



# Newsletter

EDITED BY  
Lutfun Nahar LATA

## INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER

Message from RC09 President	p. 2
RC09 New Board Members 2023-2027	p. 3
New publications Books	p. 4
New publications: articles & book chapters	p. 7
Grants and awards	p. 9
Announcements	p. 10

## GET IN TOUCH

[isarc09@gmail.com](mailto:isarc09@gmail.com)

<https://rc09socialtransformations.org>



rc09isa



@RC09\_ISA



## MESSAGE FROM RC09 PRESIDENT

Dear colleagues,

I am delighted to present, for the first time, in my capacity as President of RC09, this Winter 2023 Newsletter. This year has been remarkable for our Research Committee, marked by two significant milestones and collective achievements.

The major contribution of RC09 to the ISA activities in 2023 was undoubtedly the XX World Congress of Sociology in Melbourne, Australia. I want to underline here the merits of the two former co-chairs of RC 09, Habib KHONDKER and Ulrike SCHUERKENS, the former and re-elected secretary and treasurer, Brian DILL, and all the former Board members of RC 09. Their implication, dedication and passion have driven Melbourne's Congress towards vibrant and insightful intellectual discussions. May they all be thanked sincerely! I also want to congratulate all participants in this event and encourage them to maintain enthusiasm and engagement in future RC09 and ISA events.

Another important milestone in the dynamics of our research committee this year was the election of a new Board in September 2023. This Board is eager to infuse renewed energy into our activity. As the newly elected president, I am both honoured and excited about the potential of our collective efforts for a dynamic and impactful RC 09 within ISA and beyond.

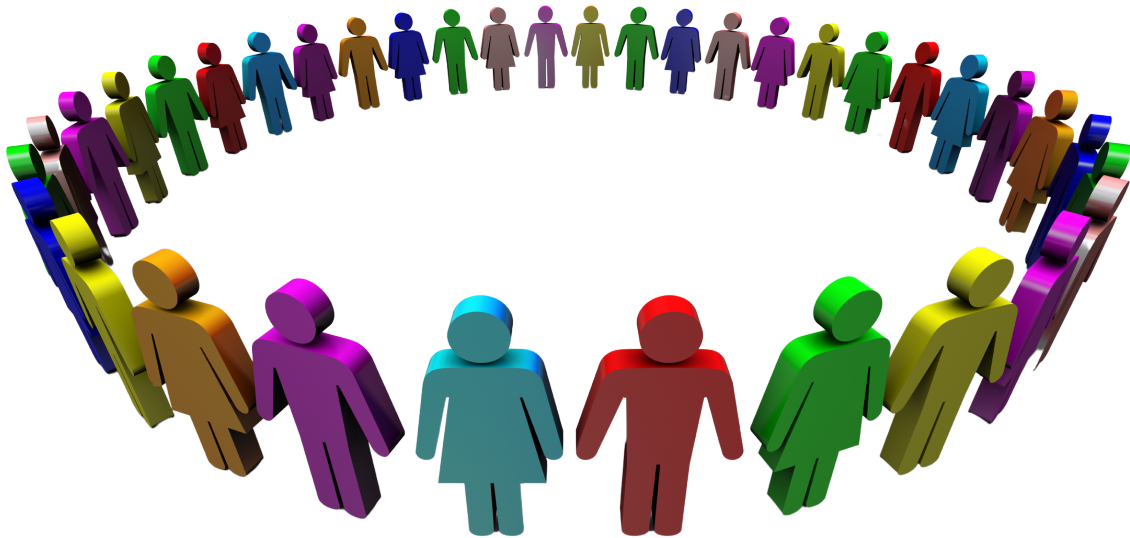
Our first Boarding meeting, on October 30, 2023, consolidated our vision for the coming 4-year term and reiterated our wish to fortify the bonds within the RC09 community. We aim to foster continuous engagement by organising thematic webinars, co-sharing events with relevant organisations, and increasing RC09's visibility in digital space. Additionally, we will soon start preparing for the V ISA Forum of Sociology, to be held in 2025 in Rabat, Morocco – an essential milestone of this term.

I am happy to embark on this journey with you and encourage each member to approach this new 4-year term with renewed enthusiasm and rich contributions to our RC09 activities.

Wishing you joyful seasonal holidays and a Happy New Year 2024.

Kind regards,

Dorina Rosca  
RC09 President



# RC09 NEW BOARD MEMBERS 2023-2027

**Welcome to the newly elected RC09 board!**

We are excited about each new member's contributions to our board and the broader RC09 community.

## **Board 2023-2027**

<b>President</b>	Dorina ROSCA, The American University of Moldova, Moldova
<b>Vice-President</b>	Rukmini SEN, Dr B R Ambedkar University Delhi, India
<b>Secretary/Treasurer</b>	Brian DILL, University of Illinois, USA
<b>Online Communication Manager</b>	Lutfun Nahar LATA, The University of Melbourne, Australia
<b>Board Members</b>	Paul Mamba DIEDHIOU, Université Rennes 2, France and Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, Senegal
	Habibul Haque KHONDKER, Zayed University, UAE (Ex-Oficio)
	Su-ming KHOO, National University of Ireland, Ireland
	Hasan MAHMUD, Northwestern University in Qatar, Qatar
	Uddhab Prasad PYAKUREL, Kathmandu University, Nepal
	Matthew SABBI, University of Bayreuth, Germany
	Ulrike M.M. SCHUERKENS, Université Rennes 2, France (Ex-Oficio)



## NEW PUBLICATIONS: BOOKS

Hosseini, S. A. H. and Gills, B. K. (2024). *Capital Redefined: A Commonist Value Theory for Liberating Life*. Routledge.

The Open Access version of this book, available at <http://www.taylorfrancis.com>, has been made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

### Abstract

Capital Redefined presents a unique perspective on the nature of “capital,” departing from the prevailing reductionist accounts. Hosseini and Gills offer an expanded perspective on Marxian value theory by addressing its main limitations and building their own integrative value theory. They argue that the current understanding of “value” must be re-examined and liberated from its subservient ties to capital while acknowledging the ways in which capital appropriates value. This is achieved by differentiating between “fetish value” created by capital and “true value” generated through various commons-based forms of coexistence.

The authors propose a defetishization of value by rejecting the commonly accepted idea of its objectivity. They introduce their “commonist value theory,” which redefines capital as both the product and process of perverting the fundamental commoning causes of true value into sources of fetish value. Capital is theorized through a “modular” framework, where multiple intersecting processes constitute a comprehensive power structure, a “value regime,” representing an unprecedented degree of the domination of capital over life. Their theory reconciles two apparently incompatible views on the notion of value. One view encompasses all inputs involved in capitalist value production and conflates intrinsic and commodity values. The other warns against this conflation as it treats capital as an entity tightly associated only with commodity production and wage labor.

The authors believe that establishing alternative forms of value creation based on normative principles of living in commons is crucial as an analytical base for criticizing existing power structures and economic systems. The book offers a theoretical foundation for transforming our life worlds toward “post-capitalist” futures. It appeals to scholars and students in various fields, such as political economy, capitalism, and post-capitalist studies, economic and political sociology, globalization, development studies, social ecology, and ecological philosophy.



### Capital Redefined

A Commonist Value Theory  
for Liberating Life

S. A. HAMED HOSSEINI  
AND BARRY K. GILLS



### Critique’s review

The critical acclaim for "Capital Redefined" has been exceptional, with renowned scholars praising its substantial contributions to the reimagining of Marxian value theory through a commonist perspective with the purpose of tackling the challenges of the 21st century. Leslie Sklair, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics, hails it as a “challenging contribution” to our understanding. Paul James, Professor of Globalization and Cultural Diversity at Western Sydney University, emphasizes its relevance to the future of human productivity. Ariel Salleh, Distinguished Visiting Scholar at Queen Mary University of London, appreciates its open-ended approach. William K. Carroll, Professor of Sociology at the University of Victoria, Canada, finds it timely for our troubled times. James Goodman, Professor of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney, finds it essential for envisioning post-capitalist possibilities. Hans A. Baer, Principal Honorary Fellow at the University of Melbourne, describes it as an indispensable literary companion for those exploring revolutionary potentials. Jamie Morgan, Professor of Economics, commends its reimagining of value theory in the age of climate and ecological emergency. Ulrich Brand, Professor of International Politics at the University of Vienna, sees it shaping the debate about radical political strategies. Saturnino M. Borrás Jr., co-editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Land Politics*, calls it a thought-provoking exploration. James Juniper, Ph.D., Conjoint Academic at Newcastle Business School, applauds its potential to invigorate progressive research and policy development. These endorsements offer a glimpse into the depth and significance of “Capital Redefined” and are well worth exploring further on the book’s webpage.

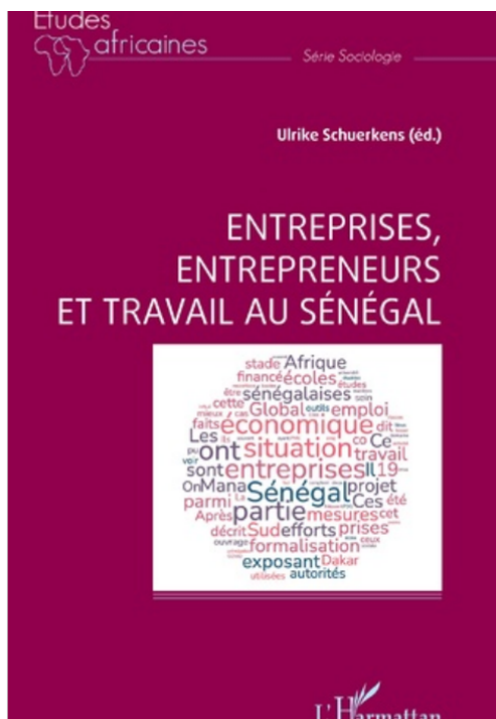
## NEW PUBLICATIONS: BOOKS

Ulrike Schuerkens (ed.) (2023). *Entreprises, entrepreneurs et travail au Sénégal*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 292 p.

<https://www.editions-harmattan.fr/livre-entreprises-entrepreneurs-et-travail-au-senegal-ulrike-schuerkens-9782140354823-77628.html>

### Abstract

How important are African cultures in the economic systems of sub-Saharan Africa, and Senegal in particular? The first part of this study analyses the Senegalese economy and the measures taken to improve this situation and the integration of the population into the modern economic system. The second part brings together case studies based on an analysis of the professional and personal careers of a number of entrepreneurs. They show how these entrepreneurs have been able to make their businesses profitable: certain sectors, neglected by the major international groups, are those in which a generation of people in their forties and fifties is investing. The professional future of a large part of the population therefore, depends on businesses that we need to support and sustain in order to create jobs, generate growth, encourage innovation and initiate a transformation.



Herkulaas MvE Combrink, Tobias Knedlik, Samia Satti Osman Mohamed Nour, Ulrike Schuerkens, Katinka de Wet, Karl Wohlmuth (Eds.). (2023). *Business Opportunities, Start-ups, and Digital Transformation in Africa. Volume 23 (2022/2023) of the African Development Perspectives Yearbook*.

### Abstract

This book focusses on the issues of digital entrepreneurship, digital start-ups, and digital business opportunities in Africa. It investigates links between digitalization and development of productive capacities. It deals with business opportunities created by the digital transformation. It discusses the role of universities in the digital transformation process. It also presents book reviews and book notes. Country case studies include Senegal, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and South Africa.



## NEW PUBLICATIONS: BOOKS

ULata, L.N. (2023). *Spatial Justice, Contested Governance and Livelihood Challenges in Bangladesh: The Production of Counterspace*. Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003350095>

### Abstract

This book analyses the key livelihood and governance challenges that the urban poor experience while navigating public spaces in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Using data collected through extensive fieldwork in Bangladesh, the book contributes to the emerging scholarship of resilient cities, gendered space, spatial justice, and poverty in cities of the Global South. The book assesses the everyday politics of survival for the urban poor; how the poor negotiate different levels of formal and informal modes of power and governance; and the dynamics of gender.

It explores how tenuous counter-spaces are created when these factors combine to provide a valuable framework for work in other urban contexts in the Global South beyond Bangladesh. Using cross-disciplinary perspectives, this book investigates the issues of human development, urban governance, urban planning and the gendered nature of urban space to outline how these issues enable or constrain poor people's livelihood practices and their rights to be in the city.

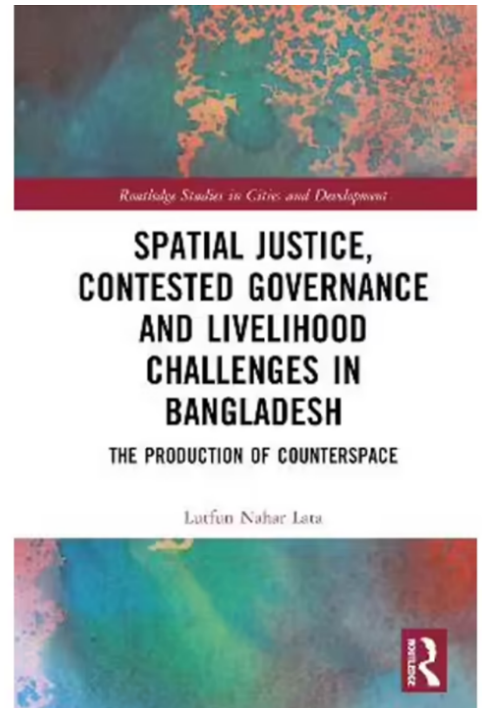
Exploring debates surrounding placemaking and inclusive cities and their connection to poor people's livelihoods, this book will be of interest to scholars in the field of Sociology, Development Studies, Planning, Geography and Anthropology.

Rosca Dorina & Cotovanu Lidia (coord.) (2022). *Republica Moldova: 30 de ani în 30 de cuvinte* [Republic of Moldova: 30 Years in 30 Words] Chisinau: Cartier. 512 p.

<https://cartier.md/libraria/istorie/republica-moldova-3/>

### Abstract

This book addresses three key imperatives. First, it encapsulates the Republic of Moldova's 30-year journey since 1991, using concepts that offer a comprehensive view of the era's ethos. Second, it positions the Moldovan context within social sciences, underscoring its inherent heuristic value. This work aims to re-establish the Moldovan field, spotlighting its identity and research significance through thirty defining words, each affirming its research legitimacy. Third, our collective endeavour enriches the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological apparatus essential for exploring the Moldovan terrain.



## NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

**Holtum, P.J.P., Lata, L. and Marston, G. (2023).** “Be your own boss The role of digital labour platforms in producing migrant masculinity (ies).” In *Migratory Men: Place, Transnationalism and Masculinities*, ed. by Garth Stahl and Yang Zhao. Routledge.

**Abstract:** A large proportion of low-skilled migrant workers use the personalised transport industry (such as taxis, limousines and ridesourcing) as an entry point into labour markets. This chapter explores the nexus of migrant masculinities, work and digital labour platforms (DLPs). Highlighting the ways in which DLPs capitalise on the precarity of migrant populations to exploit them for cheap labour, it draws on research from Uber driver-partners in south-east Queensland to illustrate how the platform both capitalises on migrant populations and serves as a valuable mechanism to validate migrant male masculinity. The chapter demonstrates how migrant men are able to construct a masculinity which is culturally validated in their communities as well as in mainstream Australian society. It presents three case studies to illustrate how masculinity is performed in a way that fosters unique hybrid identities.

**Khoo, S. (2023).** “Humane security: solidarity in policy and practice.” *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* <https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2023.2200241>

**Abstract:** This paper responds to the UNDP 2022 Special Report on Human Security in the Anthropocene (hereafter ‘UNDP Special Report’, UNDP 2022), and HDCA Human Security Thematic Group’s sessions at the 2022 HDCA Antwerp conference, focused on interrogating the ‘soul’ of the human security concept. In order to facilitate the practical implementation of human security principles, I offer six integrative suggestions for a convergent view that reinforces human security’s emancipatory critical and transformative potential, substantiating the UNDP Special Report’s demand for greater solidarity: i) recalling the Stockholm Conference’s agenda for global solidarity; ii) drawing on emancipatory legacies of established social movements; iii) applying differentiated measures to address vulnerability; iv) learning from indigenous and local insights on ‘coordination’ that emphasize relationality; v) decentralizing policy and practice; and, vi) An integrative perspective deepening the ‘humane’ interpretation of human security, taking on the Ogata-Sen recommendations for integrated policies, jointly emphasizing survival, livelihood and dignity. Keywords: Human security; Anthropocene; human development; UNDP Special Report 2022; Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment; Ogata-Sen Commission on Human Security.

**Kuhn,C; Khoo, S; Czerniewicz, L; Lilley, W; Bute, S; Crean, Abegglen, A; Burns, T; Sinfield, S. (2023.)** “Understanding Digital Inequality: a Theoretical Kaleidoscope, Postdigital Science and Education.” <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-023-00395-8>

**Abstract:** The pandemic affected more than 1.5 billion students and youth, and the most vulnerable learners were hit hardest, making digital inequality in educational settings impossible to overlook. Given this reality, we, all educators, came together to find ways to understand and address some of these inequalities. As a product of this collaboration, we propose a methodological toolkit: a theoretical kaleidoscope to examine and critique the constitutive elements and dimensions of digital inequalities. We argue that such a tool is helpful when a critical attitude to examine ‘the ideology of digitalism’, its concomitant inequalities, and the huge losses it entails for human flourishing seems urgent. In the paper, we describe different theoretical approaches that can be used for the kaleidoscope. We give relevant examples of each theory. We argue that the postdigital does not mean that the digital is over, rather that it has mutated into new power structures that are less evident but no less insidious as they continue to govern socio-technical infrastructures, geopolitics, and markets. In this sense, it is vital to find tools that allow us to shed light on such invisible and pervasive power structures and the consequences in the daily lives of so many.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

**Floss, M; Abelsohn, A; Kirk, A; Khoo, S; Saldiva, PHN; Umpierre, RN; McGushin, A; Yoon S. (2023).** “An International Planetary Health for Primary Care Massive Open Online Course.” *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 7, February 2023, 172-178  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2542519622003072>

**Abstract:** In this Viewpoint we argue that primary care practitioners should receive professional education in how to directly respond to planetary health challenges. We reflect on the provision of a massive open online course (MOOC) on planetary health for primary care practitioners in the context of existing training programmes. We describe the construction, delivery, and certification of a Global South-originated MOOC and explain aspects of its rhizomatic learning theory. We share baseline information and preliminary findings collected on the initial cohort of participants, including their profiles and previous knowledge about planetary health. We suggest that this MOOC is an appropriate response to planetary health challenges, and argue that cost-free, accredited planetary health education for primary care practitioners should be provided as a public good that also fulfils individual professionals' entitlement to quality education and continuing professional development.

**Rosca Dorina. (2023).** “A Transnational Exchange Mechanism Among Moldovan Migrants in the Parisian Region. Exploring 'The Post Office of Moldova'.” *Economy and Sociology*, June Nr.1. Pp. 7-18. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36004/nier.es.2023.1-01>.

**Abstract:** This article explores the exchange of parcels between Moldovan immigrants in Paris and their connections in Moldova, using 2017 ethnographic data from the Moldovan community in Paris. It challenges traditional push-pull theories, focusing instead on these exchanges' social and symbolic significance. The study reveals how parcel exchange has become a social institution, maintaining ties between Moldova and its diaspora. Termed the “Post Office of Moldova” by migrants, this mechanism involves both commercial and non-commercial elements, integrating the immigrant community. The motivations behind these exchanges are analyzed through the lenses of reciprocity, redistribution, and altruism, highlighting their reciprocal nature.

**Rosca Dorina. (2023).** “In Search of a Lost Market: The Features of Moldovan Capitalism Today.” *Journal of Romanian Studies*. 2022, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 83-104. DOI: [10.3828/romanian.2022.6](https://doi.org/10.3828/romanian.2022.6).

**Abstract:** This article examines the overlooked nature of post-Soviet Moldovan capitalism, critiquing the prevalent use of neoclassical economic theory by local scholars and NGO experts. It suggests that existing analyses often misalign with the realities of Moldovan capitalism, proposing instead a Polanyian perspective focused on the “logic of reciprocity.” This approach views the Moldovan economy from the perspective of reciprocal informal economic and social exchanges, as evidenced by monetary and in-kind transfers from Moldovan emigrants. The study highlights that Moldovan socioeconomic interactions are deeply rooted in local moral and social norms. Additionally, it explores how this reciprocity coexists with Moldova's oligarchic political economy, shaping the unique dynamics of its capitalist system.

**Staines, Z., Smith, K., Plage, S., Lata, L.N., Fay, S., Zheng, Z., Reeves, L.S., Beazley, H., Kuskoff, E., Clarke, A. and McGowan, G., (2023).** “Social science as social action to address inequalities.” *Australian Journal of Social Issues*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ajs4.272>

**Abstract:** In its most recent report, the Academy of the Social Sciences Australia (ASSA, 2021: 10) identified social inequality as a “grand challenge” for the social sciences, arguing that social scientists have a pivotal role to play in “understanding, addressing and guiding us towards a narrowing of a two-tier society.” Nevertheless, the social sciences continue to be regularly positioned as “soft” and esoteric in relation to the natural sciences, while also sustaining disproportionate funding cuts. In this article, we—a multidisciplinary group of social science researchers forming part of the Inequalities and Social Action Research Cluster based at The University of Queensland (Australia)—draw on the existing literature and our diverse experiences to reflexively consider how academic social scientists might play the active role that ASSA foresees to address social inequalities into the future. This includes by countering the inherent imperialism of the Western academy itself. We explore the roles, barriers and tensions that social scientists face and conclude by offering a framework of key strategies to improve the translational impacts of social science research for addressing social inequalities.



## GRANTS & AWARDS

Dorina Rosca is the scientific co-coordinator of **Horizon Europe 101086224 HESPRI, MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS, Staff Exchanges (SE) project** and leader of WP3 - Governing Education: Interdisciplinary as a roadmap for lastING and responsible policy (GET-INCITING), within HESPRI.



**ELEVATING HIGHER EDUCATION  
PUBLIC POLICIES:  
AN EMPOWERING SPRINGBOARD**

**RWebsite:** <https://www.hespriproject.eu/>

**Abstract:** HESPRI focuses on developing innovative strategies to enhance public policies and boost the competitiveness of the Higher Education (HE) sector. It acknowledges the dual influences that have shaped today's HE landscapes: the enduring humanistic traditions of university governance and the neo-liberal reforms implemented over the last three decades. HESPRI aims to propose alternative approaches to address key challenges in HE, like quality assessments, the ways to bring the collective scientific voice in HE, and the adaptation to the digital shifts of our societies. HESPRI's goal is to offer data-driven recommendations to governments, policymakers, and educational institutions.

**Dorina Rosca, Fulbright Fellow from August 2023 to January 2024 at Marymount University, VA, USA.**

**Abstract:** The aim of this grant is to allow academic staff to explore innovative pedagogical approaches, develop syllabi and interdisciplinary courses. Within this framework, Dorina Rosca gave two guest lectures: one at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign and another at Pace University, New York City. This Fulbright fellowship aligns with the HESPRI Project, particularly in examining the impact of new technologies on education and the academic profession. A key output will be a comprehensive paper analyzing how technological advancements are reshaping educational paradigms and transforming the roles and responsibilities of academic professionals.

**Lutfun Nahar Lata received the The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) Early Career Researcher best paper award** for the published paper titled "The production of counter-space: Informal labour, social networks and the production of urban space in Dhaka." *Current Sociology*, Vol. 71, Issue 6.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00113921221078049>

**Abstract:** Access to public space for earning livelihoods is important for street vendors in global south cities. However, due to continuous population growth and the demand for lands by the real estate development sector, pressure on land is very high in the global south. Consequently, global south cities such as Dhaka provide 'no place' for its poor migrant citizens. Yet, the urban poor are able to appropriate public space for livelihoods. Drawing on a case study of Sattola slum in Dhaka, this article investigates how the urban poor access to public space for

livelihoods and construct counter-spaces by breaking the planned order of the city. This article argues that the urban poor are able to construct counter-spaces with the tacit support of translocal social networks as well as with the support of a range of state and non-state powerful actors who are compromised by the benefits and profits they extract from vendors. This article draws on qualitative data generated through in-depth interviews with 94 informal workers and 37 key informants. This article contributes to urban sociology literature demonstrating that the urban poor are able to construct counter-spaces drawing on a range of everyday tactics and appropriating public space by quietly breaking the planned order of the city.

### Sustaining the Social

Voices  
Cultures  
Natures  TASA 2023

### Early Career Researcher

Best Paper Prize 2023



*Lutfun Nahar Lata*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Invitation to Participate in RC 09 Webinars

RC09 intends to host a series of insightful webinars focusing on topics related to social transformations and the sociology of development. These webinars aim to foster dialogue, share cutting-edge research, and explore diverse perspectives within the field. If you are interested in organizing a webinar, please get in touch with us at [rc09editors@gmail.com](mailto:rc09editors@gmail.com).



### Call for abstracts: Future of Work in the Global South and Global North Symposium

*2-3 May 2024, The University of Melbourne, Australia*

This two-day symposium aims to bring together researchers from across the social sciences—sociology, geography, work and organisational studies, industrial relations, cultural studies and beyond to discuss the variegated nature of digital labour platforms (Uber, Gojek, Didi, Deliveroo, Menulog, Hungry Panda, Mable, Hire Up etc.) and their operations in the Global South and Global North countries.

*Deadline for submission of abstracts:* 10 March 2024. Notifications of decisions on abstracts will be made by April 7, 2024.

Registration is free / All catering will be supplied / Participants are responsible for their own travel.

*Format:* To maximise the participation of scholars from Global South and Global North, we plan to organise this as a hybrid symposium that will simultaneously take place at The University of Melbourne and through Zoom.

*Abstract submission:* Please submit an abstract (150-200 words) and a short bio to Lutfun Nahar Lata: [l.lata@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:l.lata@unimelb.edu.au).

### Call for abstracts: The 57th Annual Conference of the Canadian Sociological Association (CSA)

This conference will be held in two sections: 1. *Virtual sessions scheduled from Monday, June 3 through Friday, June 7, 2024;* 2. *In-person sessions scheduled from Monday, June 17 through Friday, June 21, 2024* as part of the Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences Congress in partnership with McGill University.

*Session Title:* (WPO2) Gig economy, labour movements and platform capitalism in the Global South and Global North

This session invites submissions that address the following issues, or other issues pertinent to contemporary governance of the gig economy: (i) The variegated nature of digital labour platforms and their operations in the Global South and Global North countries; (ii) Algorithmic management in the gig economy; (iii) Intersectional approach to the gig economy; (iv) Resistance in the gig economy.

*Deadline for submission of abstracts:* January 29, 2024

*Format:* Paper Presentations

*Session Organizers:* Lutfun Nahar, Lata, The University of Melbourne, [l.lata@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:l.lata@unimelb.edu.au)