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RC 09 Social Transformations and the Sociology of Development

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Remarks from the RC 09 Co-Presidents, Ulrike Schuerkens and Habibul Khondker

The Spring/Summer 2018 Newsletter of the RC09 Social Transformations and Sociology of Development comes out coinciding the 19th World Congress of Sociology organized by the International Sociological Association to be held in Toronto, Canada from July 15 – 21, 2018. The theme of the 2018 Congress, Power, Violence and Justice resonates with the main objectives of our Research Committee.

We study social transformations from various theoretical and conceptual angles, yet our goal is to understand social change and social processes so that we can improve on the outcomes of social transformations where violence will give way to peace and injustice will be replaced justice. This is a timely topic as the world is beset with problems of violence and injustices emanating from uneven structures of power.

The members of our Research Committee 09 have been very active in research and publications some of which are reported in the current edition of our Newsletter. At Toronto World Congress our RC will organize 23 sessions with a total of more than 80 papers. We greatly appreciate and salute our members for submitting so many abstracts and papers that all our panels filled out quickly. There will be a session dedicated to the authors meet the readers where two recent books will be discussed in the presence of the authors, who will be happy to answer questions from the audience. The books to be discussed are: *Social Change in a Global World*, Sage, 2017 by U. Schuerkens and *Glocalization: A Critical Introduction*, Routledge, 2017 by Victor Roudometof. Our social event will take place on Tuesday evening, 17th July 2018 after the Business meeting. More information will be given in the session room in Toronto.

We are looking forward to a productive and fun-filled World congress in Toronto. See you there soon.

Ulrike Schuerkens
Habibul Khondker

Co-chairs RC 09

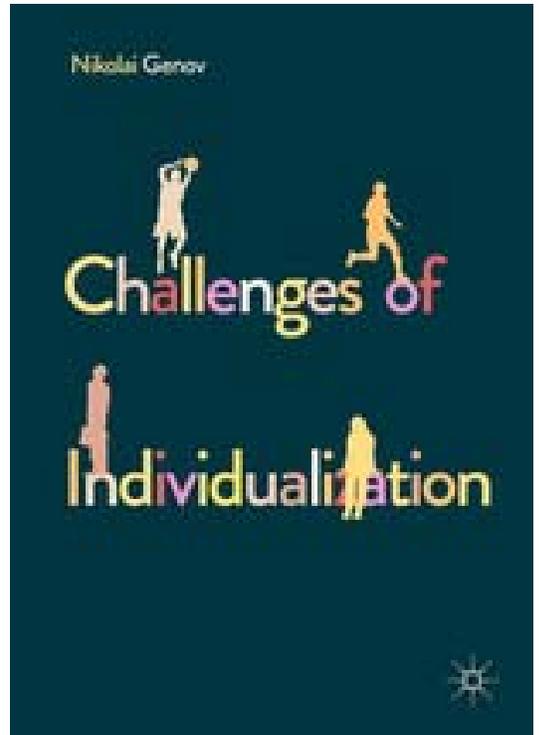
Recent RC09 Member Publications

Genov, Nikolai. 2019. *Challenges of Individualization*. Palgrave Macmillan.

This book critically engages with a series of provocative questions that ask: Why are contemporary societies so dependent on constructive and destructive effects of individualization? Is this phenomenon only related to the 'second' or 'late' modernity? Can the concept of individualization be productively used for developing a sociological diagnosis of our time? The innovative answers suggested in this book are focused on two types of challenges accompanying the rise of individualization. First, it is caused by controversial changes in social structures and action patterns. Second, the effects of individualization question varieties of the common good. Both challenges have a long history but reached critical intensity in the advanced contemporary societies in the context of current globalization.

ISBN 978-3-319-72654-0;

e-book 74,96 EUR, Hardcover 93,59 EUR



Heideman, Laura J. 2018. "Making Civil Society Sustainable: The Legacy of USAID in Croatia." *Voluntas* 29(2):333-347.

Abstract: What makes civil society sustainable? This paper examines USAID "Legacy Mechanisms"—programs designed to support a stable civil society after USAID withdraws aid—in the context of postwar Croatia to reconceptualize civil society sustainability in terms of resilience. Rather than examine whether specific legacy mechanisms remained intact, this paper looks at how Croatian civil society organizations adopted, adapted, and dropped these legacy programs to respond to novel crises and a changing political and social environment once USAID exited Croatia. Drawing on archival data from USAID's time in Croatia and interviews conducted between 2008 (the year after USAID withdrew) and 2016, this paper shows that the long-term impact USAID had on civil society lay not within the formal institutions and organizations it supported, but in the resilience, creativity, and cooperation it fostered in the civil society sector.

URL: <http://rdcu.be/udgj>

Heideman, Laura J. 2017. "Cultivating Peace: Social Movement Professionalization and NGOization in Croatia." *Mobilization* 22(3): 345-362.

Scholars studying social movements and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have noted a rapid expansion in the number of professional organizations dedicated to creating social change. This study uses the case of the peacebuilding sector in Croatia (1991-present) to examine central questions in both fields: where professional organizations come from, what drives professionalization, and what the consequences of professionalization are for the work of social change. I find there are actually many paths to NGO creation, and identify five types of NGOs: transformed, new, bud, seed, and clone. These five types of organizations had different paths for development, have different levels of professionalization, and engage in different types of work based on their location and history. Examining the history of a social change sector shows professionalization to be a nuanced, uneven process that can expand the social change sector even as it transforms the sector's work.

URL: <https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-22-3-345>

Jiménez, Jaime, Juan C. Escalante, Delfino Vargas, Rodolfo Ramírez, Leonardo Munguía, Brenda H. Molina. 2018. "National Laboratories: A Strategy for Scientific and Technological Development Geared to Innovation." *Sociology of Science and Technology* 9(1): 73-85.

Abstract: The concept of governmental financing of science and technology was born in the Western World as early as the 17th Century. Both Great Britain and France became aware of the need to protect and enhance the scientific achievements of their scientists, mainly for reasons of international prestige. The USA witnessed a spectacular growth of its scientific facilities in the 20th Century. The number of National Laboratories expanded out of the massive scientific effort developed during WWII that produced innovative technologies such as the radar, the computer, the proximity fuse and, unfortunately, the atomic bomb. The scale and impact of the mobilization of science for military purposes during WW II was extraordinary and unprecedented. The concept of National Laboratory gradually extended in the USA to include research institutions dedicated to areas of national interest like atmosphere, soil, oceans and health of the population. Although not necessarily identified as National Laboratories, they conserved the characteristic of being financed by the national government. Countries in the process of development have put a lot of interest in the creation and support of National Laboratories, or equivalents, as a strategy to enhance productivity and reduce the gap between developed and developing countries. The chain science—technology—innovation—applications is to be encouraged for both international prestige and increase in revenues at national and international levels. The federal agency that is in charge of planning and implementing Mexican science, technology and innovation policy is the National Council for Science and Technology (Conacyt, in Spanish). In 2006, the institution launched a National Laboratories program through a call for national laboratory candidates that is still in effect today. The applicants submit a project to Conacyt, and commit to the joint development of projects with one or more similar Mexican research institutions. Those who are approved are supported with funds to acquire necessary equipment. Conacyt's ultimate aim is for the laboratories to become self-sufficient with the provision of services, as well as national and international referents in their field of knowledge.

A preliminary presentation of a successful Mexican National Laboratory, the National Center of Imaging Studies and Medical Instrumentation (CI3M) is presented as a paradigmatic example of the track laboratories in the program should follow, which is aimed at satisfactorily accomplishing the objectives of human resource development, production of innovative technology, and provision of services. CI3M not only has fulfilled such areas but has become self-sufficient through the provision of services and the creation of their own enterprises.

Neubert, Dieter & Florian Stoll. 2018. “The “narrative of the African middle class” and its conceptual limitations.” Pp. 57-80 In Lena Kroeker, David O’Kane & Tabea Scharrer (Hg.) *Middle Classes in Africa - Critiques and Realities*. Palgrave.

Abstract: The core of the ‘middle class narrative’ points to the purchasing power of the growing middle class and its stimulating effect on the African economy. Promoted by the media and consultancies, the term appears to relate to a growing, homogeneous, financially fluid, and politically outspoken section of society. Against this background, the main aim of this chapter is to discuss critically the conceptual limitations of this term – the African middle class. To date, social structure analyses relating to the Global South have analysed socio-economic ‘strata’; or ‘class’ in a (neo-)Marxist or Weberian sense; or ‘class’ without specific parameters. The existence of a middle socio-economic stratum, however, does not imply the presence of a socio-culturally homogeneous ‘class’ in Marxian or Weberian terms. To analyse socio-cultural differentiation we propose two concepts developed in German sociology: ‘socio-cultural milieus’ and ‘small lifeworlds.’

Neubert, Dieter & Achim von Oppen. 2018. “The Kenya we want! From post-colonial departure to recent hopes.” Bayreuth African Studies working papers 20. Academy reflects 4. Bayreuth: Institute of African Studies, 23.

Abstract: At the eve of independence a conference on “The Kenya we want” discussed future visions for the development of independent Kenya. Since then conferences and books used this or a similar slogan as a heading for political programs for Kenya. The paper presents and discusses these different future visions in the context of political and social change in Kenya.

URL: <https://epub.uni-bayreuth.de/3754/>

Neubert, Dieter. 2017. "Mobilität, Unsicherheit und verdeckte Schließung. Neuformierungen in der Mittelschicht Kenias." In: Lessenich, Stephan (Hg.), *Geschlossene Gesellschaft. Verhandlungsband des 38. Kongresses der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie.*

Abstract: The "African middle class" is presented as a social reality. However, it is neither a class nor easily to be defined as a "middle." This group may have a "middle income" compared to the large number of the poor and small top elite. However, most of the members of this "middle income group" have close kinship relation to the poor because of the absence of a formal social security system family in kinship that provides at least basic social security. As long as "middle income earners" stay in family and kinship relations they have the obligations to support poorer kin. This limits their chance of further upward mobility and accumulation. If they cut off these relations, they lose the security of the kinship system and risk to fall back into poverty in case of shocks. However, there is a small group of middle income earners whose kin is less established in the middle. Even when they have no top-positions they have the chance to stabilize their position in the middle. When we want to analyse social inequality we need to consider formal and informal systems of social security.

URL: www.publikationen.soziologie.de/index.php/kongressband_2016

Pitluck, Aaron Z., Fabio Mattioli, and Daniel Souleles. 2018. "Finance beyond function: Three causal explanations for financialization." *Economic Anthropology* 5 (2): 157-171.

Abstract: This article suggests that it is advantageous for social scientists to deliberately depart from functionalist theories seeking to explain the expansion of financial instruments and logics across social life. Rather, we identify three causes of financialization from three extant clusters of scholastic activity: an organic political economy that sees finance expanding as a product or by-product of larger state- and imperial-level political struggles, a relational sociology that sees the ways that finance expands by becoming another medium for expressing and constraining social relationships, and a cultural analysis that observes the increasing redefinition of discursive and material practices as financial. Across this larger discussion, we introduce and situate the contributions of the paper to this journal's special issue on financialization.

Pitluck, Aaron Z., and Shikshya Adhikari. 2018. "Islamic Finance in the Global North: Secular Incubators, Elementary Accommodation and Strategic Negligence." In *Handbook of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Lives*, edited by M. Woodward and R. Lukens-Bull: Springer Reference.

Abstract: Dating from the mid-1970s, Islamic banking and finance (IBF) is an ongoing experiment to critique the conventional interest-based financial system and to construct an alternative "Sharia-compliant" industry. This chapter develops an analytic typology to describe how states respond to this project based on (1) whether the state practices industrial policy to promote the IBF industry and/or (2) whether it promotes a legislative and regulative divarication of the dominant financial market to accommodate IBF. This response can and does differ between the IBF wholesale and retail markets, and such government accommodations that are more important in retail than wholesale financial markets. This chapter develops this framework to investigate the social forces promoting and inhibiting Islamic finance in Muslim-minority countries in the global North. Specifically, it argues that Islamic finance has expanded in the United Kingdom after the state moved from a position of elementary accommodation to that of a secular incubator. In contrast, only wholesale Islamic finance has flourished in Luxembourg, in part because the state continues a strategy of elementary accommodation. More pointedly, in spite of a more favorable environment than either the United Kingdom or Luxembourg, in the United States IBF has failed to take root because of the government's position of strategic negligence.

Povitkina, Marina and Iлона Wysmulek. 2017. "Quantitative methods in researching corruption: surveys, cross-national studies, and measurement issues." In A. Schwickerath, A. Varrach & L.-L. Smith (eds.) *How to Research Corruption. Conference Proceedings: Interdisciplinary Corruption Research Forum*, pp. 25-34. Retrieved from <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-52393-1>.

Abstract: In this paper, we provide a brief overview of the main quantitative methods in researching corruption. We start with an introduction to the problem of measuring corruption and briefly elaborate on citizens and experts surveys as the main sources of data on corruption. We proceed by describing the main statistical methods and techniques used in corruption research. We also discuss the major benefits and pitfalls of quantitative methods in researching corruption and provide suggestions for future research. We conclude with a summary from the workshop on quantitative methods in researching corruption at the 1st Interdisciplinary Forum "How to Research Corruption" in Amsterdam, June 2016, stating the main aims, topics discussed, and contributions from the participants.

Wysmulek, Ilona. 2017. "Corruption in Schools? The Scale and Sources of Corruption Perceptions in Poland." *Edukacja* 4(143): 41-55.

<http://www.edukacja.ibe.edu.pl/images/numery/2017/5-3-wysmulek-corruption-in-schools.pdf>

Abstract: This paper analyses the scale and sources of views on the prevalence of corruption in the education sector in Poland. Through the use of public opinion surveys, I answer questions on how the corruption level in Polish educational institutions has changed over time and how it compares to other public institutions (such as the health care sector and police) and to the situation in other European countries. My goal is to investigate the effect of individual-level predictors of perceiving schools as corrupt in Poland, with special attention given to structural determinants and previous bribe-giving experiences of respondents. The results reveal that in Poland relatively few respondents have experienced recent acts of giving bribes in schools or perceive educational institutions as corrupt. However, there is a structural pattern behind the sources of negative opinions. The effect of socio-economic determinants on views relating to corruption in Polish schools is strongly pronounced and trends in the opposite direction compared to the effects reported in other European countries.

Wysmulek, Ilona, 2017. "Cross-national Surveys featuring Corruption Items in Europe (1989-2013)", doi:10.7910/DVN/WRVUTZ, Harvard Dataverse, V2, UNF:6:tlybE8+JV2GxDiYQe2KfIQ==

<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/WRVUTZ>

Abstract: In this article, Ilona Wysmulek presents an overview of existing survey data suitable for research on corruption, and their documentation. The overview of available data is important in the process of conducting research, similar to summarizing relevant literature; however, scholars rarely discuss it explicitly. This information is essential for creating a 'common file' with source variables of interest – itself a key step in ex-post harmonization. The growing availability of survey data during the last 20 years offers rich topic coverage and multiple research opportunities, but also demands knowing where data sources are located, and what issues on corruption they cover. Ilona intends to help others find these sources. This publication consists of an Excel file and the article accompanying it. The detailed source variables' file is an Excel file that documents source variable name, question wording and response categories of corruption items as well as survey name, survey wave and year of survey wave where this item appears. Additionally, it also includes the country availability information, that allows for a check of availability of source data on corruption by country. The file includes information about 112 corruption items from 44 international survey project waves covering European countries in the period 1989-2013. The detailed source variables file includes only information on survey projects with less than ten corruption items per wave (not specialized surveys on corruption). The paper "Creating a 'Common File' of Source Variables for Ex-post Harmonization of International Surveys featuring Corruption Items," accompanying the Excel file, provides details about the project and survey selection criteria.

Book Review

Review of Mathangi Krishnamurthy. 2018. *1-800 Worlds: The Making of the Indian Call Centre Economy*. Oxford University Press.

By Dr. Manisha T. Pandey

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A good blend of theoretical and conceptual issues with the empirical case studies makes this book an interesting and valuable reading. Through an ethnographic research of everyday lives of young, middle class customer service agents, working in the transnational Indian call centers in Pune, *1-800 Worlds: The Making of the Indian Call Centre Economy* explores the call center world as a 'communicative corporation' that manages to bring productivity and foster 'flexibility' as the new form of professional etiquette for upward mobility of young workers in urban India. This is a novel way of analyzing the call center economy with the significant insights of nightly lives of the 'flexible' workers in relation to the system of flexible accumulation of the new service economy.

One of the great strengths of this book is the remarkable clarity with which the author lays out its intent. The research is based on participant observation, extensive interviews and focus group discussions; the work accounts for everyday life in and around the call center. The "graveyard shift" in the working life of agents, managers and trainers has been brilliantly addressed. This personal account illustrates how working through the night, the call center workers assume a different name, location, and cultural and language markers, as part of their job requirements. Workers are young and often adolescents when they began to work in the industry. Most of them are within the age group of 17 to 20 years and are often simultaneously college students. This leads to socio-economic and cultural transformations in the lives of the workers. Building on three main bodies of theory – flexible or late capital, ethnography of the corporation, and affective labor, - this volume has appeared at a time when the debates on contemporary manifestations of 'flexible accumulation' are gaining ground.

The book is divided into six chapters. With fascinating titles of each chapter, there is a rich investigation of the political economy of the call center; the everyday life of recruitment; orientation of the young workers to the nightly labor; imagination and experiences of workers; language training in the call center seeking "to create a well-spoken, well-trained, acquiescent subject - another Eliza Doolittle as it were". There is an impetus for workers to be trained in an accent defined as "neutral". "The disembodied labor of call center work was primarily dependent upon the deployment of voice", writes the author. Herein lay the flexibility and adaptability of the workers to fit into the regimes of late capital. The arguments are very well articulated and are systematic.

In the chapter on “The Affective Corporation”, formations of affect and intimacy among the workers in the call center corporation is examined by deploying the lens of affective, immaterial labor. The intentional as well as accidental production of the call center as an affective space, peculiar in its vulnerability to emotionality, and a new kind of kinship relations, functioning within the rules of rational-legal bureaucracy, is an analysis which is lucid and refreshing in its exposition. The kinship relations are understood as a way of also understanding how managers themselves interpret their relations with workers in terms of the codes of family.

But the discourse on labor in the new service economy is missing. The study does not address the question of global division of labor and its associated problems. Has the shift to neo-liberal market oriented policies disempowered labor? How has the changes in the new economy impacted labor relations and how adequate are the social security nets? New research in these areas can find this work as a useful reference book.

The author focuses on ‘flexibility’ as a property of late capital in relation to the ‘flexible’ workers of the call center economy. Flexibility is seen as the new individuality which creates and re-creates normality in daily life of the workers. Drawing from the works of Harvey, Appadurai, Castells, Foucault, Ong and Sennett, the book gives a detailed analysis of the call center as a site where flexible bodies are deeply interlocked within the system of flexible accumulation. Through the gendered logics of flexible capital, it is the young urban workers that are seen as the most malleable, affordable and suitable to the demanding flexible life practices. The depth and the rigor of the work stimulate the reader and also do not fail to provoke. This ethnographic study of the labor practices and life-worlds of Indian call center workers, deserves to be read carefully to understand the complex negotiations that underlie the new service economies in India.

Recent RC09 Member Ongoing Projects and other news

The Ambivalences of Success: Discourses on Development, Progress and Extractivism in Ecuador

Fausto A.P. Ignatov Vinueza, M.A. Doctoral Candidate Rachel Carson Center for Environment & Society Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München; www.fausto-ignatov.de

In 2007, the Ecuadorian government made a groundbreaking proposal to the international community. The Ecuadorian State was willing to refrain from drilling and extraction the oil under the Yasuni National Park. The Yasuni-ITT (Ischpingo-Tiputini-Tambococha) initiative would not only promote conservation in one of the most bio-diverse regions on Earth; it would leave 856 million barrels' worth of oil underground. All this in exchange for 3.6 billion USD— half the value of the oil reserves—to be raised from public and private contributions from the international community. However, after six years of campaigning, the government terminated the initiative owing to inadequate results. The Yasuni-ITT Initiative sparked a national debate on the productive future of a country on the verge of a post-extractivist economic catastrophe, and worldwide controversy. Although the initiative was ultimately unsuccessful, with its proposal, Ecuador opened a still ongoing discussion about concepts like “development,” “growth,” “progress,” and “success.” These are not only meaningful terms to describe and analyze the societies we live in; they are also part of powerful discourses governing our ways of living, individually and collectively, locally and globally. Questioning the role and meaning of the above-mentioned concepts, the author aims to reveal the dominant discourses on how societies think they should act in order to achieve a certain status. How does a society build its understanding of success and development? How is this understanding reproduced? How does it influence other aspects of societal life? To address these questions, this project combines theories of development, extractivism, and discourse analysis. In addition, the author will also consider social and technical practices. To understand the extent of such discourses and their implications, it is crucial to scrutinize actual oil extraction practices, their impacts on the environment and society, and the role of politics and economics. Only through an integral understanding of the technical, political, and economic practicalities is a reasonable analysis of the social outcomes and mechanisms possible. Ultimately, this project seeks to gain an insight into the construction and reproduction of such discourses, taking into consideration more recent developments like the Yasuni-ITT Initiative. However, it will also take into account Ecuador's environmental, economic, and political history and its implications, thus allowing us to assess the Ecuadorian case within the framework of a regional and international comparison.

Development of Undergraduate Research on Social Transformations: The Ohio State University Summer School in Social Sciences in Warsaw, Poland

By Joshua K. Dubrow, Polish Academy of Sciences

In June and July 2018, students participate in the annual OSU Summer School in Social Sciences at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN) in Warsaw, Poland. This Study Abroad Program of The Ohio State University's (OSU) Department of Sociology features a mix of students from OSU and from Polish academic institutions. The OSU Summer School is developed and administered by Cross-National Studies: Interdisciplinary Research and Training program (CONSIRT.osu.edu), a collaborative endeavor of OSU and the Polish Academy of Sciences. The Summer School is co-organized, in part, by the Graduate School for Social Research (GSSR) at IFiS PAN and the University of Warsaw. We have organized the OSU Summer School every year since 2008. Students take courses in social science statistics, independent research, and social change in Central and Eastern Europe. The OSU Summer School fosters skills both academia and the professional labor market seek: analyze large-scale datasets with designated software; interpret statistics; communicate results; engage in critical thinking; find and apply for research grants and awards; and gain international experience to work in a multicultural environment.

The Polish Panel Survey, POLPAN 1988 – 2013 (POLPAN.org), is a key teaching resource of the OSU Summer School. POLPAN is a panel survey project carried out since 1988 in 5-year intervals on social structure and social change. Students use POLPAN data to learn how to apply basic concepts in statistics to substantive problems of the post-Communist transformation in Poland and to write their individual research paper. Many of our students have presented these papers at OSU's Undergraduate Research Festival held in the Fall semester and at OSU's Denman Undergraduate Research Forum in Spring.

Some of our undergraduate students have published their OSU Summer School research in journals or book chapters:

"The Global Economic Crisis, Economic Distress, and Mental Health in Poland" by Taylor Cathcart, forthcoming in the 2018 issue of *JUROS: Journal of Undergraduate Research at Ohio State*.

"Justice for All? Economic Disadvantage and Trust in Poland's Judicial System" by Lauren Sayers, 2017 in *JUROS: Journal of Undergraduate Research at Ohio State*.

"Is the Church a Source of Social Capital? Religiosity and the Size and Quality of Personal Networks," by Oyindamola Bola, 2016 in the edited book, *Social Inequality and the Life Course: Poland's Transformative Years 1988–2013* (IFiS Publishers).

"Lean In in Poland: Psychological Determinants of Women's Labor Market Success" by Polina Zvavitch, 2014 in *JUROS: Journal of Undergraduate Research at Ohio State*.

"Effects of Marital Status on Material Conditions" by Megan Hicks, 2011 in *JUROS: Journal of Undergraduate Research at Ohio State*.

OSU Summer School instructors are Kazmierz M. Slomczynski, Irina Tomescu-Dubrow, and Joshua K. Dubrow from IFiS-PAN and CONSIRT. In addition, guest lecturers Anna Kiersztyn (PhD, University of Warsaw), Nika Palaguta (PhD Candidate, GSSR), Yevhen Revtiuk (PhD from Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Oil and Gas, Ukraine), Marcin Slarzynski (PhD, GSSR), and Olga Zelinska (PhD Candidate, GSSR) provide expert knowledge on topics pertaining to social and political transformations in Central and Eastern Europe.

OSU undergraduate students have received travel and research awards from OSU, including from the Department of Sociology and the Department of Political Science. Every year, IFiS PAN has awarded travel grants to outstanding students of the Summer School.

Undergraduates are the future scholars of the sociology of social transformations. It is crucial that they gain meaningful research experience early in their academic careers. Since 2008, the OSU Summer School has helped to develop undergraduate research in social and political transformations in the post-Communist region. Interested scholars can learn more about the OSU Summer School at warsawsummerschool.wordpress.com.

Call for papers to a special issue of Technological Forecasting and Social Change on “Digital Transformation of Social Theory”.
Weblink: <https://wp.me/pvO07-17R>

Guest editors

Steffen Roth, La Rochelle Business School and Yerevan State University

Harry F. Dahms, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Frank Welz, University of Innsbruck

Sandro Cattacin, University of Geneva

There was once a time when leaders could both appreciate books and govern empires without knowing how to read and write (Dutton, 2016; Pascal, 1970). Today’s thought leaders are in a very similar situation. Though hardly ever away from keyboard, we scholars in general and social theorists in particular relate to the dominant media of the 21st century as if we still lived in the Gutenberg Galaxy (McLuhan, 1962), as exemplified in the prevailing use of computers and Internet mainly to write books and articles to store and search for in online libraries. The situation is even more remarkable in that we not only continue to treat the new media like traditional media, but also produce more and more traditional media on the new media. Today, there are publications on the digital transformation of almost everything. Human identity (Nagy & Koles, 2014) is being transformed digitally, along with more mundane aspects of social life such as work (Stone, 2004), production (Potstada et al., 2016), or healthcare (Agarwal et al., 2010); and then again time and space (Berthon et al., 2000), and thus even the globe (Heylighen & Lenartowicz, 2016) and all of our everyday life (Wajcman, 2008); apparently, not even the traditional media (Coyle, 2006; Roth et al., 2017) can escape the digital transformation ... read the full CFP at <https://wp.me/pvO07-17R>

Call for Papers

International Conference on the Past, Present and Future of African-Asian Relations

University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland

April 25-27, 2019

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the relations between Africa and Asia. This is mainly due to what is perceived as increasing Chinese influence and presence in Africa. Initially hardly noticed in Western Europe and Northern America, a key moment in this gradual process was the “Five Points Proposal” presented by then-President Jiang Zemin during his tour of Africa in 1996. What was termed a “new relationship with Africa” included catchwords such as non-intervention, reliable friendship and mutually beneficial development. Among the earlier scholars to analyze these developments, Alden (2005, 2007) described China’s need for energy (especially oil), strategic minerals, and arguably stable sources of key foodstuffs. He pointed to China’s drive for new markets, especially for low-value consumer goods sold through a growing network of Chinese merchants. Africa is also a considerable market for Chinese construction firms using contracted Chinese labor, especially in the domains of infrastructure and housing. Finally, there is growing Chinese direct investment in land and businesses. Not only Africa’s ties with the world economy are redefined, but also its ties with the international community, as Brautigam’s (2009) widely known analysis of Chinese development aid shows.

While unrivalled in its scope, the Chinese relations with Africa are only one example of growing ties between Asian and African countries. Among the other examples are Japan and India, not least with their joint Asia-Africa Growth Corridor efforts. Maritime Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia or Indonesia have also intensified their relationship with Africa in trade, FDI and beyond. Additionally, various oil states in the Persian Gulf (Iran, UAE, Oman, Qatar) have turned their gaze to Africa. Both Asian and African countries frequently describe their relations as being different to relations with European or North American countries. In the rapidly growing body of scientific literature on the topic, but also in media reports, the influence of China and other Asian countries is the source of controversial debates. Particularly China is seen as a rogue donor and neocolonial exploiter causing multi-dependency of African countries or as a (potential) new hegemon in the world economy. More benevolent perspectives on Asian relations with African countries see Asian countries as healthy economic competitors, as development partners that help African countries pave a pathway out of poverty or even as liberators that help end the postcolonial dependence of African countries.

Prudent voices such as Chaponnière (2008) remind us that quite similar debates were abundant in the 1960s, when revolutionary China became increasingly active in Africa. Taking an even broader and more long-term view of the relationship between Asia and Africa, the current interaction is seen as a shift of the center of the world economy to the East or as (cyclical) re-emergence of the centers of the early world economies as described, for example, by Abu-Lughod (1991), Frank (1998), or Chaudhuri (1985). These early world economies did not originate in Europe, but in Asia, reaching, as expressed by Sheriff (1987), the Indian Ocean to the littoral southeast of Africa. In yet another perspective, not least taken by Chinese sources, the current developments are described as the advent of a multipolar world.

With this call for papers, the organizers encourage researchers to investigate sociological theories and conceptual tools for the analysis of the relationships between Asia and Africa. They welcome reflections on questions of methods and data for analysis of these relationships. The organizers are interested in past and current developments in the social structure of the world society. They invite papers on the economic, political and social changes triggered by African-Asian relationships, both on the African continent but also in China and other Asian countries. Finally, this call is interested in the driving forces behind these developments and their interests, again on both continents.

Issues that may be addressed by papers include (but are not limited to):

- Institutionalized Asian-African relationships, such as China's "One Belt, One Road Initiative" or the FOCAC, the India Africa Forum Summit, or Japan's TICAD.
- Consequences of the Asian-African relationships such as changing inequalities, unequal exchanges, indebtedness, changes in poverty, (dis)continuities in labor movements
- Other social consequences including changes of gender and generational relations
- Changes in the economy triggered by foreign direct investment, the diffusion of agricultural and other technologies, labor migration and changing trade patterns
- Political issues such as the shift of military power, new conflict lines or human rights issues
- Ideational aspects of the Asian-African relationships such as Asian (developmental) states as blue print for development strategies in African countries, Gulf States as models for non-Western modernity, or mutual (racist) stereotypes. Transnational aspects such as the role of networks and diasporas or forms of migration for business, recreation, health care or education
- Ecological issues such as the consumption of resources and its impact on the environment or the potential for green technologies

Highest priority will be given to papers that combine a general theoretical discussion with new empirical findings. These papers may be based on new comparative research as well as single-case studies, and on qualitative as well as quantitative research methods. Papers can take a long durée perspective or focus on limited time periods, including contemporary ones.

Submission procedure: Please submit a 500 word paper abstract in English before September 30, 2018 (CET) to africa-asia.conference@unine.ch. The abstract should include the title of the paper, all author(s) names and affiliation as well as contact information. It should contain clear information on the research methods, data sources and analytical tools to be used. Please note that the organizers are seeking original contributions. Papers that have already been published or submitted for publication will not be accepted. Authors will be notified before the end of October 2018 of paper proposal acceptance. Successful applicants are invited to elaborate their proposals into full papers and to participate in the World Society Foundation Award of Excellence Program for Research Papers.

World Society Foundation Award for Research Papers: Successful applicants of abstract proposals interested in having their papers considered for the World Society Foundation Award for Research Papers are invited to submit their full paper (25-30 pages, but no more than 8000 words) in English before January 6, 2019 (CET) to africa-asia.conference@unine.ch. The authors of the most outstanding papers will be invited to the conference and they become candidates for the Foundation's 2019 Award. Notification of selected papers will be given by February 15, 2019. The Award, with a prize of US \$ 10'000 (first prize) and US \$ 5'000 (second prize) will be presented at the Neuchâtel conference.

Travel grants: The organizers award a limited number of travel grants covering airfare and accommodation (in full or in part) to researchers from the Global South (International Sociological Association country categories B and C) and to doctoral students. Travel grants will be allocated on the basis of a competitive assessment of papers submitted. To apply for travel grants, please submit as paper proposal a 500 word abstract before May 27, 2018 (CET) to africaasia.conference@unine.ch.

The abstract should comply with the requirements mentioned above. Authors of accepted abstracts will receive notification by May 31, 2018 and asked to elaborate their proposals into full papers to be submitted by September 30, 2018 (CET). Authors will be notified before the end of October 2018 of full paper acceptance. Accommodation and travel will be provided for one author per accepted full paper using the most economical travel route.

Publication: A selection of outstanding papers will be published in a conference volume.

Organizing committee: Marilyn Grell-Brisk (University of Neuchâtel), Daniel Künzler (University of Fribourg), Christian Suter (University of Neuchâtel), Patrick Ziltener (University of Zurich).
Conference Sponsorship: The conference is supported by the World Society Foundation (Zurich, Switzerland), the Swiss Society for African Studies, the Swiss Sociological Association, and the Sociological Institute of the University of Neuchâtel. For more information on the conference and for updates, please check at: <http://www.worldsociety.ch/>.

Finally, the latest issue of *Economic Anthropology* (Volume 5, issue 2) is focused on the topic of financialization, with particular focus on financialization in the Global South, which may be of interest to RC09 colleagues. The table of contents can be found here: <https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/23304847/current>



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