



Social Transformations and
Sociology of Development

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Newsletter

CONTENTS

Message from RC09 President	p.2
New Articles and Book Chapters	p.3
Rukmini Contribution	p.6
Announcements	p.7
New Members Spotlight	p.8

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MESSAGE FROM RC09 PRESIDENT



Dear colleagues,

As we are entering the second half of the year, it is a good time to reflect on what we have accomplished together in the first half. This has been a busy and productive period for the RC09 Board, marked by numerous milestones.

In January 2026, RC09 successfully applied for and received an ISA Grant to organise a methodological workshop entitled *Academic Writing and Publishing Workshop for PhD Scholars in India*, as part of the Annual Conference of the Indian Sociological Society (ISS). This initiative reaffirms our shared commitment to creating opportunities for early-career researchers from the Global South. The grant will be complemented by funds from RC09 to support the participation of 10 doctoral students in the workshop and the ISS Annual Conference. Rukmini SEN and Brian DILL made outstanding contributions to this activity, and I am deeply grateful to both of them.

At the same time, the Board has been preparing the call for submissions for the *RC09 Best Post-Graduate Student Paper Award 2027*. The winning paper will be presented during next year's XXI ISA World Congress of Sociology, to be held in Gwangju, South Korea, in July 2027. The call can be found in this newsletter edition and is already published on our RC09 website and social media. My sincere thanks go to the members of the Selection Committee - composed of Brian DILL, Habib KHONDEKER, Su-Ming KHOO, Dorina ROSCA, Ulrike SCHUERKENS and Rukmini SEN - for their valuable insights and commitment in preparing this call.

A significant part of our efforts has also been devoted to preparing the call for session proposals for the XXI ISA World Congress of Sociology. RC09 received 35 session proposals for the 19 available session slots. This enthusiastic response demonstrates the vitality of our community and has contributed to an increase in our membership. It will also allow us to put together an exciting and stimulating programme for the Congress. I would like to thank Egbert Peng WU for his active involvement in disseminating the call through RC09's social media channels. His contribution has been invaluable. I would also like to take this opportunity, prompted by our growing membership, to extend a warm welcome to all our new RC09 members. I hope they will find in our community a stimulating intellectual environment and many opportunities for fruitful exchange and collaboration.

These achievements reflect the cohesion, collaborative spirit, and dedication of our community.

Finally, my special thanks go to Augusto GAMUZZA, editor of this edition of the newsletter, for his excellent work.

With warm regards,

Dorina Rosca
President, RC09

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Caracentev, S., & Roșca, D. (2026). Situated responsibility in interdisciplinary research ethics: Comparative perspectives from Moldova, Japan and France. Research Ethics. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17470161261427335>

Abstract

This paper designs and explores the concept of situated ethical responsibility (SER) within interdisciplinary research ethics, drawing on comparative perspectives from Moldova, Japan, and France. The study highlights the limitations of universalised ethical codes, particularly in the context of cross-border collaborations and diverse disciplinary norms. By analysing 29 semi-structured interviews and participant observation conducted as part of the 101086224-HESPRI-HORIZON-MSCA-2021-SE-01 Project (HESPRI), the paper illustrates how ethical practices are negotiated within specific socio-cultural, historical, and institutional contexts. The findings reveal that ethical responsibility is not merely a matter of adhering to formal procedures but is a dynamic, relational practice embedded in everyday research activities. The concept of SER is proposed as a framework that valorises the richness of researchers' backgrounds and experiences while addressing the complexities of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural collaborations. This approach underscores the need for governance models that transcend disciplinary silos and apply context-sensitive judgement to adequately reflect the realities of contemporary research environments.

Gamuzza, A., Tamayo Gomez, C., Rosca, D., Scieri, A., & Caruso, G. (2026). Gendered dimensions of return migration: a systematic review of the literature. International Review of Sociology, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03906701.2026.2655721>

Abstract

Voluntary return migration is a multifaceted process encompassing the assisted or independent return of migrants to their country of origin, transit, or a third country, based on a voluntary decision of the returnee. Rather than constituting a mere reversal of migration, return reflects a constellation of socio-political, economic, and cultural dynamics that intersect with structural inequalities, including gender, legal status, family position and socio-economic status. This article adopts a mixed-method approach to literature review to provide a critical examination of an under-researched aspect in voluntary return migration studies through a gender-focused lens. Return processes are frequently embedded in gendered expectations operating within returnees' networks, while reintegration challenges are often mediated by socially ascribed gender roles. Our findings unveil the necessity of developing multi-layered analytical frameworks that treat gender not as a descriptive variable but as a relational regime that shapes return migration experiences.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Hanrieder, T. (2025). Contesting neoliberalism with human rights? Liberal exhaustion and exploitation in Colombia's health system. Journal of European Public Policy, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2025.2578283>

Abstract

The neoliberal reorganisation of social policy has provoked counterreactions worldwide. One genuinely liberal contestation of neoliberal restructuring is based on human rights mobilisation, and, in many countries, judicial guarantees of social human rights. This article investigates the interaction of neoliberalism and human rights liberalism in the domain of health policy. I focus on Colombia, where 'health as a human right' has become a widespread reference for resistance against neoliberalism. However, human-rights-based mobilisation has proven unable to revert disinvestment from public infrastructure. Rather, the judicialized enforcement of the right to health has reinforced a pharmaceutical bias and cost-shifting towards profitable care. Neoliberalism and the right to health co-create a politics that offloads the actual cost of care to precarious workers and vulnerable patients. I draw on feminist economics and critical public health to capture these exhausting and exploitative tendencies of (neo)liberalism. The article is based on rich qualitative material gathered in the context of 'post-neoliberal' reform struggles and health system crisis in Colombia.

Hanrieder, T. (2026). The politics of evidence in health system crises: the case of Colombia. International Affairs, Volume 102, Issue 2, 639–658. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaf266>

Abstract

Health systems worldwide are in crisis, facing financial sustainability challenges, workforce shortages and shifting demands due to demographic change. Limited or decreasing public resources, aid cuts, population ageing and health workforce shortages affect countries in different but serious ways, leading to a sense of ongoing crisis. This article investigates the politics of health system crisis and its contentious interpretation in Colombia, where this issue is highly politicized. I analyse how proponents and opponents of a major health system reform proposal have mobilized evidence in favour and against the reform bill put forward by the leftist government elected in 2022. This analysis yields that the politics of slow, gradual health system crises is also one of sense-making, in which evidence is assembled within larger and changing narratives about development. Colombia's international status as a recent OECD member, the idea of progress and modernity amid social inequality, and the political legitimacy of state and private actors are all renegotiated through evidence about health system performance and crisis. I draw on in-depth qualitative research conducted in 2024 and 2025. The article invites cross-fertilization between analyses of gradual, 'slow-burning' crises and of changing notions of international development.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Kuriti, A. R. (2025). Networked individualism and technological divide: Paradigm shifts in social relations in India. *Studime Sociale*, 19(4), 81–88.

Abstract:

India's accelerating integration into global information and communication technologies over the past three decades has triggered profound transformations in social relations, economic organisation, and cultural practices. Yet this digital penetration is neither uniform nor socially neutral — it is deeply mediated by pre-existing inequalities of caste, class, gender, region, and language. This paper critically examines how digital technologies are reconfiguring individual relationships with families, communities, and institutions in India, situating the analysis within Manuel Castells' theory of the network society and Barry Wellman's concept of networked individualism. Networked individualism captures a historically significant transition: from stable, place-based communities and familial loyalties toward fluid, dispersed, and technologically mediated networks of social interaction. In the Indian context, this shift is especially visible in the intergenerational sphere, where children's deepening engagement with mobile phones and social media simultaneously empowers and disrupts traditional family structures, producing both cultural and relational divides within households.

The paper conceptualises India's digital divide as multi-dimensional rather than as a singular infrastructural gap. It encompasses infrastructural barriers such as the uneven availability of broadband and reliable electricity alongside economic, linguistic, and gendered dimensions of exclusion. Rural–urban disparities remain particularly acute: metropolitan centres host dense digital ecosystems enabling gig-economy labour and cultural production, while rural areas continue to face inconsistency in connectivity and power supply. India's rich linguistic ecology further compounds exclusion, as the predominance of English-language digital content renders much of the internet inaccessible to vernacular communities. Gendered access is constrained by patriarchal gatekeeping, limiting women's participation in online spaces in ways that curtail their social and economic empowerment.

Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital — economic, cultural, social, and symbolic — the paper argues that mere access to devices or connectivity is insufficient. What matters equally are the embodied competencies and social ties that enable individuals to convert digital access into meaningful advantage. Combining Castells and Bourdieu thus illuminates how digital positions reproduce or overturn existing social hierarchies, depending on one's position within broader structures of power.

The paper further examines the rearticulation of social relations across four key domains: family and intimate life, labour and economic relations, community and urban space, and politics and state–society relations. Across each domain, technology mediates both autonomy and control, enabling new democratic voices and grassroots mobilisations while simultaneously enabling state surveillance, platform gatekeeping, and algorithmic bias that reinforce dominant cultural narratives.

Despite these reproduction mechanisms, the paper identifies significant transformative possibilities: vernacular digital platforms, community-driven media initiatives, cooperative platform governance, and policy frameworks promoting affordable broadband, digital literacy, and algorithmic accountability all offer pathways toward a more equitable digital future.

The paper concludes that addressing India's technological divide requires simultaneously tackling material and symbolic inequalities. Only through theoretically grounded, policy-responsive, and socially inclusive approaches can India's digital transformation serve as a foundation for more just and equitable social relations.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Schuerkens, U. (Co-Ed.). (2026). African development yearbook 2024/25: Unit on fiscality in West Africa. Lit Verlag. <https://lit-verlag.de/isbn/978-3-643-91607-5/>

Abstract:

Volume 24 (2024/2025) of African Development Perspectives Yearbook 2024/25 examines the development of the fiscal state in Senegal as a case study for understanding broader challenges of domestic resource mobilisation in Africa. The unit brings together five complementary studies that analyse fiscal capacity from different perspectives: successful experiences in tax mobilisation, the relationship between tax structures and economic growth, the distributive effects of tax expenditures, reforms for improving public resource management, and the contribution of local public finance to local economic development.

Schuerkens, U., & Ly, O. (2026). Promoting local public finance in Senegal: strategies for mobilising tax resources to meet the challenges of local economic development (LED) in the communes of Saint-Louis and Kolda. In African development yearbook 2024/25 (pp. 421–494). Lit Verlag. <https://lit-verlag.de/isbn/978-3-643-91607-5/>

Abstract:

This chapter analyses the relationship between local taxation and local economic development (LED) in Senegal through a comparative study of the municipalities of Saint-Louis and Kolda. The authors investigate how local governments mobilise fiscal resources under decentralisation and whether existing fiscal arrangements are capable of supporting territorial economic development. They argue that conventional economic approaches to taxation are insufficient and should be complemented by a fiscal sociology perspective that recognises the social, political, and territorial functions of taxation. The research employs a mixed-methods design combining semi-structured interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and documentary analysis. The findings indicate that although both municipalities possess significant development potential, local taxation remains too weak to ensure genuine financial autonomy.

Schuerkens, U. (2026, June 2). L'IA ne menace pas de la même manière tous les emplois. Elle risque de reproduire les discriminations existantes. The Conversation. <https://doi.org/10.64628/AAK.yw9c7ky37>

Abstract:

The article argues that the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on employment cannot be understood solely in terms of the number of jobs that may disappear. Rather than affecting all workers equally, AI is likely to reinforce existing social and labour market inequalities. The authors emphasize that workers' vulnerability to AI depends on their position within the labour market. This divergence reflects unequal access to the resources needed to adapt to technological transformation. Another important argument is that AI itself is not inherently discriminatory. However, because AI systems are trained on historical data and implemented within existing social and institutional structures, they may reproduce or even amplify existing biases in hiring, promotion, evaluation, and other workplace decisions.

Schuerkens, U. (2026). Entrepreneurs trans-nationaux de la high-tech au Sénégal. In E. Kamdem (Ed.), Diasporas africaines et développement inclusif durable : défis, opportunités en Afrique et pour l'Afrique. Éditions EMS (Entreprise, Management et Société).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

II edition RC09 Award for Best Post-Graduate Student Paper XXI World Congress of Sociology, Gwangju, Korea, 4 - 10 Jul 2027

Following the success of its first edition, ISA RC09 is pleased to announce **the second edition of the award for the Best Postgraduate Student Paper on Sociological Research on Social Transformations**. The winning author(s) will be invited to present their work in a dedicated RC09 session at the V ISA Forum of Sociology, held within the XXI ISA World Congress of Sociology in Gwangju, South Korea, 4–10 July 2027, and their name(s) will be featured in the RC09 Newsletter.

The award comprises a certificate of recognition and a monetary prize of up to €500 — or €500 per author in the case of co-authored papers — to help offset the costs of attending the World Congress. A summary of the finalist paper will also be published in the RC09 Newsletter.

For further details, please visit the RC09 website (ADD THE LINK)



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	Cristina Copaceanu (she/her)
Short Bio	Cristina Copaceanu is Associate Professor at the European University of Political and Economic Studies „Constantin Stere”. She also serves as Head of the economic and financial department at the Institute of Mother and Child, one of the largest public healthcare institutions in Moldova. Her research focuses on financial sustainability of healthcare systems, public sector governance, internal audit, quality assurance in higher education, and sustainable development. She is currently working on a habilitation thesis on the financial sustainability of the healthcare system in the Republic of Moldova.
Recent Projects/Publications	Copăceanu, C. (2025). Analysis of the Financial Capacity of the Healthcare System in the Republic of Moldova for Systemic Improvement. Annals – Economy Series, No.2, pp. 167–175. https://doi.org/10.56329/1810-7087.25.2.14 Copăceanu, C. (2024). Internal Managerial Control: A Tool for Strengthening the Healthcare System. International Scientific Conference on Accounting, pp. 245–255. https://doi.org/10.53486/isca2024.32
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Name	Anna Shostya (she/her)
Short Bio	A native of Ukraine, Anna Shostya is Professor of Economics and Chair of the Economics Department at Pace University, NYC. She received her PhD in Economics from the New School University (NYC). She has extensive international experience and has been an invited speaker at universities in China, Poland, and Moldova. For 10 years, she was a visiting lecturer at the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology. In 2023, she served as a Fulbright Specialist to the American University of Moldova. Dr. Shostya's major fields of study are sustainable development, China's economic studies, international comparative economics, and higher education pedagogy.
Recent Projects/Publications	Kakar, N., & Shostya, A. (Eds.). (2025). Pathways to Sustainable Development: Implementing the Pact for the Future. Edward Elgar. Morreale, J. C., & Shostya, A. (2026). Awakening the future: Environmental awareness and leadership potential among college students in China. In A. Akande (Ed.), Modern Transformational Leadership. Diversity and Inclusion Research. Springer.
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