

Futures Research Newsletter

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Editor's Note

Dear Readers:

The new issue of the newsletter is now in your hands (or on your computer). This newsletter brings you the reports of the sessions we organised at the Barcelona Forum in 2008. We thank those who have taken time to write reports on the sessions they chaired in Barcelona. Members are reminded to contribute items to the newsletter, and your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

Radhamany Sooryamoorthy

President's Message

Debating Futures at the Barcelona Forum

Just a few days after the Barcelona Forum, the current financial crisis became manifest with the spectacular collapse of the over 150 year old finance firm Lehman Brothers, and it is since then spiralling into a world-wide economic recession, if not outright depression. Media headlines announced the collapse of capitalism. States embarked on a new round of market interventions after decades of neoliberal deregulation.

A crisis can shatter previously unquestioned assumptions. A crisis can open the horizon for new visions. If sociology is to provide greater input in the public debate of our time, it will need to embrace a more forward-looking perspective and dare to tackle the big questions. Convened under the motto "Debating Futures," our Barcelona sessions were a vibrant forum for engaging with the tasks ahead.

RC07 had organized at the previous World Congress in Durban a meeting on Public Sociology with Michael Burawoy, who promoted the notion of public sociology in the United States. The Barcelona Forum brought this notion now to the center-stage. To be sure, many would argue that public sociology is nothing new, but something that a lot of sociologists have been doing all along, albeit not under this particular label.

Burawoy used the term *public sociology* to distinguish its orientation to larger publics from more intra-academic mainstream *professional* and *critical* sociologies as well as from rather elite-oriented *policy* sociology. These four types are not meant to be

mutually exclusive but corresponding, though there was considerable disagreement as to whether they should be seen as equal or subservient to one another. In Barcelona, Burawoy advocated a greater collaboration between sociologists and public constituents. He held up the examples of Paolo Freire and Antonio Gramsci as “organic intellectuals,” working “in the trenches,” while pointing with some reservation to critical intellectuals such as C. Wright Mills, who despised the masses, or Pierre Bourdieu, who thought the false consciousness to be so deeply rooted that no organic sociology would be possible.

The notion of public sociology succeeded in provoking a vibrant debate. Among the most vehement critics was Alberto Martinelli. He argued that Burawoy demonizes market and state and fetishizes civil society. Patricia Nickel had different concerns about Burawoy’s approach. She pointed to his neglect of governmentality and his failure to recognize the shared epistemology of Non-Governmental Organizations and State. Alain Touraine called for a strongly “interventionist” sociology, yet also emphasized its need to remain autonomous. Many prominent sociologists such as Jan Nederveen Pieterse and Saskia Sassen preferred hands-on engagement with the most relevant trends of our time while critically questioning conventional categories and exposing domination and exclusion. Raquel Sosa shared her experience as an academic sociologist and politician in Mexico, serving in the latter role first in city government and later in the country’s popular counter-government.

As the discussions in Durban and Barcelona made clear, the relation between sociology and public debate varies greatly between countries. In some countries, sociologists write regular columns in the major national newspapers and appear on television. In too many countries however, sociologists are prevented from addressing key issues by authoritarian regimes and dictatorships, sometimes threatened for their lives or forced into exile. In other countries, the cordon around sociology is more subtle and more related to institutional norms, demands of the tenure-track system, or external funding as well as the structural logic of corporate mass media.

RC07’s Barcelona program provided a platform for all four modes of “professional,” “critical,” “policy,” and “public” sociology and addressed a wide range of substantive issues such as globalization, social movements, media, technology, work, values, and religion. Several joint sessions with other research committees resulted in fruitful collaborations across fields, thus countering the discipline’s often bemoaned fragmentation. More details on the Barcelona Forum are presented in the report in this newsletter.

Futures research can serve public debates in multiple ways according to its distinct approaches. Specific *forecasts* can serve the public as warnings about what might

happen if no countermeasures are being taken. *Scenario building* can provide specific visions and extrapolations of alternative paths. Studies of *social imagination* can address power differentials and relate to subaltern social actors with counter-hegemonic projects. *Normative* or *norm-analytical* research can help to spell-out value choices that are often only implicit in alternative futures.

Futures research becomes particularly important in times of crisis. A crisis that shakes previous certainties can be seen as a chance for critical imagination. As competing social actors rally to install their future visions, sociological interventions gain urgency. The current crisis could unfold as the kind of “shock” about which Naomi Klein warned and that can facilitate the further plundering of public assets while curtailing public control. Or, it could become an opening for reflexive, equitable, and democratic changes.

Markus S. Schulz

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International Sociological Association Research Committee 07 Futures Research (ISARC07)

The International Sociological Association Research Committee 07 Futures Research (ISARC07) was founded in 1971 and is dedicated to the promotion of future-oriented social research. A newsletter with details of ISARC07's activities is published once or twice a year. For more information on how to become a member, please visit our website at: <<http://www.isa-sociology.org/rc07.htm>>. To Contact the Newsletter Editor: Radhamany Sooryamoorthy, University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. Email: <sooryamoorthy@ukzn.ac.za>

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Reports from Barcelona

Debating Futures: Global Trends, Alternative Visions, Public Discourse and The New Tasks Of Social Research

RC07's program in Barcelona was a great success. Over one hundred papers were presented in eighteen panels, organized under the umbrella theme "Debating Futures: Global Trends, Alternative Visions, Public Discourse and the New Tasks of Social Research. More than a hundred scholars from well over two dozen countries of all five continents had come to share their work and contributed their ideas to lively discus-

sions. The papers addressed an exciting spectrum of issues ranging from current political, economic and cultural trends to the agency of social movements and elites and the roles of values, media, and technology. They represented a vibrant diversity of methodological and theoretical approaches as well as stimulating collaborations across disciplines. Many thanks to all participants for having made the Barcelona Forum such an inspiring experience. Particular thanks also to all session chairs who kindly prepared summaries of their panel presentations and discussions. Their reports are presented on the following pages.



Markus S. Schulz

NEW TRENDS IN GLOBALIZATION I

The first panel was chaired by Jan NEDERVEEN PIETERSE (USA). It featured four presentations with distinct, yet complementary perspectives on the new trends of globalization.

Roland ROBERTSON gave the opening talk titled “This Millennial Moment: The New Phase of Globalization”. Rejecting theories of global secularization and atheisticization, Robertson maintained that the current phase of globalization represents a “millennial movement.” He pointed out that present visions of globalization, especially since the bombing of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon took on an increasingly apocalyptic shape. He discussed the present millennialism in light of his earlier theorization of the global field with its four main dimensions of national societies, individual selves, international relations, and humanity. Contrary to widespread recent claims about the decline of the nation-state, Robertson

argued that the nation-state is today more powerful than ever. On the world level, US power may be on the decline but other players arise, like China that is becoming a new imperialist in Africa. He emphasized the difference between a “world in itself” and a “world for itself,” pending on whether humanity achieves a self-consciousness as collective actor.

Manisha DESAI’s presentation was titled “Rethinking Globalization: A View from the Perspective of Gendered Actors.” Desai noted that almost all theorists of globalization miss a gender lens and raised the question of how to remedy this. She argued that this is not just about adding gender into the theory mix and stirring it. The problem is rather one of a “double erasure”: globalization is gendered and yet erased. She provided examples of how transnational feminist activists in different world regions are not just victims of globalization but actively shaping it. These examples

served simultaneously as an illustration for moving away from disembodied macro processes to a gender-sensitive linking of micro and macro analysis.

Markus S. SCHULZ talked about "Globalization 2.0: New Media Trends and Their Social Implications." Schulz focused on one key aspect of globalization: the new media technologies that enable globalization of trade and production as well as global communication between actors in civil society. His theoretical approach rejects resilient assumptions of technological determinism and any equally one-sided structuralism or voluntarism. Schulz discussed the historical processes of the Internet's "social shaping" in terms of four distinct phases, each characterized by the involvement of specific collective actors with differential visions and differential access to resources and power. Schulz also pointed out the regulatory stakes and available choices in the shaping of the new global mediascapes as critical spheres for global dialogue.

Jan NEDERVEEN PIETERSE's talk was titled "New Balance: Globalization 21st Century." Nederveen Pieterse pointed out that the advanced economies that in the 1990s had pushed globalization are now retreating to economic nationalism. The neoliberal orthodoxy is quickly eroding. The imbalances in the world economy, especially the US over-consump-

tion and deficits and the Asian surpluses, were producing a reorganization of global finance and trade, yet reinforced through the ensuing US credit crisis. The old 'core-periphery' relations no longer hold. Developing countries look sideways and build south-south relations in trade, energy, finance and security. Amid the reshuffling and reorganization of capitalism and global re-alignments political concerns and priorities shift markedly. US consumers have overspent but the world cannot de-couple from the US.

The session's open discussion centered on questions about nation-states as key-policy makers and the public need for communication to tackle global problems and to pressure nation-states into more sustainable policies.

NEW TRENDS IN GLOBALIZATION II

Mun Cho KIM talked about the "Cosmopolitan Turn in Social Theory." Focusing on the impact of multi-culturalism, he presents three broad categories of cosmopolitanism, moral, social and cultural. Cultural cosmopolitanism is post-universal, involves cultural pluralism and has affinities with the idea of multiple modernities.

Lynne CIOCHETTO's talk on "Globalization and Sustainability: The impact of global consumer goods companies and their advertising on the economic and environmental sustain-

ability of developing nations” was accompanied by PowerPoint presentation of advertisements in developing countries. She explores the role of global consumer goods companies in contemporary globalization, both the benefits in terms of capital, jobs, technology and raising of standards of living and the adverse effects of the focus on profits, domination of local economies, and social and environmental impact.

Franciszek CZECH gave an engaging talk titled “Global Events: The huge consequences of short occurrences.” Rather than defining globalization as a set of processes he emphasizes the importance of global events, in the sense of relatively important (socially recognized) facts bringing international consequences. They frequently occur for a short time, simultaneously in various parts of the world or gain international attention via media. Examples include the Olympic Games, cultural events such as Live Earth, the September 11 attacks, and protests against the Iraq war in which over 11 million people in 800 cities around the world participated on 15 February 2003. Globalization processes such as migration, international trade, diffusion of ideas, are very old phenomena which only increased in strength during recent decades. Global events however seem to be solely contemporary and thus give more specific

meaning to the term globalization and the qualitative – instead of only quantitative – character of changes.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY, POLICY MAKING, AND POWER

This session was co-chaired by Raquel SOSA ELÍZAGA (UNAM, Mexico) and Markus S. SCHULZ (USA). Seven papers from four continents were presented. They looked at the relations between sociology, public policy, and power from very distinct theoretical, normative, deconstructivist, and practical perspectives.

The first speaker was Barbara ADAM (Cardiff, UK) with a talk entitled “Future Matters for Sociology,” drawing from her recent book on Future Matters. Adam noted that future making is essential to human beings but that sociology had difficulty in studying it. She traced these difficulties to a mode of professionalization oriented at the evidence-standards of the natural sciences at the expense of normative concerns. The future thus elided the factual investigations of positivist social science. In order to make sociology more relevant again, she called for critical studies that were forward-looking and linked up to public debates.

Jenny ANDERSON (Swedish Institute for Futures Studies, Sweden) analyzed in her talk “The Privatization of

the Future” by drawing from a project on the changing governance of the future in Western Europe. Anderson observed that futures thinking and futures planning shifted from the 1980s onwards from public institutions to private actors. What had been perceived as a fundamental task of government was now pursued by a plethora of private think-tanks and consultancies or within corporate research divisions. These private players now guided companies and influenced political decision-making. Anderson pointed to four major trends within this shift toward privatization: (a) relocation of future responsibilities from politics to the individual, in line with a general dismantling of welfare politics; (b) a new relationship between politics and expertise such as the ‘foresight processes’ sponsored by EU and OECD that result in new hegemonic future visions; (c) the emergence of future market consultancies (for sale); and (d) the scientificization of the future, such as futurology in business schools. Anderson also emphasized that these trends varied between countries and regions. Different political cultures produced different future regimes with different civic epistemologies of the future. What is at stake here is the capacity of democratic societies to know and govern the future.

Patricia NICKEL (Victoria U Wellington, New Zealand) talked about

“Critical Theory, NGOs, and the State: ‘Humanitarian Public Sociology’ as a Regime of Truth.” Nickel embarked on the observation that public sociologists place their humanitarian aims in the context of their relation to professionalized knowledge but fail to address the broader issue of knowledge and power and the question about the forces that bring discipline and governmentality about. Nickel argued that NGOs share the very same epistemology with the State. Human Rights become “Rites of Rule.” Public sociology’s humanitarian program of “cosmopolitan global governance” perpetuates the epistemological divisions between knowledge pertaining to state, market, and civil society. It fails to problematize the power relations in which it operated, eroded trans-formational discourse, and suppressed alternative visions.

Olga MALINOVA (Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia) gave a presentation on “Doing Political Science in Post-Soviet Context: Academic Community and Political Practice in Russia.” Malinova provided an overview of the institutional development of political science in post-communist Russia since the early 1990s. She noted that the dramatic economic reforms, political and social changes were a stimulating experience for the young discipline. Yet, she also pointed to three key problems that seriously im-

pede its potential, namely the shortage of funding, the lack of literature, and the restrictions on the objects of study (such as elections).

Geci KARURIM-SABINA and David HEMSON presented a paper they had co-authored with Crysta MYNTHEE (Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa) under the title "Lame Flamingoes, Flying Ducks: Exploring What South Africa's State of the Future Index Can Contribute to Policy Dialogue in the Region South Africa" (please note this change in the title). The authors provided an overview on the progress made in South Africa in constructing the "State of the Future Index" (SOFI) in the context of the United Nations Millennium Project. The presenters discussed the methodological issues related to the selection of variables, Delphi interviews, time series, and trend impact analysis. They concluded with a discussion of the policy dissemination and engagement process, and an assessment of its potential impact in the region.

The talk by Romana XEREZ (Technical University, Lisbon, Portugal) was entitled "Sociological Research in Portugal: The Public Sociology Perspective". Xerez pointed out that sociologists in Portugal had a tradition of being public intellectuals but that this tradition was disrupted during the dictatorship. It is only since very recently that public sociology is taking off

again in Portugal. She argued that sociology has a great impact on public debate through different media. Merton's influence is credited with having inspired a generation of sociologists to orient their work at the medium-range. Xerez emphasized that funding remains an obstacle. The pressure on finding financing for projects is thus a key factor in the shaping of research.

Raquel SOSA ELIZAGA (UNAM, Mexico) talked about "Public Sociology and Alternative Experiences of Public Practice: The Legitimate Government of Mexico." Sosa reported from the current political struggle in Mexico and her efforts to practice a sociology that brings the theoretical and practical together. She outlined how the country's current official government was installed after widespread fraud in the 2006 federal elections and how the moral and political authority continues to be contested by a broad resistance movement. The opposition candidate Andres Manuel López Obrador has formed its own Legitimate Government and travelled through some 1,500 of Mexico's municipalities to engage in a grassroots dialogue. More than two million Mexicans have affiliated themselves with the Legitimate President and the fight against neoliberal policies and in defense of a popular economy and national strategic industries and patrimony. Sosa shared reflections on her

roles as a cabinet member of the Legitimate Government and as a professional sociologist.

The discussion was very lively and continued in the hallways well past the session. Several of the questions related to the definitions of public sociology, public power, and social knowledge. John Urry pointedly raised the question that, in order to contest neoliberalism, social science has to become a super-economic science, but where and how could this be done? Much of the debate was inspired by comparisons between sociological experience in different countries and the search for transcending established ways of thinking.

THE ROLE OF "FUTURE" IN SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIZING

This Joint Session with RC16 (Sociological Theory) was co-chaired by Elisa REIS (Brazil) and Markus S. SCHULZ (USA). The papers came from three different countries and addressed the notion of "future" in current social science theorizing from distinct, yet complementary perspectives.

Radim MARADA (Masaryk University, Czech Republic) opened the panel with a talk on "Anticipated Generations: Generational Logic of Historical Time in Modernity." Marada focused on the notion of "generations" as a category for comprehending historical time. He pointed out that in modern

times a generational imaginary has become a cultural given. He offered an initial definition of generation as a category of actor with similar reactions to the same stimuli without necessarily knowing it but pointed out that the term entailed more. Marada emphasized that the sociology of generations distinguishes between a "generation for itself" and a "generation in itself." For Hegel, the purpose of the nuclear family was its "Selbstaufhebung," to raise kids and make them independent. What was previously thought of as a transmission of values is now seen as unpredictable. Marada thus proposed the term "anticipated generation" as a complimentary concept to indicate an expectational generational change and a perception that the new generation is different. Generational sensitivity is for Marada more than a sense of generational belonging resulting from a shared historical experience of an age cohort. It is an active cultural and social force as well. Modern revolutions (political, social, cultural, and technological) not only bring about new generations, they are defined by an explicit hope in them. Such expectation itself shapes perception of social relations, it often works as a self-fulfilling prophecy, and it makes revolution an almost everyday experience. Marada distinguishes an "expected generation" related to the making of history and revolution; an

“announced generation” related to the media logic of looking for moral panics or newsworthy stories; and an “assumed generation” tied to the individualizing logic of neoliberalism.

Iddo TAVORY (University of California at Los Angeles, USA) presented a paper that he had co-authored with Nina ELIASOPH (University of Southern California, USA) under the title “The Future Tense: Two Ethnographic Studies of Problematic Negotiations of a Temporal Trajectory.” Tavory and Eliasoph approached the question of future through a fine-tuned micro perspective. They researched how the future was being created, negotiated, and manipulated in two different ethnographic settings. Eliasoph investigated how youth volunteering was organized through subtle appeals to the volunteers’ aspirations in order to meet organizational demands without eliminating a sense of spontaneity and self-control. Tavory studied how people flirted. He argued that the future is negotiated in an interactional process. He illustrated this point with an example in which a conversation playfully suspended the future by keeping ambivalence between the two frames of a non-romantic present and a possible romantic future without choosing between them. The authors pointed out that the interaction in the present depended in both cases on the actors’ coordinating their unspoken ways of

imagining the future together. The implicit coordination was achieved through the management of what they call “time-work.”

Emília RODRIGUES ARAÚJO (Universidade do Minho, Portugal) gave a presentation entitled “Technology and Imaginary: Towards Governance of Future.” Rodrigues Araújo engaged with concepts of the future and the social management of time in a range of sociological authors from Castells to Luhmann. One of her main concerns was the framing of technology as a protagonist and narrator of future social change. What is at stake, she argued, is the democratic control of future-relevant policies.

Guillermina JASSO (New York University, USA) was unable to attend for reasons unforeseeable. Her paper was entitled “Basic Theory and the Future.” We are providing here an abbreviated version of her original abstract: Basic sociobehavioral theory yields predictions that are held to apply universally: in the past, present, and future. The paper examines a selection of predictions for the following behavioral domains: (1) the quantitative characteristics and possessions that persons value (such as wealth, beauty, or intelligence; (2) the qualitative characteristics that persons value (such as their race, gender, ethnicity, religion, or language; (3) the primordial sociobehavioral outcomes persons

value (such as justice, status, or power; (4) individuals' portfolios of identities; (5) all the inequalities (such as wealth inequality or status inequality, between persons and between subgroups); (6) the extent of individuals' attachments to self, subgroup, or group and the ensuing potential for group and subgroup fissures as well as for intersubgroup coalitions; and (7) individual happiness and social harmony. The paper concludes with a brief look at some theoretical insights and an ensuing sketch of alternative pathways to the future.

Each of the four papers had its own approach to conceptualize "future", ranging from the historical-phenomenological to rational choice and ethnography, stretching from the micro analysis of everyday interaction to the macro processes of generational changes. The discussion showed the fruitfulness of bringing theorists with diverse approaches into a dialogue.

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ON RELIGIOUS VALUES AND SYMBOLISM

This session was chaired by Reimon BACHIKA (Kyoto, Japan). It was probably one of the most intimate meetings in Barcelona having four authors and an audience of only two! As such it was rewarding in its own way allowing personal involvement of all in every presentation, which continued in

informal conversation for two hours during an evening meal. Its content was as follows.

Reimon BACHIKA, "Values as Multidimensional Cultural Phenomena." As organizer and chair of the session the presenter voiced evaluation and some critique of empirical value research as it has been engaged in by the European Values Study group (EVS), World Values Surveys (WVS), and as found in Geert Hofstede's and Ronald Inglehart's theories of culture. All this research has greatly contributed to intercultural understanding and communication as well as to modernization theory. However, in contrast to what one would expect, it neither improved understanding of values as core elements of culture nor did it provide more depth in the understanding of the subject as the main source of values.

Michael GEORGE, "Recognizing the Moral Stranger: Ethics, Religion, and Moral Possibilities." Michael discussed the ethical context of the value perspective, focusing particularly on the difficulties of a globally viable ethical discourse, the main issues of which he saw as being the following: the necessity of a theoretical frame work as the core issue; the recognition of the ethical Other (the moral stranger) and giving attention to all moral agendas; the necessity of seeing ethical discourse in a historical perspective; and sorting

out the problems of language in order to enable a common understanding.

Tetsuo MARUYAMA. "Religious Values as Universal Elements of Culture in Globalizing Societies." Tetsuo discussed the globalizing possibilities of religious values, particularly those of Buddhism that, over the centuries, turned into local religious culture in Japan, but that today tend to spread to the Western world. Tetsuo presented a conceptual scheme for the analysis of cultural globalization based on Talcott Parsons' cultural system distinguishing between (1) cognitive, (2) expressive, (3) evaluative, and (4) existential elements of culture. The general tendency is that elements representing objective reality (1 and 2) easily globalize, but that elements referring to subjective reality (3 and 4) remain local.

Seil OH. "Holistic Spirituality of Mind-Body Practitioners: Exploring the Social Implications of Holism." Seil presented his empirical research on practitioners of mind-body exercises such as Yoga, Tai Chi, and Falun Gong in the Boston area of the USA. These practices, in contrast to religiosity that is anchored in institutional religion, show a holistic spirituality. He explored the social significance of these practices, concluding that, although holistic spirituality in the United States appears to promote individual wellbeing and altruism (the personal and interpersonal

dimensions), it does not enhance community participation or political engagement (the broader social dimension).

R.B

NEW MEDIA, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, AND DEMOCRACY

This joint session of RC07 with RC48 (Social Movements, Collective Action, and Social Change) was co-chaired by Markus S. SCHULZ (USA) and Benjamín TEJERINA (University of the Basque Country, Spain). Three research projects were presented that investigated the new media from complementary perspectives with methods that ranged from comparative case study designs to quantitative content analysis.

The first presenter was Veronica ALFARO (New School for Social Research, USA) with a paper entitled "Comparing Action and Social Movements in the Virtual Public Sphere: Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 from Silence and Disruption to Acting in Concert." Alfaro investigated the new modes of activism on the Internet. She focused on three seminal cases, the virtual sit-ins of the Electronic Disturbance Theater in the late 1990s, the new media use for coordinating the WTO protest in Seattle, and the recent blogging activities related to the political struggle in Burma. She pointed to the danger of a "comfortable activism" as well

as to the positive potentials. She emphasized that the new media can serve as crucial tools allowing activists more fluid and far-flung forms of communication and mobilization.

Frederico BERTAGNOLI (NYU, USA) continued with a presentation on "Human Rights, Wireless Technologies, and Organized Crime in Contemporary Brazil." Bertagnoli reported from a case study of the use of smuggled cell phones in the struggle over the conditions in Brazilian prisons. The cell phones were used to facilitate communication and coordination among prisoners and between prisoners and the outside. In response to the massacre of 111 detainees by the military police, prisoners formed an association that became a force in negotiating penitentiary regulations. Protesting the transfer of their leadership to other detention centers, the association orchestrated hundreds of attacks against city and police over the course of a week with almost five hundred people being killed. The mass media covered the riots in sensationalist terms but failed to address the underlying causes.

Jürgen GERHARDS and Mike S. SCHÄFER (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany) presented a research paper with the title "Is the Internet More Democratic than Traditional Media? Comparing Newspapers and Internet in the US and Germany." Gerhards

and Schäfer were interested in assessing the wide-held assumption that the Internet is more democratic than traditional media. Several major reasons can let one to expect the Internet to be more democratic. The absence of gate-keeping journalists, easy access and cost effectiveness, and the lack of restrictions on content seem to allow greater possibilities for pluralism of opinions and greater participation in discourse. Gerhards and Schäfer designed an empirical case study in which they compared the coverage of the debate about human genome research in selected newspapers and on websites in Germany and the United States. The empirical findings of their quantitative content analysis provided a surprise: The data showed that the Internet was not much better than newspapers.

The three presentations inspired a lively discussion about the extent to which the different projects' findings might be generalized and their implications for further comparative media research and for discourse models of democracy, mobilization, and the public sphere.

[Please note: The authors of three additional papers were unable to come to Barcelona but may be contacted via Internet: Sartaj CHANCHAL (University of Texas, USA) on "The Role of Media in Advancing the Cause of the Feminist Movement in America;" Gert

VERSCHRAEGEN (University of Leuven, Belgium) on “Commons-based Knowledge Production as a Strategy for Development;” and Fen LIN (University of Chicago, USA) and Yihu ZHOU (Beijing University, China) on “Behind Technology: Changes of State-Society Relationship and Media Technology.”]

THE INTERNET: FROM UTOPIA TO NIGHTMARE

Joint Session RC07 with RC14 and RC23
Sociology of Science and Technology

Ann Denis' paper referred to Digital divide of 2nd type. Internet use and social stratification are found to be positively related to social class, high prestige school, parental education. An East European study pointed out that new technology (ICT) is a means of state control through surveillance. A Romanian study reported that the new ICT usages are leading to major restructuring of identity patterns in Eastern Europe. The politics of identity (undermining social class differences) is boosted through the ICT as it is reconstructed, reinterpreted in the cyberspace e.g.. Re imagination of ethno-national identities in Central and Eastern Europe. Using post modern tools and discourses various ethnic and nationalist myths are sustained in the cyber space. This has been called as cyber ethnocisation. A study from

Northern Europe pointed out the Role of ICT in rural communities (e.g.: Post communist Lithuania), e.g.: (A) (1) New mode of social interaction – helping to cope with inclusion (2) helping to offer opportunities for building social capital, (B) Internet is a tool to strengthen social inequality and widening information gap and (C) Increasing Internet access-points have facilitated local community solidarity. A study from the USA noted that Internet use benefits people at the time of natural calamity e.g. Hurricane Katrina. Advance warning information helps evacuation and more net-savvy victims get better relief and support afterward.

Further, a Belgian study pointed out the 'digital divide' which concerns growing inequalities among users of new ICT – meaning differential usages of internet – determines the extent and kind of benefits from e-services. So future policies should explore issues and solutions related to the next step i.e. Differential usages of Internet, as it is going to engender new types of inequalities.

A paper from Taiwan emphasized that while increasing patent-related activities, widening IP divide between the rich countries of West/ North and poor countries of the South/ East has been greatly ignored. Hence in a foreseeable future the world economy may turn out to be unsustainable as

more and more royalties will flow from East/South to West/North.

An Italian paper pointed out the phenomenon of Economic development through 'Digital Galaxy'. It is articulated that by the creation of a huge market through Digital Galaxy (cyber space/ mobile phone/ emails/ television) the technology has resulted in (i) enormous e-business of manufacturing as well as service sector, (ii) and public consumerism. But its social costs are very high. Through this, there has been a globalization of local and localization of global products/ processes and services.

B.P

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, DIGITAL INEQUALITY, AND GLOBAL HEGEMONY

This Joint Session of RC07 with RC14 (Communication, Knowledge and Culture) and RC23 (Sociology of Science and Technology) was co-chaired by Jaime Jimenez (UNAM, Mexico) and Markus S. Schulz (USA).

Chris ARMBRUSTER (Max Planck Digital Library, Germany) presented a paper entitled "Cyberscience and the Knowledge-based Economy: Open Access and Trade Publishing: From Contradiction to Compatibility with Nonexclusive Copyright Licensing." Armbruster discussed the pros and cons of competing views on copyright, open-access, and guild accreditation

models of scholarly publishing. He emphasized the importance of distinguishing distribution from certification. Universities, publishers, and governments should end the current practice of copyright transfer and exclusive licensing and allow the emergence of a competitive market based on nonexclusive rights. He recommended adopting standard copyright licenses that reserve some rights, namely 'Attribution' and 'No Derivative Works,' while permitting the unlimited reproduction, dissemination, and re-uses.

The paper co-authored by Andrew KIRTON, Matthew DAVID, and Paul JONES (University of Liverpool, UK) was entitled "Somewhere Over 'In Rainbows': Music Online and the Disruption of the Field." Kirton, David, and Jones invoked the question of whether the musical field is falling apart in light of the recording industry's complaints about US\$ 9 billion losses. The authors contrasted what they called legal copyright totalitarianism and anarchic popular practices. They pointed out that when Radiohead, a famous UK rock group, had stopped renewing label contracts to distribute their music themselves for free, it sent shockwaves to the recording industry. The authors maintained that appropriation of the new media in popular music processes exposed already existing fault-lines in the

industry business models. Record companies' efforts to bind artists through so-called '360° contracts' encompassing not only the musical recording itself but also performance and merchandising revenues were countered by artists' efforts to bypass the companies and the model of commercially packaged music altogether and to use file-sharing software to distribute their music directly online.

Gérard VALENDUC (FUNDP/UCL, Belgium) gave a presentation with the title "Understanding and Preventing the Second Order Digital Divide." Valenduc noted that current policies for digital inclusion addressed mainly the "first order digital divide" of unequal access to the new information and communication technology. He argued that these policies are insufficient to deal with the coming generation of media technologies and the ensuing "second order digital divide." This second order regards access to continuous upgrading to maintain compatibility; technological skills and new media literacy; social support networks; and the ability of autonomous use. Valenduc argued that future policies should explore the issues and solutions related to the next steps in the diffusion of the Internet and the emerging possibilities of Web 2.0.

Vincent H. SHIE (Fu Jen Catholic U, Taiwan), Craig D. MEER (Australian National U, Australia), and Hung-Yi

HSU (Fu Jen Catholic U, Taiwan) are jointly working on a project about "The Global IP Gap: Towards an Un-sustainable World-Economy?" The presentation was given by Hsu. He raised the question of whether there is a new politics of knowledge. He acknowledged that some countries have been competing quite well in the new economy, especially India in terms of software subcontracting and Taiwan with original design manufacturing of hardware. Yet he argued that overall the global gap in intellectual property rights is widening, not shrinking. He pointed out that key companies are typically controlled by entrepreneurs of the leading economies. Patent filing indicated that gap between leading and developing economies is actually widening. Royalty payments continue to flow mainly from South to North. Questions about the project may also be directed to Vincent Shie via email to <vhs1021@yahoo.com.tw>.

The spirited discussions after each of the four presentations focused in large parts on whether and what types of regulatory shortcomings allowed market failures to produce highly unequal outcomes and impede knowledge access on national and global levels and in the different spheres ranging from scholarly content to music. A second major focus was on the remedies and sociology's role in addressing these.

(Please note: The authors of three additional papers had been unable to come to Barcelona and may be contacted: Bruno SANGUANINI (University of Verona, Italy) on "ICT: A Chance for Leapfrogging Development?"; Savaş ÇAĞLAYAN (Mugla University, Turkey) on "Internet: The New Dimensions of Inequality from Democratization to Digital Gulf"; Mahjabeen Khaled HOSSAIN (Institute of Hazrat Mohammad, Bangladesh) on "E- Accessibility for the Disabled in Bangladesh.")

RC 07/RC 13 RC 23: LEISURE SOCIETY, A DREAM OR A REALITY

This session was held together with a joint session on *Leisure in the Age of technological transformation*. The Question of a Leisure Society was discussed by three scholars:

Scott NORTH from Osaka University, Japan, spoke on *The Future of Leisure in Japan and the United States*. By comparing working hours and overtime practices in contemporary Japan and the US, Scott North could show a shared, cross-cultural employer preference for long-hours jobs that increases inner-firm competition between workers and serve as a means of control. His data proves, that these societies are far from realizing the dream of a leisure society.

Pelin ÖNDER EROL from Halmstad University, Sweden, presented a more optimistic view on the question if we can expect a "Leisure Society." Her analysis of Turkey leads her to the assumption, that the demographic trend of longevity and the increasing relevance of leisure goods and services as a means of conspicuous consumption for people in post-retirement will cumulate and thus contribute to the realization of a leisure society .

Alan LAW from Trent University, Canada, rebutted the idea of a Leisure Society as a result of his research on debates about and techniques of sifting 'social malingerers' from the deserving poor during the post-war period in Australia. Describing the treatment of labour market misfits such as alcoholics or surfers, Alan Law elaborated how the state claims to possess the normative power to decide what is good and what is bad leisure.

S.N

LEISURE IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION – PART I AND LEISURE SOCIETY: DREAM OR REALITY?

Due to space restraints and the withdrawal of three papers, the Forum's Local Organizing Committee combined this session with the thematically related session on Leisure in

the Age of technological Transformation.

The panel addressed how technological transformations are affecting leisure. Phillipe TERRAL, of University of Toulouse III, France discussed the findings of a large-scale survey and review of the French literature on the use of electrical stimulation to increase muscle. Question of whether electronic stimulation is natural, or a form of doping, whether electronic stimulation should be limited to medical use or be allowed to be commercialized, and whether it should only be used with the disabled or be permitted to the general population are hotly debated. Two schools of thought were identified, that of the CEP, which argues that practical results are important, and INSEP, which believes more scientific research is needed.

Sari PEKKOLA from Kristianstad University College, Sweden, presented her research on diasporic Bolivian youth who use the Internet as a space within which to create transnational cultural identities based on music and dance. In the realm of cyberspace, new technologies such as My Space, Facebook, and YouTube, provide ways of sharing images and creating shared identities across borders in alternative public spaces. In these spaces, it is possible to “imagine the nation” and debate what it means to be Bolivian.

Leisure in rural India is being rapidly transformed by the diffusion of technology, said Sumana PANDEY, of Government College, Dausa, India. Her study of four villages revealed how “city technologies,” such as mobile phones and television are reshaping rural opportunities for leisure and concepts of leisure. Yet caste differences are still evident: upper castes are more likely to have cell phones and watch TV than lower castes. Certain aspects of leisure in India remain difficult to understand. Leisure is “what one enjoys,” so even chores, such as caring for children or cleaning wheat can be considered leisure. There is a tendency to combine watching TV with other tasks. Despite these new technologies, Indian workers seem resistant to efforts to increase efficiency. Much time during the day is still devoted to tea drinking and schedules are cheerfully ignored.

Nuno de ALMEIDA ALVES, of the Portugal Center for Studies in Sociology, reported on the results of his initial analysis of a survey of Internet use among a random sample of Portuguese. Of those 3,000 people 1,216 (41%) responded. Six types of users and their ways of using the Internet were identified, indicating an emerging range of use patterns among the 30% of people in Portugal who have access to the Web. Many multitask and use the Web at work for personal as well as professional reasons.

Ake NILSEN, of University of Halmstad, Sweden, discussed his research on how scuba diving technology and masculinity are related. Technology allows men (and women) to probe the deep, but there are still risks. How divers think about their equipment and the ways it allows them to display their rational and mechanical skills, become intimate with each other, and enjoy pleasure, creativity, and playfulness were revealed in Nilsen's ethnographic study. Technology use provides grounds for judging performance, establishing a hierarchy of divers, and displaying knowledge that forms the basis of trust, essential to safety among divers.

D.S

NEW AGE Y TERCERA VÍA: PARADOJAS E INCONFORMIDADES DE LA MODERNIDAD

Ricardo F. Macip (Chair)

English

(This session was conducted in Spanish. We provide here a bilingual summary.)

The panel succeeded in launching a productive discussion on the emergent but dominant trends in *Conclusion* *rrial* activism and its ideological lines of argumentation. The papers by Hernández, Vargas and Macip drew examples from ethnographic research in Mexico. The paper by San Roman made a preliminary

analysis on a generational study on the attitudes of young adults in contemporary Spain. The papers by Morfín and Martínez were theoretical in nature. They were all connected by the fact that they were dealing with the global displacement in activism from politics to the market, from political to civil society and the commodification of nature and experiences. In a most felicitous coincidence the regions discussed by Vargas and Macip are recipients of heavy Spanish investment and attention *Conclusion* by the combined interest of tourism and benevolent work. San Roman identified this convergence as marker of the generation Y. The discussion of basic theoretical arguments in Marx (Morfín) and two of his Latin American interpreters (Martínez) was pondered by the participants. A more decided and focused attention to NGOs working as Trojan Horses for businesses was concluded by the majority of the *Conclusion*.

Spanish

El panel cumplió en lanzar una discusión *Conclusion* sobre las tendencias emergentes pero dominantes en activismo empresarial y sus líneas ideológicas de argumentación. Las ponencias de Hernández, Vargas y Macip tomaron ejemplos de investigaciones etnográficas en México. La ponencia de San Román hizo un análisis preliminar de un *Conclu*

generacional sobre las actitudes de adultos jóvenes en España contemporánea. Las ponencias de Morfín y Martínez fueron de naturaleza teórica. Todas se conectaron el hecho de lidiar con el desplazamiento global en activismo de la conclusión al conclusión, de la sociedad política a la sociedad civil y la mercancianización de la naturaleza y experiencias. En una feliz coincidencia, las conclusiones discutidas por Vargas y Macip reciben fuertes conclusiones y atención españolas por los intereses combinados del turismo y beneficencia. San Román identificó esta convergencia como un marcador de la generación Y. La conclusión de argumentos básicos en Marx (Morfín) y dos de sus interpretaciones latinoamericanas (Martínez) se ponderó por todos los participantes. Atención específica y concentrada a ONGs laborando como caballos de Troia para carteos empresariales fue una conclusión de trabajo de la mayoría de los panelistas.

R.M

COMMON SESSION OF THE GENERAL FORUM PROGRAM ON PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

The common sessions were dedicated to explore different aspects of the Forum's overall theme of Sociological Research and Public Debate. The speakers represented the ISA's different research committees and thematic

groups. The sessions took place in the historical Paraninf auditorium and Aula Magna of the University of Barcelona's old main building.

Chair: Manuel PÉREZ YRUELA (Local Organizing Committee, IESA-CSIC, Spain)

Presenters:

Markus S. SCHULZ (RC07 Futures Research): "Debating Futures: Global Trends, Alternative Visions, and Public Discourse." This paper discusses the relationship between futures research and public debate. Sociology is defined as a collective reflection on the conditions of our social existence and the potentials for change. Futures research is that part of sociology that studies current trends, likely and possible scenarios of transformation, and their social implications. The future is regarded as an open and contested terrain. Efforts of the future's expertocratic closure are challenged by citizen initiatives and social movements who are susceptible to pressing problems and advocating alternative visions. Relevant new research tasks derive from this contestation. Important strands of current futures research explore social struggles over the mode of globalization and the underlying values assumptions. Although the new media provide unprecedented opportunities for global communication, emerging restrictions on the fair use of cultural content and increasing surveil-

lance pose concerns for the future of thriving publics.

Peter RATCLIFF (RC05 Racism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Relations): "Sociology and Sociologists: Part of the Solution or Part of the Problem?" This paper tackles the thorny issue of the place of the discipline in contemporary society. In particular, it examines the structural constraints that impact on the work we do as a profession. Those concerned with the area covered by RC05, for example, normally express commitment to an emancipator project that seeks to empower those subject to oppressive forces and strive towards broader societal change. Indeed, this is enshrined in the RC05 mission statement. But what does this mean in practice? To what extent is our sphere of influence constrained by external forces, not least institutional monitoring/ assessment regimes which are increasing central to modes/ systems of state control? Does this ultimately mean that we flatter to deceive (ourselves as well as our 'subjects')?

Yashimoto SATO (RC45 Rational Choice): "Contributions of Rational Choice Theory to Public Debate" This paper investigated the contributions of rational choice theory through the lens of a case study about the impact of specific public policy provisions. It contrasts the myopic rationality of politicians with the more

far-sighted rationality of scholars in the case's uncertainly-producing multiple equilibrium conditions.

Celine-Marie PASCALE (RC25 Language and Society): "Horizons of Possibility: Sociology in the 21st Century." If we accept that all knowledge is socially constructed and historically situated, sociologists must refuse to reify the analytical constructs of social research and instead carefully, and consistently, examine methodologies as historically produced social formations. This paper is a theoretical investigation of the underlying philosophical foundations of qualitative tools for studying language and their ability to apprehend routinized relations of privilege. The epistemic foundation of any methodology directs our attention to certain 'realities' and not to others and thereby determines the horizon of possibilities for any research project – what can and cannot be seen as well as what can and cannot legitimately be argued. Celine-Marie argued that without a grasp of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of research methodology, we lose an important basis for understanding the production of knowledge. This is especially relevant to our ability to develop research strategies that are congruent with contemporary concerns for human rights and social justice.

The open discussion that followed the presentations focused on public

sociology's task to reflect on the conditions of its own production in order to become more effective. This entailed a reflection on power relations, the vested interests on macro and micro levels, and mediating channels of language and technologies as well as the capacity to tackle relevant issues

through creative imagination. There was a widely felt consensus that there was not one solution, not one path, but different ones. Sociology can serve the public by listening especially to those who are often unheard, by feeding debates with critical data and by inspiring broader agenda-setting.



Comparing the International Sociological Association's Durban 2006 and Barcelona 2008 Symposia: The case of ISA RC07 'Futures Research'

Geoff Waters

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa

Having previously undertaken (Waters, 2008) a content analysis of the official *Programme* for the International Sociological Association's (ISA) 2006 'XVI World Congress of Sociology' to explore the nature of contemporary Sociology, receiving an advance copy of the programme for the ISA research committee RC07 'Futures Research' for the upcoming 'First ISA Forum of Sociology' scheduled for Barcelona in early September, 2008, proved tempting. What could be gleaned from a comparison of this specific research com-

mittee over this two year interval? This report seeks to answer this question.

Procedures

The same content analysis strategies as were applied to the Durban 2006 data were employed in analyzing the Barcelona 2008 data. This involved a straightforward complete enumeration of the programme information: number counts of listed participants (presenters, chairpersons, discussants) and of the nations in which participants are situated. (No assumptions are possible as to the nationalities of

individuals). The national totals were then grouped into larger geographic regions. In what follows, the two resulting data sets are compared.

Results

In Durban in 2006, the ‘Futures Research’ Research Committee (RC07) was one of 53 ISA research committees which convened there. The ‘Futures Research’ grouping in Durban had a total of 11 scheduled sessions. (The mean number of sessions per research group was 12.5). In Barcelona, 19 sessions are scheduled. In Durban 2006, there were 51 scheduled participants in

RC07; in Barcelona 2008 there are 153 – three times more than in 2006.

Regional Distribution

In regional terms, Durban and Barcelona differ widely (Table 1). In 2006, delegates from North America predominated in RC07 (43.1%); in 2008, they form only 19.6 percent while delegates from Europe form the majority (39.8%). Central and South America constitutes 15.0 percent in 2008, replacing Asia as the third-ranked region. Only Africa and Scandinavia remain the same (each 2.0% of total delegates) at the two dates.

Table 1. ISA Durban World Congress 2006 and ISA Barcelona First Forum: RC07 ‘Futures Research’ Research Committee Regional Distribution of Participants

Region	Durban 2006		Barcelona 2008	
	No. of participants	% of total participants	No. of participants	% of total participants
Europe	8	15.7	61	39.8
N. America	22	43.1	30	19.6
Africa	1	2.0	3	2.0
Asia	9	17.6	15	9.8
C. & S. America	5	9.8	23	15.0
Australasia	3	5.9	3	2.0
Scandinavia	1	2.0	3	2.0
E. Europe	2	3.9	14	9.2
Middle East	0	0	1	0.7
Total	51	100	153	100

National Distribution: Durban 2006

In Durban 2006, 18 different nations were represented with the United

States (N=19) providing by far the most delegates followed by Japan with six (Table 2). Six nations were ranked joint fourth overall and eight joint fifth.

Table 2. ISA Durban Congress 2006: Participants in RC07 'Futures Research' by Nation*

Nation in rank order	Number of participants per nation
1. United States	19
2. Japan	6
3. Canada, Mexico	3
4. United Kingdom, India, Italy, Russia, Australia, Germany	2
5. New Zealand, Brazil, Spain, Ecuador, S. Korea, S. Africa, Switzerland, Finland	1
Total nations*: 18	
Total participants: 51	

Note: *Nation where respondent is based, not nationality.

National Distribution: Barcelona 2008

In Barcelona 2008, 33 different nations are scheduled to be represented (15 more than in Durban) but the United States again provides the most dele-

gates (26) followed by the host nation Spain with 23 (see Table 3). Mexico remains third overall with 12 delegates. Six nations provide two delegates each while eleven nations send one delegate each.

Table 3. ISA Barcelona Congress 2008: Participants in RC07 'Futures Research' by Nation*

Nation in rank order	Number of participants per nation
1. United States	26
2. Spain	23
3. Mexico	12
4. Brazil	10
5. Russia, United Kingdom	7
6. Portugal, Japan, Germany	6
7. Italy, Austria	5
8. Canada, India	4
9. Sweden, S. Africa, Belgium	3
10. New Zealand, Poland, France, Lithuania, Taiwan, Netherlands	2
11. S. Korea, Czech Rep., China, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, Romania, Australia, Turkey, Bangladesh, Argentina, Hungary	1
Total nations*: 33	
Total participants: 153	

Note: *Nation where respondent is based, not nationality.

Discussion

At first glance, as far as RC07 'Futures Research' is concerned, it would appear that Durban 2006 and Barcelona 2008 share little in common. The latter both in terms of numbers and degree of international interest appears by far the more robust. When national representations are taken into consideration, however, the

United States emerges as dominant at both times while the 2008 Iberian interest may relate to the event being in Spain. Geographical proximity could also account for intensified European and Eastern European interest.

However, a questionnaire survey of participants in RC07 at Barcelona might be the best way to answer questions which this content analysis of

Durban 2006 and Barcelona 2008 raise.

Reference:

Waters, G. 2008. " The International Sociological Association's 2006' XVI

World Congress of Sociology and Sociology Today: A Documentary Analysis. *Loyola Journal of Social Sciences* 22 (2): 167-184.



Members write...

Thank you very much for an excellent Newsletter and please convey my thanks also to Markus. I read with interest the very good programme for the Barcelona meeting to which I shall not be able to participate, unfortunately although Barcelona is not far from where I am now, in Liguria, Italy. I really wish I could and meet old friends and new ones also from Italy. I am specially interested in session 4 specifically on the future and session 6 where Bachika is and with whom I have worked many times. I was also very interested in the article by M. Mapadimeng on sociology in South Africa of which I did not know enough and I am specially interested in its history, context and orientation to action and policy making. Having had much research in gender issues and the future in many parts of the world specially in Africa, Asia and Latin America and also taught in the area including in USA, I liked very much M. Desai's article on the importance of interdisciplinarity and diversity in such research and studies.

So good success to all in Barcelona.

Eleonora Barbieri Masini

Professor Emeritus

Faculty of Social Sciences

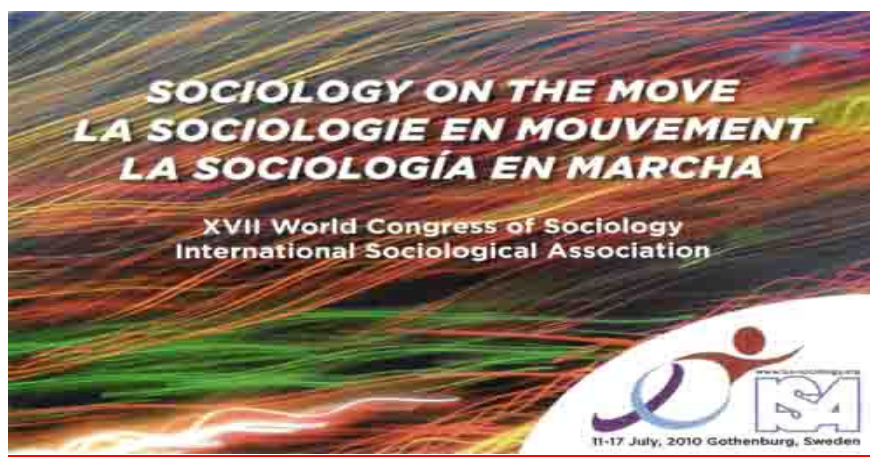
Gregorian University, Rome



Newsletter: Call for Contributions

Our newsletter aims to be a means of communication among the members of RC07 as well as other scholars interested in futures research. It is published non-periodically according to the needs of our scientific community. In addition to announcements of

events organized by our RC, or related to our research concerns, we include news from our members, reports of activities, information on new publications, ongoing projects and works-in-progress as well as short thought-pieces on pressing issues and current debates in our field. Please contribute to our newsletter and help making it an effective tool for interaction. Send your comments and any news item for the next newsletter to RC07 Newsletter Editor, Radhamany Sooryamoorthy, University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa <sooryamoorthyr@ukzn.ac.za> and copies to is-arc07@gmail.com.



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Become a new member of the ISA Research Committee Futures Research (ISA-RC07) or renew your membership. The regular dues are only US\$20.00 for a four-year period, which is discounted for members in countries with softer currencies and for students (US\$10.00). For more details and registration form please visit the secure web-site: <https://secured.com/~f3641/formisa.htm>

