ISA

RC09 Social Transformations and Sociology of Development

Newsletter

EDITED BY
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MESSAGE FROM RC09 PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

As the end of summer is so close, it is time to take stock of the first half of the year. This period was marked by the organisation of the Vth ISA Forum of Sociology, held in Rabat, Morocco, in early July 2025. It was a pleasure to see so many of you again, to meet new colleagues, and to share fruitful discussions during our RC09 sessions.

For the first time, RC09 experimented with new formats for organising, debating, and promoting the interests of our community. Among the numerous paper sessions, we had several integrative sessions. We also have had a guest speaker – Professor Andrea J. Nightingale from the University of Oslo. Another notable first was the organisation of a PhD Laboratory, focused on academic writing techniques. We also had the pleasure of hearing the presentation of Dembélé Abdul-Aziz, the winner of the inaugural 2025 RC09 Best Post-Graduate Student Paper Award.

During the RC09 Business Meeting, we agreed to broaden the thematic scope of our RC's work – a natural evolution in light of the contemporary dynamics we are witnessing, and one that is fully in keeping with RC09's mission: the analysis of social transformations. We also agreed to spotlight and provide more support to RC09 early-career researchers.

These accomplishments reflect the cohesion and collaborative spirit of our community, as well as the strong commitment of RC09 members to advancing our shared goals. And for this, I extend my gratitude to all the Board members of RC09 for their hard work, implication, enthusiasm, ideas and excellent team job done so far.

Before closing this introductory word, it should be mentioned that this newsletter edition features a slightly revised design and introduces new sections, including one dedicated to spotlighting our new members, whom I warmly welcome into the RC09 family.

I would like to express my gratitude to our former newsletter editor, Lutfun Nahar Lata, for her service. I also extend my warmest welcome and thanks to our newly appointed newsletter editor, Augusto Gamuzza, for his new ideas and excellent job. A warm welcome to the team to Egbert Peng Wu, the freshly appointed social media editor. I wish them great success and a rewarding collaboration.

With gratitude for these wonderful results and best regards,

Dorina Rosca
RC09 President

NEW PUBLICATIONS: BOOKS

Villette, M., Branine, M. and Wade, M. E. B. (Eds.). *Entreprises Africaines. Vingt projets pour sortir du néo-colonialisme et du sous-développement*. **Paris: Presses de l'Ecole des Mines. ISBN: 978-2-38542-521-0**

Abstract

In the 21st century, Africa is a continent in full transformation where local entrepreneurs are developing businesses by following unique paths, still poorly understood by the academic world.

The result of the work of a collective of African and European researchers, this book analyzes the journey of twenty companies born in Africa. Some have become national champions, even pan-African multinationals, others have been bought by European multinationals, and still others have collapsed after a brief period of glory.

By applying the same analytical methods used to study European and North American companies, the authors show both strong similarities in the way businessmen accumulate capital, and the singularities of African contexts. Major differences emerge, such as the dependence of large African companies on their international business partners, and the role of family, political and religious influences. It is observed that in these countries, economic activity is even less separated than elsewhere from other aspects of life in society.

This book is a valuable tool for better understanding businesses on the African continent.

Libres opinions

Michel Villette, Mohamed Branine et Mohamed El Bachir Wade (Dir.)

Entreprises africaines

Vingt projets pour sortir du néo-colonialisme et du sous-développement

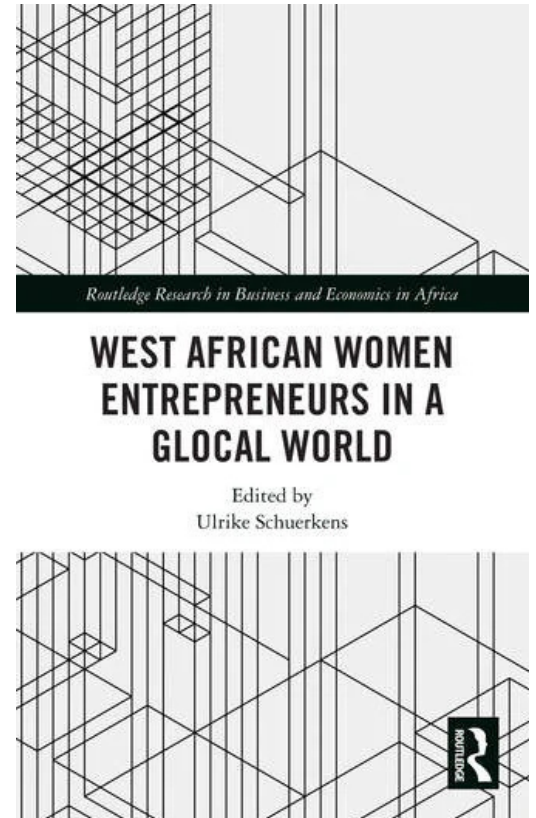MINES PARIS | PSL★
Presses des Mines

NEW PUBLICATIONS: BOOKS

Ulrike Schuerkens (Ed.). West African Women Entrepreneurs in a Glocal World. Published March 24, 2025 by Routledge. ISBN: 9781032795973

Abstract

More African women than men become entrepreneurs, with women often balancing time caring for their households with small enterprises such as setting up shops in front of their homes, renting market stalls, or setting up hairstyling businesses.

This book considers these micro-level instances of entrepreneurship, as well as cases of more established high-status entrepreneurs, to build a picture of women entrepreneurs in West African societies, and their wider role in socio-economic development. Small and medium enterprises are seen as agents of change in the Global South, vital for job creation and poverty reduction, but women often face barriers which hinder their entrepreneurial success, such as lack of funding, useful networks, or inhibitive gender stereotypes. This book highlights cases of gender and economic success, to demonstrate the significant potential of the female economy to generate progress and change.

This book will be an important read for students and researchers of entrepreneurship, business, gender, development, and economic sociology in Africa.

Routledge Research in Business and Economics in Africa

WEST AFRICAN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN A GLOCAL WORLD

Edited by
Ulrike Schuerkens

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Coggo Cristofoletti, E; Khoo, S; Rodés, V (2025) Is another internationalisation possible? Reconsidering public university engagement from a Latin American perspective. Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences 18(2): 58-80 https://doi.org/10.3167/latiss.2025.180204

Abstract: This article discusses 'another' internationalisation of higher education through the lens of the 'third mission' of engagement from a Global South viewpoint. It recontextualises internationalisation and the third mission through the meanings and practices of university extension in Latin America. Within a Global North perspective, internationalisation of the third mission is under-studied, compared to the internationalisation of teaching and research. We offer a case study of the Montevideo Group University Association (Spanish acronym: AUGM), an association of Latin American public universities promoting academic exchange in teaching, research and extension. We further our analysis and discussion through a within-case analysis of Uruguay's Udelar, the eponymous founding location of AUGM. At a moment of radical, debilitating global and national marketisation and privatisation focused on the individual, the case of AUGM's internationalisation of regional public extension is complemented by Udelar's case-within-a-case of extension, tying widened higher education access to national democratic reforms.

Coelho, D.; Khoo, S. Indelicato, M (2025) Naming, sustaining, nourishing: Tensions, resistances and possibilities of Education, Anti-Racism and Decoloniality, Introduction to Special Issue on "Education, antiracism and decoloniality: tensions, resistances, and possibilities", Educação, Sociedade & Culturas [Education, Society & Cultures], 70, 1-7, https://doi.org/10.24840/esc.vi70.1586

Abstract: In the spring of 2024, we issued a call for a thematic number titled "Education, antiracism and decoloniality: tensions, resistances, and possibilities" as part of Educação, Sociedade & Culturas [Education, Society & Cultures], a multilingual journal of CIIE – Centre for Research and Intervention in Education of the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of the University of Porto, Portugal, as a result of an open call for special issues promoted by the Journal. At the time, the call for contributions stated that, in the face of particularly vicious contemporary colonial and racist violence, it is vital to call upon all antiracist and decolonial powers to understand current struggles and envision transformed futures. Keeping engaged in critical reflections about antiracist and decolonial struggles seems more necessary than ever as contexts become more urgent and demanding, and we witness a growing – and increasingly more explicit – backlash against diversity, antiracism and decoloniality.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Abstract: Development as presented in the MDGs/SDGs is a well-planned step-by-step enterprise. If we dig deeper into the development debate, it is clear that the dilemma of eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development is still unsolved, despite all efforts. Thus, development seems to be fictional in the sense of an unreachable utopia. Against this background, it is helpful to connect the development debate with utopian studies. We learn from utopian studies that there are not only fictional utopias as a vision of a just world, which may never be realised. There are also lived utopias that unpack alternative approaches to overcoming inequality or meeting ecological challenges, and which can be realised at least within a limited space. This applies to concepts from in the Global South, such as swaraj, buen vivir and ubuntu, or ecovillages and solidarity economies that present themselves as models for alternative development. As lived utopias, they follow future practice in a defined area in which the desired future becomes part of the present. These concepts are new models in the critical development debate. They are particularly successful in communities that share a common vision and common values. At the same time, there are doubts whether these models may be realised at the national or global. With regard to the fictional character of development goals, it is obvious that we still lack a feasible global strategy with a vision for the future that is attractive enough to gain global support and that can really be accomplished.

Abstract: Max Weber feared a social future dominated by rational specialists "without spirit". He considered this development a possible outcome of the interplay between all-embracing commercialization (marketization, monetization) with the rationalization (bureaucratization) of structures and processes in industrialized societies. Another observation of Weber concerned the ongoing replacement of medieval religious values with secularized-rationalist and profit-oriented ones. The predominance of such values usually fosters work productivity but also raises profound questions about the changing specifics of money. They have become central to the value systems at local, regional, and global levels. Weber was pessimistic concerning the fate of commercialization. Edward A. Ross substantially contributed to the study of commercialization as part and parcel of his efforts to put a sociological diagnosis on American society after WWI. He selected and analysed a dozen constructive and destructive cases of commercialization. Talcott Parsons studied the phenomenon in detail and called it "instrumental activism". George Ritzer's study on McDonaldization as a rationalization process is an effort to put a sociological diagnosis on global society. There are open questions concerning the capacity of contemporary societies and individuals to manage innovations for coping with commercialization. The empirical reference for the discussion is SpaceX, led by Elon Musk.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Genov, N. (2025). Conceptualizing Global Trends. World Futures. The Journal of New Paradigm Research. DOI: 10.1080/02604027.2025.2402040

Abstract: Numerous publications contain high-quality descriptions of causes, processes, and effects of global trends. However, very few of these publications are theoretically guided or aim at theory building. This is a handicap preventing most publications on global trends from developing high-quality explanations and prognostications. This article contains an attempt at developing a conceptual framework for resolving the issue. The attempt is based on the paradigm of social interaction and includes arguments in favor of four global trends: upgrading the rationality of organizations, individualization, spread of instrumental activism, and homogenization of culture. The decomposition of the trends makes it possible to identify their structures and dynamics. The analyzed examples usually refer to constructive processes and effects. In reality, the global trends are internally controversial and bring about both constructive and destructive processes and effects. The most challenging task for future studies concerns the interplay of the internal dynamics of each global trend with the dynamics of the configuration of global trends. The conceptualization of the dynamic configuration of interacting global trends is the core of the diagnosis of the global situation.

Khondker, H. H. (2025). Temporary migrant workers in transnational space: Understanding class ambiguity. *Zanj: The Journal of Critical Global South Studies*. https://scienceopen.com

Abstract: This paper has two main objectives. First, it delves into the complex dynamics of social inequality among migrant workers who, being transnational, often face dual or multiple class and status positions depending on their physical location, and their ethno-national and gender backgrounds. Their class position becomes uncertain, fluid, and unstable. Drawing comparisons with their sedentary counterparts, the ambiguity of their class positions in the home and host countries becomes apparent. Migrant workers, often driven by economic necessity or geopolitical factors, face unique challenges that distinguish their experiences from those in settled communities. By examining the multifaceted dimensions of social inequality, this paper sheds light on the distinct characteristics and implications of inequality within migrant populations while also highlighting key differences from their sedentary counterparts in their societies of origin. Second, it argues that the concept of class, as used in mainstream sociology, falls short when applied to transnational migrants. Nevertheless, the concept of class remains relevant, and conceptual innovation is needed for tackling class in the context of transnationalism. This paper strives to provide such innovation by interrelating social class with occupational status and exploring their effects on transnational migrant workers.

Khondker, H. H. (2025). The paradox of development. *Economic & Political Weekly*. https://cpd.org.bd

Abstract: This review article critically discusses a volume produced by leading economists and other social scientists of Bangladesh on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Bangladesh's independence.

Khondker, H. (2024). Social inequality in MENA region. In S. S. Jodhka & B. Rehbein (Eds.), *Global handbook of inequality* (pp. 1–17). Springer

Abstract: After providing an overview of global social inequality trends in recent times, this chapter delves into the intricate landscape of income and wealth inequality within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, one of the most unequal regions in the world. Drawing upon Goran Therborn's analytic framework of existential inequality, it goes beyond economic dimensions to highlight the multifaceted aspects of gender and health inequalities prevalent in the MENA region. The chapter not only dissects the stark realities of inequality but also illuminates instances of progress and positive change within the region.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Khoo, S (2025) Disrupting Assumptions: My 500 on the Future of Development Education. Policy and Practice, Issue 40.
https://www.centreforglobaleducation.com/sites/default/files/My%20500%20on%20Rhe%20Future%20of%20DE%20FEB%202025%20FINAL.pdf.
(**No Abstract Available**)

Khoo, S (2025) Review of K. Szadkowski, Capital in Higher Education: A Critique of the Political Economy of the Sector, Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences. 18(2): 81-83
https://doi.org/10.3167/latiss.2025.180205
(**No Abstract Available**)

Khoo, S (2025) Emancipation as Rebellion or Repair? Higher Education, (Un)Sustainability and Possibilities for Transformation and Public Good, Chapter 3 in Belluigi, D.Z. and Keet, A. (eds) Emancipatory Imaginations: Advancing Critical University Studies. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media. pp 44-75.
https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260741
(**No Abstract Available**)

Khoo, S; Kuhn, C (2025) Through the kaleidoscope: a different way of looking into digital inequalities, Human Development & Capability Association blog, February 10.
https://hd-ca.org/through-the-kaleidoscope-a-different-way-of-looking-into-digital-inequalities

Abstract: This blog offers a brief critical reflection on a collaborative article, 'Understanding Digital Inequality: A Theoretical Kaleidoscope', by 9 authors based in England (Caroline, Tom, Sandra Sinfield), Ireland (Su-Ming), South Africa (Laura, Warren), India (Swati), Scotland (Aisling), Canada (Sandra Abbeglen), and 3 reviewers from the journal Postdigital Science & Education who each publish a brief Comment, included with the article: Petar Jandrić, Jeremy Knox, and Alison Mackenzie.

The article explores different theoretical approaches for investigating digital inequalities, including: the capabilities approach (CA), Bourdieu's theory of practice, cultural-historical activity theory, affective injustice, resources appropriation theory, critical pedagogy, Nancy Fraser's tripartite model of justice, and realist social theory. Each lens is discussed separately, to explore its advantages, with examples which shed light on aspects of digital inequality. Critical realism is included as a metatheory, a philosophy for social science that goes beyond what is commonsensical and observable at first sight, to uncover hidden social structures and mechanisms embedded in sociotechnical systems. Critical realism is an emancipatory philosophy that aligns with the goals of flourishing for all, a key preoccupation of our collective. A critical perspective is crucial, since social structures, power relations, and 'commonsensical' ideas tend to remain invisible, making it more difficult to challenge the values, vested interests, and power relations embedded in the design and development of digital systems.

Lata, L. N. (2025). Digital Labour Platform, Resistance and Labour Protection in Bangladesh. In Shahidur Rahman & Md. Masud-All-Kamal (eds.), Social Transformation in Bangladesh. London: Routledge.

Abstract: Digital labour platforms are the newest technological wave that is reshaping and reconfiguring the economic and labour landscape. Digital platforms, often known as the gig economy, are increasingly adopting app-based models to connect consumers with workers to complete their on-demand tasks. Existing research on the gig economy and its regulation has mostly been conducted in the Global North, whereas little is known about the emergence of the gig economy in the Global South. In particular, there is a gap in the literature on how the gig economy is regulated in the Global South and what the gig workers' working conditions and resistance opportunities are. In this context, this chapter explores the nature of gig work and gig workers associations in Bangladesh using the case of ridesharing drivers in Bangladesh as well as the implications of the digital labour platforms for labour regulation in Bangladesh and the potential applicability of existing laws and regulations to platform work.

Neubert, D. (2023). Social inequality in Africa. In: Surinder S. Jodhka/Boike Rehbein (Eds.), Global Handbook of Inequality, pp. 1-21. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Abstract: Our sociological concepts and theories have been developed in the context of Europe and North America. The post-colonial debate reminds us that they need to be provincialized. For the analysis of inequality, simple measures such as the distribution of per capita income are still helpful. But we cannot take for granted that our standard concepts can be applied unchanged to other parts of the world with different societies and economies. For an understanding of inequality in Africa, we have to go beyond classical concepts and consider other scholarly debates. As shown by empirical studies, in Africa socio-economic positions are more vulnerable and volatile than in Europe and North America. People often combine different sources of income and their social position cannot be clearly defined by occupation or control of the means of production. Due to weak social security systems, semi-formal and informal networks play a decisive role in coping with shocks. These networks have a considerable influence on social position and patterns of inequality. The intersectional debate reminds us that inequality is also an outcome of socio-cultural factors (usually discussed are gender and race/ethnicity). In Africa, in addition to gender, we need to consider ethnicity, neo-traditional authorities and patron-client relationships, which all play a role in shaping inequality. At the same time, individual decisions make a difference in how people deal with neo-traditional structures and with semi-formal and informal networks. The resulting differences in behaviour create socio-cultural distinctions that can be captured by using a milieu concept adapted to African contexts.

Neubert, D. (2023). How political is the middle class in Kenya? Journal of Contemporary African Studies. 4(1): 44-59.

Abstract: The current debate presents the middle class in the Global South as a driver of democratic change and the core of civil society. The activities of NGOs, or student protests, for instance, seem to support this notion. However, these examples should not be overstretched. Before confirming the idea that the 'middle class' is a carrier of political protest and a driver of democratic change, we need to answer at least two questions. Is the 'middle class' really a class in the strict sociological sense, with a common class consciousness or just a group with a middle-income: 'middle-income group'? And are the protests really representative of the middle-income group? Taking Kenya as an example, we cannot identify a 'middle class' in the strict sense of the sociological class concept. Neither does the political commitment of the middle-income group follow socio-economic differences. More important are patterns of socio-cultural differentiation that can be conceptualised as socio-cultural 'milieus'.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Abstract: Equity is a core social value that is widely debated in its conceptualisation and inclusion into policymaking and service delivery. Policymakers and street-level actors often disagree about or have limited interest in defining (in)equity, leading to a lack of consensus about how to make measurable and long-lasting impact for populations and communities experiencing disadvantage. Within this context, this paper draws on governance concepts such as hierarchy, market dimensions, and network dimensions to analyse key insights from in-depth stakeholder interviews (N = 25) with government and non-government actors in Queensland, Australia. The paper (1) examines the extent barriers to equity are created, reinforced, or reduced by centralised and street-level public governance approaches and (2) determines what (and where) the opportunities are to address these barriers and build a systemic approach to achieve equity. The paper highlights important tensions for actors tackling issues of inequity, including centralised or distant policymakers and government and non-government street-level practitioners operating within disjointed systems for policy, delivery, and funding. Notwithstanding the increasingly prevalent 'partnership' narrative, the foundations remain anchored in policy and management practices that have been built on longstanding neo-liberal market mechanisms or the 'contract state'. A more integrated and adaptive approach that aligns high-level policymaking with street-level practitioners and local communities should be an important pillar in navigating these competing priorities and challenges.

Points for practitioners

- Equity is debated both conceptually and in policymaking and practice, leading to a lack of consensus about how to design and implement effective solutions.
- Many universal policies and programs are designed and implemented in rigid silos, are not joined-up, and have limited impact on the economic and social policy drivers of inequity and entrenched disadvantage.
- A more adaptive and collaborative approach that aligns high-level governance and policymaking with street-level practitioners and local voices is possible but challenging to sustain.

Abstract: Between the release of tini briddho holen (song by KabirSuman, 1993) and briddhashram (song by NachiketaChakraborty, 1999) there was a gap of six years—but the difference in the philosophy of the two songs--the shift from the paternalistic protector to the aged as liability in the Bengali middle class household, is significant; even to understand why The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act was passed in 2007. The need for such legislation clearly indicates that what was previously expected from members of the family, is being unfulfilled, and thus there is required a legislative intervention to fill up a void.

While this legislation, on the one hand, talks about the obligation of the children to 'maintain' his/her parents; on the other hand it also legislates the need to construct old age homes. Transformed familial structures as well as kinship networks receding are clearly the reasons why legal avenues have been created, the shift from family/community services to professional services have led to the emergence of business of caring the 'left behind' elderly population. United Nations Population Division reported in 2011 that the share of India's population aged 60 and older is projected to climb from 8% in 2010 to 19% in 2050. All these developments warrant the need to observe and re-search ageing/ageism, and this paper is an attempt to understand the process primarily through socio-legal developments in the last few years.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

(2024) Sen, Rukmini (with Aishwarya Rajeev) 'Recognising Care Workers: A Feminist Legal Examination of ASHAs', Review of Women's Studies, Economic and Political Weekly, June 29 and July 6, 2024, Vol. LIX, Nos. 26 and 27, 46-51

Abstract: Despite being key 'frontline' workers, made even more visible by the pandemic, Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) are not categorised as workers, denying them many entitlements and social security benefits. This paper reviews legal judgements and public policy discourses, locating them in the interstices of women's unpaid care work and the law, to interrogate the conceptualisation of the ASHA. The terrain of legal recognition has been uneven for ASHAs, with the journey beginning from volunteer to a proposed 'worker'. However, many of their demands remain unfulfilled, for which this paper proposes a feminist re-imagination of care work(ers).

Notes about ongoing research projects

Rukmini Sen completed a research project in June 2025, funded by the Seed Money Grant Scheme of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi on 'Youth in Delhi: New Living Arrangements and Friendships'. This 10 month long project explored the challenge of finding student housing in Delhi for those who migrate to the National Capital for purposes of higher education. The study was conducted through online survey questionnaires, digital ethnography of app-based co-living arrangement websites, some in-depth interviews of students and some conversations with Paying Guest accommodation owners. The findings of this study can be located within the broader sociological theoretical framework of Simmel's Metropolis and Mental Life and Sayjay Srivastava's entangled urbanism, proposing an interdisciplinary work on urban sociology, youth cultures and friendship as a way of kinship. Basic details of the project presentation made can be found here.

INTEGRATIVE SESSIONS AT THE 5TH ISA FORUM OF SOCIOLOGY

Solidarity and Justice in the Anthropocene: Global and Local Perspectives

Participating research committees and their presidents:
RC 02 Economy and Society, Karen SHIRE
RC 07 Futures Research, Markus SCHULZ
RC 09 Social Transformations and Sociology of Development, Dorina ROSCA
RC 24 Environment and Society: Jo LINDSAY

Session organizers: Ulrike Schuerkens (RC09) and Habibul Khondker (RC09)

How do we know justice in the Anthropocene? Solidarity is not only a feeling of unity between populations all over the world who have common interests and goals and who ask for justice in the Anthropocene but also a normative value. Confronted with a shared threat such as climate change, people will refer to solidarity to address this danger. The Anthropocene requires actions and cooperation between groups to reduce inequities within societies. Inequality within societies functions as a driver of consumption that damages the planet's resources. Addressing the challenges of the Anthropocene requires solidarity between populations and institutions. Institutions should be accountable and fair. Solidarity among nations is also needed. Climate change is largely linked to activities done in wealthy nations, but more recently, it has been linked to activities in China and India. However, the burden of climate change falls on low- and middle-income countries. Needed funding must be given to poorer nations to undertake adaptation actions. Climate refugees from the global South must be welcome in the global North. By failing to accept these different tasks, we may transfer the negative outcomes of climate change to our children and grandchildren. The Integrated session will thus discuss the current and near-future situations and suggest global social dynamics and collective actions to navigate the Anthropocene safely. Which sort of socio-economic development is needed? How do we respect local cultures and favour sustainable lifestyles and consumption behaviours? How can our professional organizations support these endeavours? How can we create opportunities to attain solidarity in the economy, society, politics, and culture?

Proposed speakers and themes:
1)   Unruliness in the Anthropocene: Subjectivities and Political Possibilities for Change, Associate Professor Ms Andrea J. Nightingale, Oslo University, Norway
2)   Climate Justice in the Anthropocene: An African Perspective on Equity and Transition, Professor Hassan A. Hamdy, Zayed University, United Arab Emirates
3)   Bridging the Divide: Tackling Barriers in the Anthropocene for a Healthier, United Feature, Associate Professor Ms. Kerry Ard, Ohio State University
4)   Mexican Solidarities between Extractivism and Green Transformation: The Scenarios of the New Sexennium, Professor Markus Schulz, FLACSO, Sede Académica de México, Carretera, Mexico

INTEGRATIVE SESSIONS AT THE 5TH ISA FORUM OF SOCIOLOGY

Scientific knowledge and social practice – high expectations, tensions and compromises

Participating research committees and their presidents:
RC02 Economic Sociology, Karen A. Shire
RC09 Social Transformations and Sociology of Development, Dorina Rosca
RC11 Sociology of Aging, Lucie Vidovicova
RC17 Sociology of Organizations, Michael Grothe-Hammer
RC23 Sociology of Science and Technology, Leandro Raizer
RC31 Sociology of Migration, Loretta E. Bass
RC41 Sociology of Population, Walter Bartl
RC46 Clinical Sociology, Tina Uys
RC55 Social Indicators, Joonmo Son

Session organizers: Walter Bartl (RC41); Karen A. Shire (RC02)

Scientific knowledge is usually seen as a crucial contribution to human progress. Frames of grand challenges, such as the metaphor of the Anthropocene, formulate desiderata of prospective research and, ideally, technical or social innovation. Funding programs regularly frame their calls for grant proposals by favoring research that can be expected to contribute to tackling these challenges and even to catalyze social change. This optimism is somehow reminiscent of Talcott Parsons' modernist assumption that the expansion of higher education would contribute to a professionalization of work and a rationalization of society. Beyond the classic professions, the implied connection between research and social practice was not always part of how academia and societal stakeholders perceived of the purpose of research. Instead, research for the sake of purpose-free knowledge creation was an important topic in establishing the (relative) autonomy of science. Indeed, ample evidence suggests that there is a gap between academic knowledge production and its application, indicating fundamentally different logics of action. Approaches how this gap could be narrowed are manyfold, reaching from transformative research over transdisciplinary research to living labs and field experiments. Research policy tries to narrow this gap by measuring, monitoring and valorizing research impact. For sociology, the expectation of knowledge transfer implies new professional roles and modes of action that go beyond empirical research. This session aims to explore the (historical) constitution of societal expectations toward research-practice relations, as well as the challenges and opportunities that may arise from attempts of narrowing the gap between research and practice.

Proposed speakers and themes:
1) Maitrayee Chaudhuri, Delhi, India: Higher education and the social sciences in a "smart India"
2) Faeeza Ballim, Johannesburg, South Africa: Translating Technology in Africa
3) Renan Leonel, Newark, United States: Designing an agenda for studying the crisis in scientific and technological systems
4) Manfred Stock, Halle (Saale), Germany: Academization and its consequences

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Award for Best Post-Graduate Student Paper RC 09 5th ISA Forum in Rabat

The Research Committee on Social Transformations and Sociology of Development (RC09) of the International Sociological Association is pleased to announce the recipient of the inaugural Best Postgraduate Student Paper Award, established to recognize and encourage early-career researchers contributions in the field of sociological research.

The 2025 RC09 Postgraduate Student Best Paper has been written by **Mr. Abdul-Aziz Dembélé** in his paper entitled "*New Figures of Women's Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa*", presented within the V ISA Forum of Sociology in Rabat, 7th July 2025.

The award comprises a certificate and a monetary prize of €500, to be applied towards expenses incurred in attending the ISA Forum in Rabat.

RC09 extends its sincere congratulations to Abdul for this notable scholarly achievement.

For more information, please refer to the RC09 website here

CALL FOR IDEAS - RC09 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 isa-rc09@isa-sociology.org.

NEW MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

Name	Augusto Gamuzza (he/him)
Short Bio	I am associate professor in Sociology at University of Catania, Department of Education. Since 2016, I serve as board member of the international NGO COPE Cooperazione Paesi Emergenti, Catania and Scientific Director of the research laboratory *OfficinaSocialeCoPe*. My current research areas: international cooperation for development as cosmopolitan practice; identity dynamics in contexts of cultural contact; radicalisation phenomena and extreme behaviour among young people; methodological and epistemological aspects of action-research.
Recent Projects/Publications	Gamuzza, A. G., & Leonora, A. M. (2024). Integrating text mining and hermeneutic analysis: The case of international volunteering biographies. In New Frontiers in Textual Data Analysis (pp. 251–261). Springer Nature Switzerland AG. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-55917-4 Leonora, A. M., Gamuzza, A., Scieri, A., & Caruso, G. (2025). Genderising radicalisation: Forms and pathways of radicalisation from a perspective of gender. In Social Roots of Violent Extremism, Pathways and Trends in Europe (pp. 121–132). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-93421-6_8
Contact:	augusto.gamuzza@unict.it

Name	Peng WU (he/him)
Short Bio	I am a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Before pursuing an academic career, I was a cross-sector entrepreneur and social activist with a decade of experience in digital technology and community development. My perspectives during the pandemic gained widespread public attention, trending on Twitter and Weibo, where my content garnered 230 million views. These experiences have provided valuable insights for my ethnographic doctoral research. I have been featured in prominent media outlets, including *CGTN*, *Phoenix Television*, and *The Yorkshire Post*. My research interests include digitalisation, rural development, and contemporary Chinese society.
Recent Projects/Publications	Peng WU, Bun Hok KU. Project: Moral Fluidity and Digital Economies: Socio-Economic Transformations in Rural China. In process. Seminar at Oxford: https://talks.ox.ac.uk/talks/id/90715242-4749-459c-9953-95e6009d4fab/. Seminar at Leeds: https://essl.leeds.ac.uk/law/news/article/2085/new-technologies-and-research-methods-in-business-law-seminar-series-for-early-career-researchers. Ling'ou LI, Peng WU. Project: Making Youth Return Possible: An Exploration of County-Level Attraction Factors and Talent Retention Strategies. In process. Research article (December 2024): How Returnee Youth Can Enhance Entrepreneurship Performance: The Role of Capital Integration. https://mqikan.cqvip.com/article/ArticleDetail?id=7200203302.
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