative presentations describing local social transformations linked to the use of pharmaceuticals in order to better account for development policies and to propose innovative ways of rethinking social justice in these contexts.

Session Organizer:

**Pierre-Marie DAVID**, University of Montreal, Canada, [pierre-marie.david@umontreal.ca](mailto:pierre-marie.david@umontreal.ca)
Globalization and Development in Postsocialist Countries: Comparative Perspectives

This session invites submissions that examine the intersection of globalization, economic development, and social outcomes, such as inequality or democracy, in postsocialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia and China. Transformations after socialism have happened during a particular socio-historical moment of neoliberal globalization, financialization and economic crisis. How have these global trends shaped postsocialist developments? In many countries, the crisis has brought a time of recession, high unemployment and soaring sovereign debt, with governance marred by non-transparency and informality. In some cases, restless publics began to register support for populist and radical parties, in others they staged protest against the current governments. Some countries have shown more resistance and have weathered the crisis better than others. Why is that so? We welcome papers that explore any of these topics, employing a cross-national framework to interrogate the divergences and similarities across the region, and between the postsocialist countries and the rest of the world. We welcome quantitative cross-national analyses, qualitative case study comparisons, or multi-method designs.

Session Organizer:

Nina BANDELJ, University of California-Irvine, USA, nbandelj@uci.edu

Globalization, New Forms of Work and Inequality

The incessant requirements of companies to respond more competitively to the challenges of a global economy have triggered major changes in the structure, organization and logic of work. In an effort to adapt their economic activities to different markets, companies have relocated or turned to offshoring their production, implemented new cycles or seasonal activities, and dealt with the constant fluctuations in business volumes and flows. Thus, new forms of labor have emerged, such as working in different seasons or cycles, the installation of new working hours, telecommuting and subcontract work for multiple companies. Traditional forms of work are being replaced by new procedures which have produced an exacerbation of labor flexibility. This flexibility has led in turn to increased job insecurity and precarity, as reflected in the emergence of partial, unstable, and informal jobs, with irregular salaries and a significant marginalization of social security. This session will address these issues and especially the relationship between globalization, new ways of working and inequality. We will dis-
Discuss such questions as: What new job forms and structures do we face today, in a context of globalization and increased competition? How are the requirements of economic activities, transforming labor dynamics? Which work flexibilities could be behind these changes? Which regulations exist or are absent in these new forms of work? How are globalization and labor flexibility related to the generation of inequalities? Papers based on empirical case studies with an analytical framework using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods are welcome. Comparative analyses are encouraged.

Session Organizers:

**Tamara HERAN**, École Hautes Études Sciences Sociales, France, tamaraheran@gmail.com

**Ulrike Schuerkens**, ÉHÉSS, uschuerkens@gmail.com

**How Did Environment Call Development Pathways out?**

RC09 Social Transformations and Sociology of Development (host committee)
RC24 Environment and Society

Development was viewed as a socioeconomic and political process after WWII based on a trickle-down effect whereby all countries would benefit from the development of industrialized countries. This viewpoint was challenged in the 1970s by authors who noted that it instead leads to underdevelopment elsewhere on the planet! Environmental issues highlighted by the Club of Rome in terms of resource limitations, as well as conservation issues (IUCN “World Conservation Strategy”, 1980) also cast doubt on these views. In 1983 the UN set up the World Commission on Environment and Development to offer an alternative, Ecodevelopment – deemed too radical – giving rise to the “Our Common Future” report (1987), which outlined the sustainable development concept. Social equity is still a major tenet of this concept, without questioning the ideology of growth. But it is thus addressed differently, the mainstreaming of the environmental issue and ensuing resource scarcities having shifted the situation. Different environmental aspects (climate, biodiversity, water and land degradation) and the procedures implemented to manage them have thus become sociological research topics. Nowadays can social relationships be considered while overlooking those that human societies have with their environment and its dynamics and the procedures they have implemented to regulate them? Ways that contemporary sociology deals with these issues could be reviewed in this session. Have they given rise to new fields of research, triggered fresh debates or questioned established theoretical frame-
works? How does sociology provide a new slant on development issues in a globalized world whose biophysical sustainability is threatened?

Session Organizer:

Bernard HUBERT, Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, France, bernard.hubert@avignon.inra.fr

**Monetary Practices in the Global South**

This session aims to explore the changes in monetary practices and representations in the Global South, linking locally studied practices to globalized processes. In the recent past, many countries of the Global South have seen accumulations of wealth resulting from growing participation in the global trade and financial flows. These processes were accompanied by changed monetary practices, growing exports and luxury, economic exploitation and exclusion. This development has led to a redefinition of social hierarchies and the recent creation of the BRICS’ New Development Bank. These recent transformations imply that new monetary practices are no longer directly linked to the neoliberal economic order that has characterized North-South relations so far. South-South relations have to be considered. This will permit us to go beyond the North-South divide. The suggested proposals of case studies (quantitative and/or qualitative) for this session should thus go beyond multi-sited ethnography and integrate approaches from other disciplines such as economics and international political economy.

Session Organizer:

Ulrike SCHUERKENS, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, France, uschuerkens@gmail.com

**New Advances in Development Sociology**

This is an open topic session designed to attract new and exciting work that does not fit the other more tightly-themed sessions. Development Sociology is a highly innovative field. New work is constantly being done that asks new questions, invents new theories, or applies new methodologies to provide new insights. This session is meant to showcase these innovations. Senior scholars taking on new questions, graduate students with interesting and unu-
ual dissertations, junior scholars taking their work to the next level, all these are welcome. All methodologies are welcome; all theoretical orientations are welcome; all development-related dependent variables are welcome; work on any region of the world is welcome as well as any historical period including the present day. All that matters is that the ideas and findings being presented are new and important. Scholars that have never presented before at RC09 are particularly welcome.

Session Organizer:

Samuel COHN, Texas A&M University, USA, s-cohn@tamu.edu

Member News

Dmytro Khutkyy has been awarded the Fulbright Faculty Development Award to conduct research at the University of California, Riverside, USA. The research titled “Trends of the Modern World System: An Interdisciplinary Model” is devoted to the study of modern institutional changes of the essentially capitalist global entity from world-systems perspective. The inquiry follows within the lines of argument about the ongoing hegemonic and systemic crises thereby raising questions of possible futures. The interconnected plausible events and outcomes are linked in a map of scenarios model.

Member Publications

Dubrow, Joshua Kjerulf. 2015. “Political inequality is International, Interdisciplinary and Inter- 

Dubrow, Joshua Kjerulf, Marta Kolczynska, Kazimierz M. Slomczynski and Irina Tomescu- 
Dubrow. “Sociologists Everywhere: Country Representation in Conferences Hosted by the 
[authors contributed equally and listed alphabetically]

Elísio Macamo und Dieter Neubert. 2014. Science versus metaphysics. The importance of 
everyday life experience for the interpretation of disaster. In: Heike Egner, Marén Schorch, 
Martin Voss (Hg.), *Learning and calamities. Practices, interpretations, patterns.* New York: 
Routledge, 272-287

Genov, Nikolai (2014) ‘Upgrading Employability of Unemployed as Constructive Individualiza-
tion’. *Comparative Sociology*, vol. 13, N 2, pp. 162-184.

Genov, Nikolai (2014) ‘Concepts of Global Trends as Analytical Tools’. In: Martina Löw (Hg.) 
2014: *Vielfalt und Zusammenhalt.* Frankfurt am Main: Campus, pp. 715-726.

employment and governance“. *European Journal of Future Research*, 2:46, DOI 10.1007/s40309-
014-0046-5.

Regulation of Migration Flows’. In: Faltan, Lubomir (ed.) *Cross-border Migration and Central Eu-

Jiménez, Jaime and Juan C Escalante. “#YoSoy132, mass movements, indignant movements, 
Arab Spring, social uprisings, social unrest.” forthcoming in the *International Sociological Associ-
ation’s eSymposium.*
Abstract: During the past presidential elections, in 2012, Mexico endured her own Mexican Spring. Iam132 (YoSoy132) is an ongoing Mexican movement centered on the democratization of the country and its mass communications. It began as opposition to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI, Partido Revolucionario Institucional) candidate Enrique Peña Nieto and the Mexican media's allegedly biased coverage of the 2012 general election, surprisingly, by students of an upper-middle class Jesuit University. The purpose of this paper is to provide insight to readers into the Mexican movement's emergence and the immediate events that led to the outbreak, place these in light of similar spontaneous mass movements that have taken place around the world, and finally, a discussion on common characteristics exhibited by the different movements.


Abstract: Despite the fact that many countries target highly skilled migrants for recruitment in the global labour market, few of those migrants are able to take full advantage of their educational and professional qualifications in their new homes. Work in Transition examines this paradox, using extended narrative interviews that focus on the role that cultural capital plays in the labour market. Comparing the migrant experience in Germany, Cana-
da, and Turkey, Work in Transition shows how migrants develop their cultural capital in order to enter the workforce, as well as how failure to leverage that capital can lead to permanent exclusion from professional positions. Exposing the mechanisms that drive inclusion and exclusion for migrants from a transatlantic comparative perspective, this book provides a unique analytical approach to an increasingly important global issue.

RC09 member, Professor Tim Scrase, recently had two papers published exploring the impact of globalization on regions, and regional town formation, in India. The paper focusing on Darjeeling was presented in the RC09 sessions at the 2014 ISA World congress in Yokohama, Japan. Details of the papers are as follows:


Abstract: Despite the rapid transformation of India over the past 25 years and a swathe of publications dealing with the impact of globalisation on the culture and economy of the sub-continent, and on its large metropolitan cities, we contend that relatively far less is known about the regional impacts of globalisation and the localised impacts of neo-liberal development policies. Significantly, we seek to understand and analyse how globalisation is transforming smaller, regional towns in India. Based on social scientific research exploring the development and changes taking place in two distinctive, middle towns—Anand, Gujarat and Darjeeling, West Bengal—we highlight the social and political forces at work that are re-making these towns, the local issues residents contend with, and the external drivers of change that influence the unique growth and development of these towns.

Abstract: Darjeeling today faces problems of congestion, pollution and loss of landscape aesthetics. Increased mobility and in-migration has created urban sprawl. Much of Darjeeling’s architectural heritage has disappeared and many new constructions have come up to cater to the growing population, particularly the rising number of rural migrants who have been compelled to leave their homes due to diminishing rural employment. Based on ethnographic research and interviews with Darjeeling’s residents, we examine the struggle for control over Darjeeling’s fast-disappearing heritage, its loss of ‘charm’ as a tourist town, and its rapid transformation into a bustling, urban city reminiscent of many regional towns in India.


Abstract: How has globalization worked for women working on the frontlines of neoliberalism on the Mexico-US border? This border divides "US" from "Others" and produces social inequalities that form a site where marginalized border women encounter the othering power of neoliberalism and confront inequalities of gender and class. Within this context, a critical comparison of socially similar women, working either in export production industries or in small-scale commerce and low-level services in Ciudad Juárez, reveals how export factory work constrains women’s empowerment at home—as well as the wages they earn and the well being of their households. This book challenges the neoliberal rationale of "empowering" women to support market growth, and argues instead for understanding women’s empowerment as a process of transformation from disempowerment by gender power relations to challenging masculinist domination in households and, ultimately, the economy and society. Because structures of gender and globalization are mutually constituted, women’s empowerment as gender democracy is integral to producing alternative, democratic globalization. Using a feminist methodology that gives attention to the stand-
point of women located on the downside of social hierarchies and takes into account strategi-
gically diverse points of view, this study develops analysis to counter neoliberal globalization
as it touches down in the lives of ordinary women and men on the border and beyond. link
to website:  http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9781138809826/

New Works in the Sociology of Development and Social Transfor-
mations


Whitol de Wenden, Catherine (2015) *La globalisation humaine*. P.U.F.


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2018 ISA World Congress in Toronto, Canada
Join ISA and the Research Committee on Social Transformations and the Sociology of Development!

Established in 1971, RC 09 strives to represent sociologists interested in the study of social transformations and development around the world, regardless of their theoretical persuasion, methodological approaches or ideological perspective. The goal RC 09 is to advance sociological knowledge on social transformations and development and to support research on this topic among scholars worldwide.

To join, please see visit either the RC 09 website, rc09socialtransformations.org, or the ISA website,

Board Members of RC09

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