RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON CONCEPTUAL AND TERMINOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

International Sociological Association – Research Committee 35

Session Overview

**for the 2014 COCTA (ISA RC35) Interim Conference
at the XVIII ISA World Congress,
Yokohama, Japan, 13-19 July, 2014**

Integrative Session:
The Global South and Postcolonial Perspectives in International Sociology

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Citizenship, Cosmopolitan Recognition and Democratic Imaginaries

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Giving as Social Practice and Economic Alternative

Session 3:
'Individuality' Revisited: A Concept between Cultural and Epistemological Perspectives

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Ontologies of Development and its Absence

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General Information

XVIII ISA World Congress
"Facing an Unequal World: Challenges for Global Sociology"
Yokohama, Japan, 13-19 July 2014

The **congress website** with all information concerning the congress is:
http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2014/

The **general congress timetable** is here:
http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2014/timetable.htm

For information on general **deadlines** see:
http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2014/deadlines.htm

The **congress programme of COCTA** is here:
http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2014/rc/rc.php?n=RC35

If you plan to **present a paper** in one these sessions the calls for which you will find below, please observe the **deadline**: The **on-line abstracts submission system** (see congress webpage) will open June 3, 2013 and close **September 30, 2013, 24:00 GMT**. We are very much looking forward to your input!

Rules for all presenters Participants may be listed **no more than twice** in the Program. This includes all types of participation – except being listed as Program Coordinator or Session Organizer. Program Coordinators and Session Organizers can organize a maximum of two sessions where their names will be additionally listed in the program. A "participant" is anyone listed as an author, co-author, plenary speaker, roundtable presenter, poster presenter, panelist, critic, discussant, session (co)chair, or any similar substantive role in the program. A participant cannot present and chair in the same session. In order to be included in the program the participants (presenters, chairs, discussants, etc.) need to pay **registration** fees by April 1, 2014.

Integrative Session (not open for submission of abstracts)

The Global South and Postcolonial Perspectives in International Sociology

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RC35 in cooperation with RC08 (History of Sociology) & WG02 (Historical and Comparative Sociology)

Speakers:
Gurminder K. Bhambra, University of Warwick, UK
Manuela Boatca, Free University of Berlin, Germany
Sujata Patel, University of Hyderabad, India

The ISA is the bearer of a great prospect for sociology: becoming a genuinely international field of knowledge. A powerful contemporary change is the emergence of postcolonial and southern perspectives. Sociology's history is being re-thought; the economy of knowledge centred on Europe and North America is being analyzed; more complex international flows of ideas are being traced.

"Postcolonial sociology" is not a new specialization: it is a shift that affects all fields of sociology. Postcolonial perspectives are currently being explored in sociological theory, the sociologies of disability, education, gender and modernization, the history of sociology, and more.

This session responds to this moment in the ISA's history, providing a forum to link postcolonial perspectives emerging in different areas of the ISA's work. The session will allow researchers to compare changes in their own fields, and discuss the implications for world sociology.

Speakers will be asked to respond to a set of questions posed by the participating ISA units. Through the contact persons, units will be asked to propose issues about postcolonial and southern perspectives for discussion at the session. These will be redacted by the contact persons and the coordinator, and given (well in advance) to the speakers.

The session is intended to be interactive. The Chairperson will pose questions to the speakers, based on the agreed agenda, and invite debate as well as direct statements. In the second half of the session, contributions (time-limited) from the floor will be invited, involving exchange with speakers on the panel. At the end of the session, the speakers will offer short closing statements.

With this format, we cannot list 'themes' individually for speakers. Possible themes are: innovations within specific fields of sociology; postcolonial curricula for teaching sociology; new audiences across the majority world; relations between sociology and indigenous knowledge.

Session 1

Citizenship, Cosmopolitan Recognition and Democratic Imaginaries

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It could be argued that cosmopolitanism and citizenship involve two dimensions of recognition. Citizenship is mainly concerned with political recognition, the formal equality of members of a political community, and how rights and duties are combined (Rousseau; Marshall). Whereas the cosmopolitan thematic might be related more to cultural recognition, since it proposes modes of recognition that go beyond the limitations of exclusive citizenship and exclusive nationalism (Kant; Beck; Delanty). Honneth claims that struggles for recognition have made citizenship more democratic, opening it to wider categories of persons and enriching its meaning in ways that are consistent with T H Marshall's typology of civil, political and social rights. By contrast, cosmopolitanism is suggestive of types of cultural recognition that are not limited to the national frame and that are contrary to the image of citizenship as defined by the exclusion of the other.

This session aims to clarify and explore how the relationship of recognition and democracy bears upon cosmopolitan citizenship. It will consider whether the elucidation of mutual recognition modifies our conception of democracy as a normative ideal and an empirical reality. Yet, it asks whether current understandings of recognition are sufficient and whether they need to be supplemented by other historical frameworks and genealogies. Given that democracy is conditioned by the horizons of expectation (Koselleck) and the sense of meaning that subjects draw from the social imaginary, such as that of a moral order of mutual benefit according to Charles Taylor and Proudhon, or the project of individual and collective autonomy according to Cornelius Castoriadis.

For this reason, historical and genealogical approaches that combine interpretations of cosmopolitanism and statements of citizenship may be heuristic, as they assist in clarifying the relations between State democratization and the extending of cultural exchanges, and between recognition and cosmopolitan democracy. The authors of reference can be reviewed on some historical periods, so as to specify the relations between ideology and utopias, between global imaginaries and proceedings of recognition (Taylor, Balibar, Delanty, Benhabib). From this can be developed some intersecting histories of political recognition.

Finally, does the notion of democratic recognition enable us to enhance a better appreciation of the recent waves of social contestation that have sought to promote democracy and its resonance implicated in their attempts to give expression to democracy through public actions and the mobilising of popular will, such as in the case of the Arab spring or the Occupy movement?

Giving as Social Practice and Economic Alternative

Dave Elder-Vass, Loughborough University, UK, d.elder-vass@lboro.ac.uk

Giving is a topic that has been seriously neglected by sociologists. If we include sharing within the family or household, volunteering, charitable donations, blood and organ donation, assistance to friends, neighbours and co-workers, presents on ritual occasions such as birthdays, and the blossoming culture of digital gifts on the Internet, then giving may be as important economically as the market. Yet this is a set of social practices that is excluded from economics by its very definition of the economy, and thus a prime opportunity for sociologists to demonstrate the importance of social practices that do not conform to the neoliberal logic of the market in our contemporary social world. Giving may also be seen as an important non-capitalist form that already exists alongside the capitalist economy, and thus as offering part of a viable alternative to the current political and discursive dominance of capitalism. Nevertheless, giving is also entangled with commercial activities, notably in the burgeoning digital economy. Papers are invited that consider how the many social practices of giving operate, as well as those that discuss the critical/political implications of these practices.

Session 3

'Individuality' Revisited: A Concept between Cultural and Epistemological Perspectives

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The sociological discipline does not offer a standardized definition of "individualization" or "individuality," but a common tendency within different theoretical orientations points to the fact that the individual is not considered to be the isolated entity or actor, but can only be thematized within societal interrelations and interdependences. There is a focus on a process of removal from traditions and life forms within freely eligible, anonymity gaining networks, a pluralizing of life styles and the emergence of internal and external constraints which put pressure on individuals to make use of their personal freedom. Societal differentiation according to Georg Simmel causes individualization; specialization and division of work lead to individualizing processes. Individualization is seen as the growing quantity of group affiliation and the individual is considered to be the intersection of social circles. Wilhelm von Humboldt's and Johann Wolfgang Goethe's idea of individuality postulates a "self-unfolding subject" expressing itself in its actions, relationships, and creations. Jean Jacques Rousseau connected individuality to concepts like spontaneity, natural sentiment, and authenticity while John Stuart Mill's political reflections put emphasis on the supreme obligation of government which lays in protecting individuality. What is the specific nature of the phenomenon of individuality? Are the classical sociological and social philosophical reflections a specific product of Western thought? In some cultures, the individual may cease to be the primary unit of consciousness and instead, the sense of belongingness to a social relation is so strong that it makes more sense to think of the relationship as the functional unit of conscious reflection, especially in Japan, China, Thailand, the Philippines, India etc. The session will challenge the classical perspectives on "individuality" uniting scholars from different cultural contexts and epistemological approaches.

Session 4

Ontologies of Development and its Absence

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Development became a key and global concept after Second World War. Undeniably it affected the organization of political agendas at the level of Nation-States and institutions created to regulate the international order after 1945. Disputes concerning its definition, validation and applicability widened its semantic field and had huge impact to political, economic and intellectual agendas.

Although straightforwardly associated to the historical context of the post-1945, it is not difficult to illustrate how *development* relates to a wider arena referred to the promotion of *improvement* and *progress* and to the production of *wealth* – ideas already available at 18th century Adam Smith´s Wealth of the Nations. All in all *development* and its absence (backwardness, underdevelopment etc.) organized a semantic field referred to binary oppositions conceived as Antinomies of Modernity, structuring the relationship of the West to colonial and post-colonial peripheries.

We encourage the submission of papers aimed at mapping conceptualization, theorization and debates largely associated to *development* as a *topos* and a semantic field in relation or reaction to western expansion through colonialism and capitalism. Special attention will be given to investigations dealing with the analysis of contexts/experiences addressed from peripheral and post-colonial contexts concerning experiences of anti-development debates.

Session 5

Power and Violence Revisited: Understanding the Theoretical Significance of Challenges to Western Modernity

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David Strecker, University of Jena, Germany, David.Strecker@uni-jena.de

The prevalent notions of power and violence in social theory have been strongly shaped by a dominant self-conception of Western modernity: Power as the capacity to enforce aims is essentially based on violence as the primary resource to suppress resistance; what has been termed modernization has brought about an increasing centralization of violence and, hence, power within the state; democratization has dissolved or, at least, diminished the repressive character of power and violence.

This conceptualization has been challenged for some time: Power does not exclusively or even primarily work by suppression; power's repressive and constitutive functions can go hand in hand and are interlinked in subtle ways; furthermore, the relationship between violence and power is more difficult than is usually assumed; they might even better be understood as antithetical; finally, modernization has not tamed or at least mitigated power and violence; the recent history of the West plainly evinces the contrary; and voices from the Global South have long contested the dominant narrative.

It is not always clear, however, what the challenge raised by postcolonial, decolonial and related critiques of Western social theory exactly consists in. Does it go beyond moral protestation and a demand for historical recognition and inclusion? Do processes of modernization more or less neglected by the dominant narrative also possess significance for how we have to understand and model the central concepts of social theory?

The session is intended to take a closer look at this question by asking: What can we learn from challenges to Western modernization about the functions and mechanisms of power and violence and their relation to each other. Hence, we invite contributions discussing issues like slavery, colonialism, connected histories, and entangled or multiple modernities with the aim of thereby refining our conceptions of power and violence.

Session 6

Renegotiating Modernity: Imaginaries, Projects and Critiques

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In the last decades the concept of modernity has been tested time and again. While rejected by many, others observed a multiplication and proliferation of modernities. We welcome papers that present projects, imaginaries and critiques of modernity that draw on 'non occidental' perspectives and experiences. What kind of theories of modernity have emerged in the Asia, Africa, and Latin America and how do these negotiate, challenge, contest or even align with modernity projects elsewhere? In many countries the debates about modernity transcend the academic discourse. Literature and the arts in general are important media. Accordingly, in order to understand how certain societies conceive of modernity, we especially welcome submissions that take these media into consideration. An important question is how a fruitful dialogue between social theory and the arts can be established.

Session 7

Resonance Theory and the Quality of Life

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The panel assembles current research which focuses on the connection between theories of resonance and quality of life. The finding that experiences of resonance positively influence individual's quality of life can be taken as a starting point. A fundamental intuition comes from the conviction that sociological analyses of resonance offer the possibility to address and expand questions of recognition, of social positioning and responsiveness in a theoretically and empirically fruitful manner. The difference to approaches that exclusively focus on social relationships is found in the inclusion of objects as well as the natural sphere which make up important dimensions in experiencing resonance. Resonance theory takes these additional dimensions into consideration. Affects, emotions and modes of affection constitute crucial elements in generating and explaining experiences of resonance. Their influence can be revealed in a complex and constellative analysis. Thus resonance can be understood as a social relation, as an induced reaction by a counterpart or as an answer to things. By contrast, the lack of resonance in constitutive relationships (within the family, the spheres of work, politics, religion, nature etc.) can be understood as producing experiences or situations of alienation.

In this panel, theoretical as well as empirically accessible dimensions and spheres of resonance (love, work, nature, aesthetics and religion) will be explored. The following questions can be considered as points of departure for further reflections/contributions: 1) What empirical approaches serve to investigate experiences of resonance? What are the existing works on this topic and where's a need for methodical innovation? 2) How can a conceptual connection between ways of life and experiences of resonance (and alienation) be developed? What are the empirical findings and how can they be integrated into the current discussion? 3) Is there space for (alternative) indicators in this discussion that may help to redefine the understanding of quality of life in order to overcome a one-sided definition that remains in economic categories? 4) Conceptions of the quality of life obviously shift with class, milieu and generation (age) affiliation. What potential explanations can a critical sociology working with resonance analysis provide to this connection?

Session 8

Rethinking Concepts of 'Global Sociology' from Indigenous Perspectives

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Struggles by indigenous peoples around the world for sovereignty and land rights have emerged in recent years as perhaps the key global sites for articulating alternative visions of the global. With their common vision against the intensification of neoliberal policies and a plurality of 'solutions' envisaging the possibility of 'another world' or conceptualising the world differently, these struggles provide an important place from which to think again about the global and its associated concepts. This session calls for papers that engage theoretically with the challenges posed by indigenous struggles for our understandings of the 'global social' and the possibilities for solidarity across struggles. It would also like to invite papers that address these thematics through substantive empirical research.

Session 9

Semantics of the Concept of Community: Different Traditions and Cultural Backgrounds

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Social sciences (among other social and political discourses) are currently participating in some sort of "discursive emphasis" around the idea of community. As, in fact, they always have. All throughout the history of social sciences, there have emerged various semantics of community. Two of the most acknowledged, quite opposed to one another, are the German and the Anglosaxon traditions. The German semantics have generally tended to imbue community with affective, culturalistic, romantic and "natural" elements, and have conceived individuals as immersed in a "collective fusion", often parting from a call to "blood and ground", and making a strict delimitation of a sense of "us" strongly antagonic to a "them". On the other side, the Anglosaxon semantics have assumed voluntaristic and proactive characteristics, which imply that subjects consciously, rationally and deliberately join a collectivity that includes them but, simultaneously, promotes their individuality. In this sense, this tradition seems to include components of other notions related to it, such as "civil society" and "civic sphere", which are based on a more individualistic, contractual and liberal notion of community than that of the German tradition.

Needless to say, we are aware of the fact that the characterization of these semantics is schematic, and that there exists a number of divergent cases, of mixtures, overlappings, etc., even inside the perspective of one single author. This is why the session calls for the presentation of works on the wide range of concepts of community found in a diversity of authors. We especially welcome contributions of scholars doing research on theories that belong to these traditions and to different cultural backgrounds, where community acquires other distinctive semantics.

Session 10

Sociological Inquiries into the Concept of 'Crisis'

Marcos Gonzalez Hernando, University of Cambridge, UK,
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Crisis has become a ubiquitous term to describe a widening array of facets of our contemporary societies. Nonetheless, what we mean by it is frequently vague and opaque. When we claim a particular situation is one of 'crisis', we make an underlying statement on a distance from 'normality' that might allow the enactment of profound and transformative actions that are unthinkable in other circumstances. That process, paradoxically, habitually comes accompanied with a recognition of the limits of our understanding. Crises thus point at the junction between knowledge and politics, and the way they are publicly tackled often involves moral and ethical considerations that confront us with essential aspects of our world.

Different modes and accounts of crises, in this sense, also help delineate the contours of the social time in which we dwell: for instance, as part of a cycle and thus finite (e.g. in neoclassical economic theory), as trials of our resoluteness (e.g. in wartime discourse) or more fundamentally to the end of our social world (as in eschatology). Hence what is telling about 'crisis' is not only the situation this word describes, but also the effects it has on it, especially and precisely when we are faced with the limits of our knowledge.

Acknowledging that this process is profoundly subjective, the aim of this session is to shed a light onto the implications of the use of this concept within sociology and elsewhere. Exploring the intersections between crisis and time, narrative, uncertainty and knowledge, we expect to contribute to Edgar Morin's appeal for the foundation of a discipline of *crisologie*, clarifying what this concept reveals and obscures when uttered – ever more frequently – to describe a rapidly changing world.

We welcome submissions that attempt to tackle these issues from a theoretical, empirical, analytical, comparative or historical point of view.

Technology and Society: How Culture-Bound are Sociological Concepts?

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

Science and Technology are acknowledged as important features of modernity. Classical modernization theories, including Marxist approaches, articulated them with notions of progress and innovation to derive complex processes of social change largely based on diffusionist ideas. This generally up-beat approach to the relationship between science and technology and modernity came, however, to be viewed with scepticism by theoretical approaches developed within risk sociology and Science and Technology Studies (STS). Ulrich Beck's notion of a "risk society", for instance, drew attention to the extent to which modern societies organize in response to risk created by complex technologies and the unintended consequences of their use. Equally, Science and Technology Studies (STS) re-defined the (societal) values of scientific fact-production and re-framed the realms in which technology is enacted while focusing on a notion of the "local" that emphasises its distance to notions of universality. These approaches argued against the omnipotence of science and technology, but with regard to (Western) industrialized societies. This raises the question of their validity beyond the Western context and, more importantly, whether their account of modern society yields theoretical and analytical concepts that can be applied to other societies.

In this sense, our panel is interested in raising questions over the process through which concepts and theories developed within the framework of accounts of modernity are made relevant in different societal and cultural settings and the implications of resulting challenges to sociological theory building. This will be discussed with a focus on the relation between technology and society. More specifically, the panel asks:

- How useful are approaches like risk society or STS in non-western settings and/or settings in which technology has only penetrated parts of the society?
- What are the analytical advantages and disadvantages of viewing "risk" (in Beck's understanding) as a feature of modern societies as against the much broader view that the transformation of danger into risk is an anthropological constant and, therefore, not a prerogative of modern society?
- How can the idea that societies shape technological design be applied in settings which are radically different from a cultural and societal perspective?

Session 12

The Concept of Society: National, Global, or None?

Boris Holzer, University of Bielefeld, Germany, boris.holzer@uni-bielefeld.de

Although sociology is usually defined as the scientific study of society, sociologists by no means agree on what society 'is'. Some even hold that the concept is dispensable and therefore advocate a sociology without society. The latter position can be traced back to Max Weber's critique of 'collective notions' (Kollektivbegriffe) and how they reify social phenomena. It has gained new currency in the globalization debate as societies as primary units of analysis are called into question. Obviously, that line of reasoning challenges the everyday usage of the concept of society: Common parlance identifies 'societies' with particular countries and thus distinguishes 'American' from 'Indian' society. Yet precisely that kind of identification of society with the nation-state loses its credibility as increasing transnational flows and networks render any 'container theory' of society implausible. Not only economic relations but also the arts and popular culture, science, religion and political protest transcend the territorial domain of any given nation-state. Yet does it follow that we have to jettison the concept of society? Or is it rather necessary to adopt a concept of society that severs the link with the nation-state, i.e. the concept of global or world society?

Between the two extremes of having no concept of society at all and having only one, there are of course plenty of other options, e.g. various concepts of regional societies (such as European society). Against this backdrop, this session aims to reconsider the concept of society and its criticism. Papers could approach the topic from a theoretical or empirical perspective, highlight historical continuities or discontinuities in the thinking about society or discuss the meaning of 'society' and related concepts in a particular culture or region. Bearing in mind that society is a term that is used in both scientific and everyday discourses, papers could also examine the performative relationship between those two contexts of usage – how has the sociological concept influenced the common sense and vice versa? And finally, the European origins of the term – as it is used today – could spark reflections about its Eurocentrism and possible alternatives.

The session invites contributions addressing some of these issues and concerns.

Session 13

Time and Society

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Time and Society, http://tas.sagepub.com/

The concept of time provides key-access to the analysis of the cultural and structural fabric of society. In fact, time can be seen as the essential factor that bridges or intermediates between structure and action, since, on the one hand, it proves to be solidly constructed socially, while on the other hand it figures as an individual resource and experience.

This is the core-insight that led a group of international reseachers to the foundation of the journal *Time &Society* in 1990. We would like to dedicate this panel to a revision of our current conceptions of social temporality. For this, we invite contributions that approach the subject from a theoretical perspective and ask for the conceptions of time in different strands of social theory. Furthermore, we are looking for contributions dealing with the temporalities of particular social spheres such as the temporality of politics, education or the economy. Finally, a specific interest lies in the identification of *temporal conflicts* that arise between cultures (multitemporality), classes or social spheres (desynchronization).

The journal is co-sponsoring this session and thus invites all readers and authors as well as everybody interested in the subject to a small reception following the session.

ISA RC35 Business Meeting

The agenda will follow in due course.