

# GLOBAL DIALOGUE

## EDITORIAL

This third issue of *Global Dialogue* expands its reach. Two teams of translators – one in Japan and the other in Brazil – have volunteered to add two new languages to the 5 we already have. Through the network of translation teams *Global Dialogue* is building its own international community of young sociologists. This issue leads with an interview with one of the great architects of internationalism – President of the Japanese Sociological Society, Shujiro Yazawa – followed by ISA Vice-President Margaret Abraham’s plans for the Buenos Aires 2012 World Forum. The theme – *Social Justice and Democratization* – was proposed by the local organizers, Alberto Bialakowsky, President of Asociación Latinoamericana de Sociología (ALAS), and Alicia Palermo, President of the Argentinian Sociological Association (AAS), and endorsed by the Research Coordinating Committee. It is especially apt in the light of social movements in Latin America, but elsewhere too, most recently and notably in Tunisia and Egypt. We also continue the dialogue about the meaning of internationalism today: Ulrich Beck responds to Raewyn Connell, Helma Lutz reflects on “cosmopolitanism” in Germany, and Sari Hanafi explores the visions behind “multi-versalism”. We have reports from China, Malaysia, Australia, Poland, Colombia, and the UN. Jennifer Platt writes about the history of the ISA office, the dynamic infrastructure of sociology’s internationalism, while Jen Schradie asks whether the new informational technology, upon which our communications increasingly depend, is actually excluding sociologists from many parts of the world.

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## SHUJIRO YAZAWA: INTERNATIONALIST PAR EXCELLENCE

Shujiro Yazawa, President of the Japanese Sociological Society, has travelled to all corners of the globe, imbibing sociology wherever he goes – the embodiment of what he calls *multi-versality*. He has been teaching sociology in Japan for more than 45 years, and has published 15 books and over 70 papers. He served on the Executive Committee of the International Sociological Association from 1994 to 2002. Long a proponent for holding an ISA World Congress on Japanese soil, his dream will come true in 2014. Michael Burawoy interviewed him in a Yokohama sushi bar on December 6, 2010.

*Professor Yazawa, for so many years you have wanted to hold the World Congress of sociology in Japan – why?*

Because to hold the world congress of sociology is most important for the development of Japanese sociology. This year we held the 83<sup>rd</sup> annual convention of the Japan Sociological Society, so we have more than an 80-year tradition of sociology, but for much of that time it was without sustained contact with foreign scholars. Of course, we do import many western social theories, but it has not helped us clarify what is distinctive about Japanese sociology.

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## LET'S TANGO IN BUENOS AIRES

by Margaret Abraham, Hofstra University, ISA Vice-President for Research

It is my pleasure to announce that the ISA Executive Committee has selected Buenos Aires, Argentina to host the ISA Forum 2012 (August 1-4). In the interests of openness, the Executive Committee of the International Socio-



*We're off to Buenos Aires!*

logical Association sent out a call for bids to RCs, WGs, TGs, and NAs for the site of the ISA Forum of Sociology in 2012 with a submission deadline of November 15<sup>th</sup> 2010. We received eight

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# SHUJIRO YAZAWA

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For example, I am writing an introduction to Japanese sociology for an international journal, but I cannot find a defining theme of Japanese sociology. So what is Japanese sociology? Of course, we can provide many different answers, but even among Japanese sociologists we don't know the essence of Japanese sociology. We have imported many important sociologies—western sociologies—but, generally speaking, Japanese sociologists have been good at understanding or interpreting western sociology, whereas we really need to be *explaining* Japanese society by using western sociology. For this we need to combine western sociology and Japanese sociology. That is why I would like to organize this congress, in order to develop Japanese sociology with a universal orientation. Of course, I don't mean universality in a singular sense of modernity, but rather as part of a kind of *multi-versality*.

## *What do you mean by multi-versality?*

Multi-versality is not my term. It is associated with Michael Kuhn and the World Social Science and Humanities Network, and there was just recently a conference on the subject in Buenos Aires [reported in this issue of *Global Dialogue*]. In endorsing multi-versality I am supporting multiple universalisms, indigenous universalisms. For example, when we go to a sociology conference in East Asia – Korean sociologists tend to stress national tendencies of Korean society or Korean history. The same applies to the Chinese. But Japanese sociologists tend to stress European and American sociology without any national tradition of their own. Influenced by the Chinese and Koreans we are trying to develop our own universalism – a mixture of national tradition and Western or American sociology.

## *Has there been resistance to having the ISA Congress here?*

No, no, no. Of course, the ISA has encouraged us to hold the world congress in Japan several times —I can remember three times since the 1960s—but each time many thought we were not ready, because we didn't have the financial resources. So one problem is getting money to organize a world congress of sociology. At the same time, others do ask what is the merit of holding a world congress of sociology in Japan? Because we have a relatively big internal market, professors can sell many copies of their own books, and thereby boost their reputation without going beyond Japan, without having any reputation among international scholars. They have little interest in international competition, and when I proposed to hold an international congress some complained that I am too oriented to foreigners! In Japan we have a very clear distinction between the few internationally oriented sociologists and the majority of nationally oriented sociologists. So it takes an exceptional initiative to hold a world congress here in Japan.

## *Have you always been an internationalist?*

Yes. I was born in 1942 in Ginza and, although I was quite poor, my playground was the department stores where they sold foreign goods. When I went to the department store I always

would go to the fifth floor to gaze at the sports equipment, especially baseball equipment that came from the United States. Also, I regularly went to the public library to study because at that time it was quite difficult for me to find a place to study at home. They divided the library into a section for children and a section for adults, but I always spent time in the adult section. I loved to read books, any books.

## *Tell us about your education.*

Well, I learned English in junior high school. But also my father owned a printing house that specialized in printing English books. So he knew English quite well, and through him I too learned to read English. In high school I was already a radical and in 1960 I joined the movement against the Japan-US Treaty. Unfortunately the protest was defeated by the time I entered the University of Tokyo in 1962. The student movement was already declining. We organized many demonstrations, but few participated, and we were always outnumbered by the police!

## *You studied sociology at university – but what sort of sociology existed in Japan in 1962?*

I think we should say it was a kind of strange mixture between Parsonsian structural functionalism and Marxism, and in between these two tendencies we studied Weber, Simmel and Durkheim. Both structural functionalism and Marxism were quite influential among mainstream sociologists, because they both tried to explain society as a whole. Soviet Marxism was important because at that time the Communist Party of Japan was quite strong. But there were other Marxist tendencies, including Western Marxism. Indeed, by the middle 1960s there were even Japanese translations of Antonio Gramsci so that when I attended the first International Conference on Gramsci in 1973 at Washington University in St Louis, I became a kind of teacher to American students and professors who did not know Gramsci.

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## EDITORIAL BOARD

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# FRESH KIDNEYS: WHAT DOES COSMOPOLITAN THEORY HAVE TO SAY TO SOUTHERN SOCIOLOGY?

Ulrich Beck, Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich

**G**lobal Dialogue, which has just been launched, is in serious danger of becoming an exercise in *global monologue*. My thesis was and is: We are not living in an era of cosmopolitanism but in an age of cosmopolitization. Raewyn Connell asks rhetorically: "... can we not hear the Northern narrative in these concepts?"

Let me therefore start with listing what 'cosmopolitization' is NOT about. It does not – as Raewyn Connell suggests – neglect the enlightening universalism of 19th century sociology. It does not reflect "the experience of a privileged minority, and treats that as the new reality of the world"; it is not a view from a highly specific *somewhere*, namely the European Enlightenment; it is not intended to convey the shallow political message that 'we all are

connected', nor does it normalize imperialism and existing global power relations.

What does the notion of 'cosmopolitization' then have to say? And why is it so important to clearly distinguish it from the many 'cosmopolitanisms' (Kant, Hegel, Habermas, Nussbaum, Appiah, Benhabib, Held etc.) of European philosophy and extra-European histories of thought? 'Cosmopolitization' is not about ethics but about facts. There is nothing as informative as a significant example to illustrate this: *fresh kidneys*.

The victory of medical transplantation (and not its crisis!) has swept away its own ethical foundations and opened the floodgates to an occult shadow economy supplying the world market with 'fresh' organs (Nancy Scheper-Hughes). In this

radically unequal world there is obviously no shortage of desperate individuals willing to sell a kidney, a portion of their liver, a lung, an eye, or even a testicle for a pittance. The fates of desperate rich patients waiting for organs have become obscurely embroiled with the fates of desperate poor people, as each group struggles to find a solution to basic problems of survival. This is what impure, really existing cosmopolitization of deprivation means: The excluded of the world, the economically and politically dispossessed – refugees, the homeless, street children, undocumented workers, prisoners, ageing prostitutes, cigarette smugglers, and petty thieves – are lured into selling their organs and this way becoming physically, morally, and economically 'embodied' in mortally thick bodies and in persons who are rich enough to buy and 'incorporate' the organs of their poor global others.

In the name of neo-liberal capitalism and the basic democratic right to unlimited choice, fundamental values of modernity – the sovereignty of the body, the human being and the meaning of life

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## FROM COSMOPOLITANISM TO PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

by Helma Lutz, Goethe University, Frankfurt

**C**osmopolitanism is a normative term rooted in the enlightenment; *and* it is an ethical concept that is discussed throughout the world in debates about perceptions of justice, democracy, and human rights. Tolerance seems to be a precondition for the development of a habitus of cosmopolitanism, but it is an ambivalent term. On the one hand it asks for mutual recognition (for example, of different lifestyles) and the establishment of political equality, while on the other hand it can be used as an instrument of power, domination and exclusion (repressive tolerance). The dispute then is about whether all kinds of cultural and ethnic differences can or should be endured and/or how repressive or permissive forms of tolerance can be legitimated. If one sees tolerance as a precondition for cosmopolitanism, then the question is still what can cosmopolitanism mean in the context of ethnic and cultural plurality?

In the context of today's urban space within a democratic state, it cannot be the elitist project of a *cosmopolitanism from above*, but rather a *cosmopolitanism from below*. Stuart Hall speaks about the latter and uses the concept of *vernacular cosmopolitanism*, which derives from the everyday experience of encounters with different cultural lifestyles and conviviality. However, Hall warns against a perception of culture as a clear-cut, single, coherent, integrated and organic set of rules and traditions:



Thilo Sarrazin at the Eye of a political Storm.

"The world is not divided up neatly into particular distinct cultures wedded to every community...". Instead what we need is the awareness of the limitations of any one culture or any one identity. In other words, people are not scripted by a single community or group. In particular within urban spaces the confrontation and mutual influence of a great variety of cultural expressions is a given. At the same time there is great variation in the appreciation and reception of differences – while some focus on or are even obsessed with (visual) *differences* (habits, clothes, traditions) and perceive them as an expression of distance from their own way of life, others concentrate on commonalities of practices, values, and customs. The latter may, for example, focus on the shared experiences of young people or on

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## LET'S TANGO IN BUENOS AIRES (CONTINUED)

proposals, from Argentina (Buenos Aires), Finland (Helsinki), France (Paris), Mexico (Mexico City), Singapore, Turkey (Istanbul), United Kingdom (Birmingham) and Uruguay (Montevideo). After careful review and voting, Argentina was selected as the number one site based on its low cost of the venue (free facilities); low cost of living index for delegates; its importance in terms of geographic diversity (noting that there has not been an ISA conference in South America since the 1982 Congress in Mexico City); and belonging to B economic category used by the ISA. Congratulations to the Asociación Latinoamericana de Sociología (ALAS) and the Argentinian Sociology Association (AAS) and their co-organizing institutions. Thank you to ALAS President Alberto L. Bialakowsky and AAS President, Alicia Itati Palermo for submitting this proposal and offering Argentina as a venue.

Let me briefly share with you the main objectives of the ISA Forum 2012.

- The first and foremost objective of the ISA Forum is a meeting of the various Research Committees, Working Groups, and Thematic Groups. This will be reflected in the organization of the program. Organizers will be provided with as much flexibility as possible in designing their respective programs within the scheduled time slots (guidelines to be provided).
- The second important objective of the ISA Forum is to develop a socially significant theme involving public actors and to which the different areas of sociology can contribute. It offers RCs, WGs and TGs the opportunity to gain valuable insights from public actors while also providing them opportunities to contribute to the Forum's main theme which will be considered by the Research Coordinating Committee and will be announced soon.
- The third objective of ISA Forum is to hold the interim Research Council Business Meeting, attended by the Delegates from all Research Committees.

The Vice-President of the Research Council assumes responsibility for preparing the scientific program together with the Local Organizing Committee (LOC).

Now let me say how I see the ISA Forum 2012 contributing to the priorities that I set forth as ISA Vice-President for Research. First, I believe that the ISA Forum provides not only an excellent venue for the different Research Committees and groups to hold their respective interim meetings but also an important opportunity to help foster greater synergies between research committees and also between the research committees, working groups and national associations. The discussions and dialogues that ensue at the various sessions can promote collaborations on comparative research projects among scholars from countries in the Global North and the Global South.

A second priority is to increase diversity in perspectives and participation of members at ISA conferences, especially of under-represented groups, by selecting conference locations that are relatively affordable, and by creatively addressing language barriers that impede participation. As an international body of sociologists we need to pay greater attention to the sources of power and privilege based on nation state status, regions, citizen-

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## HISTORY CORNER

by Jennifer Platt, University of Sussex, Vice-President for Publications

ISA members now are accustomed to having Izabela Barlinska at the center of things, running the office in Madrid. She has been there as Executive Secretary since 1987, but this long period of stability follows one of repeated changes in both personnel and locations. Earlier locations have been: Oslo, Norway (1950-53); London, England (1953-59); Louvain, Belgium (1959-62); Genève, Switzerland (1962-7); Milano, Italy (1967-74); Montréal, Canada (1974-82); Amsterdam, Netherlands (1982-6). It will be noted that almost all of these have been in Europe, which means that only one has been in a purely anglophone country; none have been in France, although French has always been one of ISA's official languages, but three other part-francophone countries have taken a turn. In each of these cases the Executive Secretary has been a national of the country where the office was based, and the choice of location has owed a lot to the availability there – not only of willing and competent candidates, but also of good institutional support and facilities. The establishment of a more permanent office and secretariat has allowed a more professional administration to deal with the larger numbers of members and activities that ISA now has. Previous Executive Secretaries have held academic posts as well as working part-time for ISA, so there was sometimes a team of two or three. Many of them have had distinguished careers in the discipline; perhaps the most prominent served in the 1950s – Stein Rokkan (later ISA Vice-President 1966-70) and Tom Bottomore (President 1974-78). Others have also served as members of the Executive Committee, though the Statutes prevent them from doing that while also holding the Executive Secretary post.



*ISA Staff in Madrid - From left to right: Juan Lejarraga, Melanie Bloem, Izabela Barlinska, José (Nacho) Reguera.*

To bring history up to the present, a few words about the current team. Izabela Barlinska, of Polish origin, had a very early association with the ISA, working as a student collaborator at the World Congress in Uppsala in 1978 and then joining the secretariat in the organization of the 1982 World Congress. When the office moved to Amsterdam she became Deputy Executive Secretary, and finally Executive Secretary on the move to Madrid. (In Madrid, she has gained a doctorate in Political Science and Sociology.) Her current colleagues are José Reguera (who has worked for ISA since 1990, and is responsible for the data base and web site), Juan Lejarraga (who with José Reguera is in charge of membership dues payments, receipts, address updates etc.), and Melanie Bloem, who has just joined the team and is learning her way around the various office tasks.

# SHUJIRO YAZAWA

(CONTINUED)

## *So you did your PhD in sociology?*

Unfortunately, at that time it was not customary to write a PhD thesis, although some sociologists would do so later on in their career. Until the late 1980's, the majority of sociologists only wrote a master's thesis. In my case it was devoted to *Sociology and Pragmatism*. I wanted to study the main characteristics of US Imperialism. You know after the Meiji Restoration we imported and imitated so many foreign theories that we became imperialists ourselves without even knowing it! We misunderstood those Western theories, so I decided to study American pragmatism as a kind of ideology of US imperialism. I mainly studied William James, and John Dewey, comparing these two with Charles Sanders Peirce, and then under the guidance of the well known Japanese Parsonian, Professor Tominaga, I studied the relationship between pragmatism and structural functionalism.



*Professor Yazawa in a Reflective Mood.*

## *So you are deeply imbued with American sociology?*

Oh Yes. And after I finished my MA I spent three years at Washington University in St. Louis. At that time I got a Fulbright scholarship, so I was quite free to attend different seminars and lectures. But, I also wanted to participate in some kind of social movement in the United States. So, for example, I joined a protest against a wine company that was treating its workers badly, and I assisted the rank and file labor union movement. I think it is essential for us to study social movements if we are to understand society in depth.

## *And you were also spending time with the great radical Alvin Gouldner?*

Yes, indeed. But the problem was, although Professor Gouldner seemed quite radical, he didn't participate in social movements. It was just his ideas that were radical. I attended his seminars, and I remember well the one on how to write a PhD thesis that was based on the research behind his own books, *Wildcat Strike* and *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*.

## *So after St. Louis you returned to Japan to teach, but what did you do with all your radical sociology?*

Yes, I had no obvious audience. The student movement had disappeared. I wrote many journal articles and books, but unfortunately no more was there a relationship between my theory and my practice. I spent my time on campus. I taught women students at Tsuda College and many graduate students at Hitotsubashi University. Many became professors in Japan and some even became professors in the United States.

## *Do you still think of yourself as a radical?*

Oh, yes. I am against the Empire system. I always think of myself as a rank and file sociologist.

## *Do you think the United States is still as strong an empire as ever?*

Yes. Of course, the form of imperialism is changing—from imperialism to empire. [Laughs] The hegemony of the US continues. But there are good things too – the American Revolution is one of the most humanitarian revolutions in the history of humankind. So in that sense I like American people but not American mainstream politicians! And also I don't like mainstream sociology! [laughs]

## *Do you think Japan is an imperial state?*

In a sense. Indeed, one of the most important questions is how to overcome imperialism in Japan. After World War II we had a very good chance to overcome imperialism, but unfortunately we failed. We have a kind of imperialism without empire, which takes the hegemony of Japan in Asia for granted. In ordinary life, the majority of the Japanese people have difficulty communicating with foreign people, and they are especially critical of the aggressiveness of the Chinese people, especially as they become stronger and stronger. Although this attitude might seem reasonable, nevertheless behind it lies a Japanese self-conception of superiority.

## *Isn't this just nationalism?*

It's more than nationalism. There is a strong desire to go back to the traditional Japanese cultural system based on the emperor system before World War II. Even some politicians in the Liberal Democratic Party stress the importance of the emperor system. Without the emperor system it is impossible, they say, to develop moral education, to forge the integration of society, even to move forward—that kind of stuff. It is deeply embedded in older people's unconscious. In reality, we are facing a deep crisis in this age of globalization. I think the household principle, the community principle and Japanese ideology, all of which have been bases of the Japanese modernization, are not working too well. They are losing their cutting edge under globalization. So as sociologists, we have a duty and a privilege to present new directions and social designs for the future of Japanese society.

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## LET'S TANGO IN BUENOS AIRES (CONTINUED)

ship, ethnicity, race, class, gender, and language that shape the flow of knowledge production, information dissemination, and consumption of sociological research. The ISA Forum of Sociology in Buenos Aires is an important step in enhancing regional diversity as well as expanding our sociological lens.

A third related priority is to establish more opportunities for junior scholars to participate in ISA activities where they can meet and collaborate with senior international scholars. We need to expand such spaces for junior sociologists and I hope the ISA Forum 2012 will create a session specifically dedicated to bringing together junior and senior scholars.

A fourth priority is to improve bridges between sociologists and activists in pro-

moting social justice, through rigorous research that informs policy and practice at the local, national, transnational, and global levels. The times in which we live require a greater commitment by sociologists to engage in research that is grounded in sociology but draws upon other disciplines. The problems, challenges and possibilities to resolve poverty, unequal access to education, global inequities, environmental degradation, ongoing wars, erosion of democracy and human rights violations are just some examples of issues that the ISA can address and in so doing strengthen links between sociology and the public sphere. Here, once again, the ISA Forum can provide an excellent platform for sociologists to be proactively engaged in the international dissemination, exchange of information and global dialogue, which together can contribute to transformative change.

The selection of Buenos Aires as a venue for the ISA Forum in 2012 is an exciting first step, but there is much to be done in the year and a half ahead. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took time and effort to submit proposals that opened new possibilities for the ISA. I would also like to thank ISA President, Michael Burawoy, the Research Coordinating Committee, and the Executive Committee for working together to ensure a fair selection process. A big thank you to Izabela Barlinska whose office has been instrumental in helping to prepare the necessary documentation and for coordinating the responses to the call for proposals. The possibilities of the Forum can be immense. Its success will lie not only in developing an intellectually stimulating program but also, as an international body of social scientists, in working with policy makers, community activists, and the public to address the major issues of our time. ■

## FRESH KIDNEYS (CONTINUED)

and death – are being sacrificed without anyone noticing this for what it is: a process that symbolizes our age of cosmopolitization.

In the cosmopolitanized body, scapes, continents, races, classes, nations and religions all become fused. Muslim kidneys purify Christian blood. White racists breathe with the aid of one or more black lungs. The blonde manager gazes out at the world through the eye of an African street urchin. A secular millionaire survives thanks to the liver carved from a Protestant prostitute living in a Brazilian favela. The bodies of the wealthy are transformed into patchwork rugs. Poor people, in contrast, have been mutilated into actually or potentially one-eyed, one-kidneyed spare-parts depots, and this has occurred 'by their own free will', and 'for their own good', as the affluent sick constantly reassure themselves. The piecemeal sale of their organs is their life insurance. At the other end of the process, the bio-political 'citizen of the world' emerges – a white, male body, fit or fat, with the addition of an



*Organ transplants - A symbol of Cosmopolitization.*

Indian kidney or a Muslim eye, etc. In general, the circulation of living kidneys follows the established routes of capital from South to North, from poor to more affluent bodies, from black and brown bodies to white ones, and from females to males, or from poor males to more affluent ones. Women are rarely the beneficiaries of purchased organs anywhere in the world. From this it follows that the age of cosmopolitization is divided and recombined into organ-selling nations versus organ-buying ones.

The age of cosmopolitization stands for a world that for better or worse we all share, a world that has 'no outside', 'no exit', 'no other' anymore. We have to recognize that, regardless of how brilliantly and trenchantly we critique the 'Northern narrative' or ignore the 'Southern narrative', we are destined to live with these interwoven, contradictory framings and situations in this *World at Risk* (Beck, 2009), not only subject to its power of domination but also contaminated by its self-endangerment, corruption, suffering and exploitation. Abandon all dreams of autonomy that would allow anybody to remain outside! And abandon all clear-cut 'geographical racism' between 'Southern voices' and 'Northern voices' in the social sciences!

Is this a 'Northern narrative'? Is it a 'Southern narrative'? No, it is both. And looking for ways to combine those contradictory perspectives systematically on the level of sociological analysis, is what 'methodological cosmopolitanism' is all about.

Are 'fresh kidneys' the exception? No, processes of cosmopolitization fundamentally affect and transform all kinds of

## SHUJIRO YAZAWA (CONTINUED)

*You've been active in the International Sociological Association for many years. Is that right?*

Plenary session, and ever since then I have attended all of the Congresses. Japan has a special relation to ISA. Professor Odaka, who was one of my advisors at the University of Tokyo, was one of the founders of ISA. Even though he was a very liberal man, during wartime it was quite difficult for him to express his views. After World War II he realized the importance of international relations and opinion, which is why he attended all of the ISA's international conferences until the late 1960s. After him Professor Watanuki became a vice president of the ISA. In a sense, I am a successor of Professor Watanuki.

*What has happened, do you think, to the ISA since you began attending its congresses 30 years ago?*

It's changing. The ISA has three pillars. One pillar is, of course, made up of the research committees, a second pillar is composed of the national associations, while the third pillar is based on individuals. Until the 1980's and the middle of the 1990's the research committees were the most important group in the ISA, but since then the national associations branch is getting stronger and stronger, so right now it is a great combination of research committees and the national associations. Still, I can't discover a role for individuals. Whatever else the ISA is the only organization that has capacity and interest to develop real global sociologies. So, with this in mind we must build its organizational intelligence. ■

## FROM COSMOPOLITANISM TO PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY (CONTINUED)

women or on mothers. Within urban society these groups need to find a way to live with each other, either by practicing in-difference or by engaging one another. Cosmopolitanism in practice, then, means negotiation – to negotiate a *compromise between equality and difference* not once and forever, but continuously. This negotiation process is by no means a harmonious enterprise – it is quarrelsome, controversial and exhausting.

Let me use my city, Frankfurt, as an example. Over the last year as a preparation for a change of direction in the city's policy, the Integration Commissioner of the City of Frankfurt, Nargess Eskandari-Grünberg, introduced a new concept of integration and diversity that was debated in hundreds of local meetings and discussion groups on the Internet with as many Frankfurters as possible – people of different genders, ages, religions, social classes, ethnic groups etc. By the end of October 2010, 47,000 people had participated. The aim of these deliberations was to include people in a dialogue about how to step away from the political tradition of dealing with migrants and their offspring as ethnic isolates and instead focus more on the cultural needs of individuals with diverse lifestyles. To my knowledge, this process is unique in Germany and politicians garnered a lot

of popular support for listening to, acknowledging and sometimes even challenging the views of ordinary citizens.

However, Frankfurt does not live in a space separate from the rest of the nation.

During the summer of 2010 a controversial debate was kicked off by a prominent member of the board of trustees of the German Central Bank, also located in Frankfurt, Thilo Sarrazin, with the publication of his book *Germany does itself in*. In this book Sarrazin paints a future dominated by the extinction of the German *Volk*, claiming that German welfare recipients and Muslims are the culprits. Similar to the authors of the infamous *The Bell Curve*, which attributed the social problems of African-American to their genes, Sarrazin points to the genetic basis of cultural decay among marginalized populations in Germany. Both books claim to substantiate their partial conclusion on purely scientific grounds, using statistics from a wide range of research.

Although Sarrazin's thesis is not new, the way this book was presented has had a tremendous impact on the communication climate in Germany. Sarrazin has been able to catapult himself into the heart of political debate on the national

and local level. His book is a national bestseller with over a million copies sold. It is discussed in cafes and on street corners, in villages and in cities. The media has played a big role in promoting the book and the debate. The author, a social democrat and former Minister of Financial Affairs of Berlin, portrayed himself and was embraced as a 'public intellectual', one who is not afraid of 'speaking the truth' and 'dares to break taboos about political correctness and problems with migrants, in particular with those from Turkey and Arab countries'.

“SARRAZIN PAINTS A  
FUTURE DOMINATED BY  
THE EXTINCTION OF THE  
GERMAN VOLK ...”

There are several undercurrents in this debate:

- The assertion that politicians and the government are too distant from the people, that they make decisions without the consent of the majority, and they are not concerned about people's real worries;
- The conviction that German society is supposed to be culturally homogeneous society and that Islam is a threat;
- The belief that Germany is not a country of immigration and that migrants are a temporary phenomenon. The fact that they stay is a genuine problem for the cohesion of society and for national identity.

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## FROM COSMOPOLITANISM TO PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY (CONTINUED)

Many intellectuals and politicians have supported Sarrazin, not so much for his genetic argument, but rather for his view that political correctness has constrained a debate about migration, that multiculturalism is a chimera of the left and that migrants – in particular Muslims – cause problems. All this has certainly contributed to the hype about the book. On the one side, there were and still are politicians and intellectuals opposing this view. The Social Democratic Party has taken steps to exclude him from the party and the German Bank pressed for his exclusion from the board of trustees that was conveniently settled by Sarrazin's early retirement. On the other side, high-ranking politicians of all 'colours', well known feminists, scientists and artists have supported the bashing of Islam. The upshot is a complex constellation of voices and interests both in favor of and against migration and Muslims but overall the atmosphere is embittered and positions are getting more and more rigid. Extreme rightist groups have benefited and it seems that there is very little chance to bring some kind of rationality into this debate. Those who try to chal-

lenge Sarrazin's diagnosis, pointing to various research results that contradict his empirical claims, seem to be fighting a losing battle. The embittered spirit, one could say, is out of the bottle and the sorcerer's apprentice seems unable to put it back in.

What does this mean for the debate on diversity in Frankfurt? As a sociologist I could say that this is an interesting debate, which generates lots of new research questions that can be studied by observing the various parties involved, analysing the press coverage, depicting the media wars, putting on 'blinders' with a view to finally writing a 'balanced' article or a book on the aftermath of the Sarrazin affair. That is what Max Weber would call 'sociology as a profession', separating science from politics, sticking to 'value neutral description'. This kind of sociology, however, is contested by what was once called radical sociology and is now called public sociology from below – one that is connected to civil society and its agents. From the view of public sociology – and here Adorno and other Frankfurt School scholars can be seen as forerunners – it is important to intervene in debates

that threaten or distort open and respectful contact and communication, especially where certain groups are being scape-goated through populist demagoguery.

Thus, it is important to make space for those groups who are silent or, at least, inaudible —people with and without a migration background, who share workplaces, who do sports and study together in schools and universities, who are members of bi-national families, etc.

Here I think the university and the city have interests in common: we need to engage in public discussion if we want to guarantee an atmosphere of mutual respect in which students can develop their competencies. It is reasonable to assume that our students are affected in one way or another by this debate. Therefore, my plea is for a project, a dialogue, which takes Adorno's question "*Wie kann man ohne Angst verschieden sein?*" (How to live difference without fear?) as a motto for a debate about the conditions of cosmopolitanism that would involve students, teachers, professors, bankers, politicians, taxi-drivers and so on. This may be an arduous effort, but nevertheless one that is not totally utopian – in any case it would be a contribution to the de-escalation of hostilities and a step forward towards cosmopolitanism from below. ■

## MULTI-VERSALISM: A NEW PARADIGM?

by Sari Hanafi, American University of Beirut, ISA Executive Committee

The newly established "World Social Sciences and Humanities Network" (World SSH Net) in cooperation with UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) and the Science Council of Argentina (CONICET) held a three-day workshop (28-30 October, 2010) on "Cultural elements in social sciences and in academic labor – epistemological and educational challenges to constructing a scientific multi-versalism" in the Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO). Sociologists, anthropologists, historians and biologists from all over the world gathered together in Buenos Aires to discuss the challenge of the "growing need for globally shared knowledge" in a context of structures of exclusivity that make many forms of knowledge production invisible.

*Multi-versalism* opposes *uni-versalism's* silencing of scholars in the Global South. Multi-versalism is a way of thinking the lim-

itations of universalism. It is not occidentalism opposing orientalism but a way to think dialogue and intercultural translation between northern and southern researchers. Multi-versalism recognizes structural dependency but, at the same time, develops strategies for combating dependency. Aware of the internationalization of social sciences, workshop participants were preoccupied with how this internationalization could be culturally sensitive, acknowledging multiple sources of knowledge, including indigenous knowledge.

“...MULTI-VERSALISM IS A WAY OF THINKING THE LIMITATIONS OF UNIVERSALISM ...”

In his opening address, Michael Kuhn, President of the World SSH Net, focused on the need to replace the universalism of European interpretations of the world with a diversity of interpretations of the global. His presentation examined the nature and mechanisms of the hegemony of Western thought and he proposed that the future work of World SSH Net should: 1) disclose the epistemological assumptions of social science knowl-

# CHINESE SOCIOLOGY FACES THE CHALLENGE OF RAPID ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT<sup>1</sup>

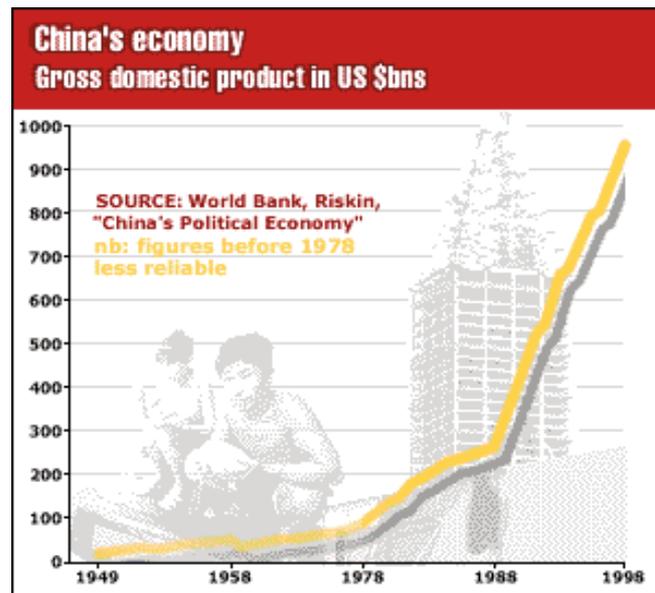
By Peilin Li, President of the Chinese Sociological Association

The 2010 annual meeting of Chinese Sociological Association, with the central topic of “Chinese road and social development”, has symbolic significance. 30 years have passed since the reform and since the policy of opening to the outside world. In that period, China has been through political turbulence, economic fluctuation, SARS, the disaster of earthquake and global economic crisis. However, our economy and society has sustained both high rates of growth and rapid development, and forged the “Chinese road”, “Chinese model” and “Chinese experience”. Over 600 sociologists from about 30 provinces and cities nationwide as well as sociologists from other nations and regions of Asia are attending our annual academic conference in Harbin this year. Besides the main conference, there are 23 special forums. Chinese sociology is in an era of rapid expansion as seen either from the scale of people or the scale of forums.

The recent global economic crisis and high government debts in some European countries have complicated international development: on the one hand, global social economy and scientific technology develop fast, and the economic interaction and interdependence increase between different countries and regions; on the other hand, humankind faces many new challenges in terms of resources, environment, unequal development, regional conflicts and financial safety. How to sustain peace and development in such a complex and fast-changing environment, and how to ensure international society's order and stability is an important and real question for our epoch.

Our nation's social economic development has entered a new phase after the global economic crisis. In this new development phase, transforming the development model, diminishing the urban-rural divide, coordinating regional development and speeding up social construction have become more and more important development issues. China is mak-

ing the 12<sup>th</sup> five-year plan now. The next 5 years is an essential period for development which will be the ultimate guarantee for realizing the goal of the Xiaokang Society (Well-off Society) in 2020.



*China's Staggering Economic Growth.*

During the 30 years of Reform and Opening to the outside world, Chinese sociology has entered an era of unprecedented development. Over the last 30 years, the expansion of the Chinese economy and the transformation of its social structure has provided rich soil for the development of Chinese sociology. In turn, Chinese sociology has made its contribution to China's harmonious development. Within this historical process, sociologists observed and analyzed social phenomena carefully, proposed and answered significant social questions and continuously accumulated academic knowledge, establishing the importance of sociology among the social sciences.

Rapid economic development has brought all sorts of problems, such as the waste of resources, the deterioration of the environment, the increase in income inequality, and heavy local debts. Many features of Chinese society have not

improved: such as public education, labor protection, social welfare, medical care, and coordinated urban-rural development. During this year, there have been several campus and kindergarten killings for social revenge, some

large-scale worker strikes, and a dozen of worker suicides in the same enterprise. Sociologists must pay great attention to all these problems.

With the rapid development of our nation, Chinese sociology received more and more attention from international sociology. We have established cooperative relationship with sociological associations in America, France, Russia, Brazil, India, Japan and

Korea. We have held an East Asia Forum with Japan and Korea as well as several BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) Forums. Chinese sociology is beginning to exert more and more international influence.

Guests and scholars, Chinese sociology is facing great opportunities, and it will also face a generational transformation in the next 10 years. I hope you will seize the opportunity to work together, study important issues pertaining to reform and development, help the younger generation of sociologists grow, undertake deep and careful social investigations, and leave more and better works on the history of sociology. Now I declare the opening of the 2010 meeting of the Chinese Sociological Association! ■

(Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup>Abridged Opening Speech to the Annual Meeting of the Chinese Sociological Association, Harbin, July, 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

## MULTI-VERSALISM: A NEW PARADIGM? (CONTINUED)

edge, 2) trace the society models incorporated in its politicized categories and theories and 3) develop a world approach to social science thinking that liberates social sciences from the particularism of politicized knowledge.

The workshop itself did not dwell on lofty theoretical discussion, but turned to grounded case studies. Thus, Hebe Vessuri (Venezuelan Institute of Scientific Research) urged the participants to frame the discussion in terms of a transition from the culture of “science” to the culture of “research”. Following Bruno Latour, science is cold, straight and detached, whereas research

is warm, involving, and risky. Science puts an end to the vagaries of human disputes, research creates controversies; science produces objectivity by trying to escape the shackles of ideology, passion, and emotions. For Vessuri, research and society today are entangled to the point where they cannot be separated any longer. She argued that social science research is also experiencing some interesting changes. Dialogue, comparison, and translation are the *mots d'ordre* at this time.

Participants insisted on the importance of recognizing the diversity of human experience. Chris Caswill (University of Oxford) theorized what he called “social science practice and everyday knowledge”, by examining three voices from three continents: Charles Lindblom from the USA, Bent Flyvbjerg from Denmark and Catherine Odora Hoppers from South Africa. Each is concerned with the interrelations in the practice of social

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## ORGANIZED CRIME AT THE UN

by Rudolf Richter, University of Vienna, ISA Representative to the UN Office in Vienna

As an observer I attended the 5<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the Parties to the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*. It took place 18-22 October, 2010 in Vienna, Austria. The Conference was established as a vehicle for State Parties to report on the implementation of the convention to combat international organized crime.

As an economic issue Transnational Crime is responsible for an enormous amount of money flows. In an introductory statement the speaker talked of \$200,000 earned every minute worldwide through trafficking. Thus, it is important for States worldwide, and the conference began with a general debate among ambassadors and ministers of nation states. General commitments to the war on organized crime were made, and the importance of international cooperation was highlighted. One measure of combat was to hamper criminals from opening bank accounts.

Individual sessions dealt with:

- Review of the implementation of the UN Convention against Transnational Crime
- Protocol on Trafficking in Persons
- Protocol on Smuggling of Migrants
- Protocol on Firearms

A diverse and complicated picture was drawn. It was argued that there might be some good in trafficking, when it helps refugees and enables migration for the

betterment of human beings. At the same time, it was argued, such migration should be possible through legal channels. For criminals the smuggling of migrants is highly profitable, low-risk business. The international community is trying to make this a high-risk enterprise. By contrast trafficking of firearms is always seen as bad. New forms of transnational crimes, such as cyber crime and trafficking in human organs, need to be incorporated in the Convention.

The plenary sessions discussed the evaluation of organized crime. It should be supervised by internationally selected peers and supported by data. Most countries were in a hurry to implement the evaluation and to show concrete activities and achievements, others were reluctant to undertake immediate implementation and were concerned about the costs. Financial support is necessary and it should go from the North to the South.



*Trafficking in People.*

All agreed on the necessity of collecting data, drawing on tools established by an expert group at the UN Office of Drugs and Crime, and sharing experiences, which would be more important than delivering recommendations. The few NGOs allowed to participate – and thus were more than simply observers – emphasized the importance of including the perspective of civil society. They promoted victim-centered approaches which would set up measures to provide compensation, material assistance and the constitution of self-organized groups.

The most important issues for sociologists seem to be the international need for data, and here sociologists could help to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data could be deepened with case studies of nations as well as the fate of individuals. Sociologists could also contribute to the training of lawyers and officers, training organized through civil society organizations. ■

Colleagues working on or interested in such activities and wanting to contribute to this internationally important issue might look at the webpage of UNODC to get more information:

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc>

The NGOs published a comment on:

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/ngos/news.html>

# SOCIOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE: REPORT FROM MALAYSIA

by Ruchira Ganguly Scrase, President of the Asia Pacific Sociological Association



Emma Porio, ISA Executive Committee, Addressing APSA Conference.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Asia Pacific Sociological Association was held in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia in December 2010. It was co-hosted by the University of Malaysia, Sabah (USM) and the University of Wollongong (UOW). The general theme of the conference was “Social and Environmental Change: Opportunities and Challenges for the Asia Pacific”. The topical nature of the conference theme attracted a great deal of media attention and was covered extensively in the local print media and television. Sociologists generally do not have a great public profile. However, a number of participants were interviewed, providing us the opportunity to highlight the significance of sociology to the world beyond the academy.

The keynote speakers were Professor Datuk Dr. Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, Founding Director of the Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), ISA Executive Committee member Professor Emma Porio, Professor of Sociology, Department of Sociology of the Ateneo

de Manila University, the Philippines, and Mr Chris Chong Chan Fui, Sabahan-born filmmaker and visual artist. Professor Porio’s address “Social and Environmental Change: Opportunities and Challenges for Sociology and Sociological Practice(s)” generated a great deal of discussion and debate setting the scene for the conference. In the past although a number of prominent filmmakers and journalists have participated in APSA conferences, this was the first time a documentary by a young award-winning filmmaker was screened as part of the conference. The successful reception of Chris’s documentary *Dis-Location* has made us think about incorporating such endeavours as a regular feature for future conferences, especially with the growing interest in Media sociology among graduate students and early career researchers.

Over 150 sociologists from 15 different countries attended the conference. It was heartening to see a number of sociologists from European universities working on Asian themes participating in the conference. A significant number of graduate students attended the conference, pre-

senting new ideas and challenging some of the mainstream sociological thoughts.

Talking informally to delegates I got the feeling that the conference was an overall success and was enjoyed by participants. At the APSA AGM a new postgraduate representative was elected, as Nichole Georgeou had recently submitted her PhD. The new representative, Ms Briekena Qafa-Osmani, an Albanian national is a PhD candidate in Sociology and Anthropology at the International Islamic University, Malaysia. Apart from this post, the APSA executive remains unchanged.

In the APSA tradition, the highlight of the conference was the conference dinner. Local Kadazan dancers entertained the delegates. APSA Secretary Prof. Scott Baum surprised all of us by his display of unusual dexterity in participating in one of the most complicated dance steps. All in all, a successful and well-organized conference was enjoyed by all and plans are underway for the next APSA conference to be held in 2012. The time and venue are still to be confirmed. ■

# DISPATCH FROM AUSTRALIA

by Dan Woodman, Australian National University



PhD student, Justin Lu, receiving award from Michael Guilding, President of TASA.

The 2010 conference of The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) was held at Macquarie University in Sydney, December 6-9. The conference began with a sociology trivia night. The collective store of esotery in the Australian sociological community was much improved by the night (beware of entering casual conversations with your Australian colleagues at future ISA events). My trivia team, mostly composed of members of the TASA Sociology of Youth Thematic Group, came second. The collective consensus was that second was ideal. We appeared knowledgeable to our colleagues, but not so much as to be intimidating. And, in the grand tradition of egalitarianism in Australian Sociology, the prize for coming second (four bottles of wine) was the same as the prize for coming first.

The opening keynote speaker at TASA 2010 was Syed Farid Alatas. Dr Alatas' presentation built on a number of debates at recent TASA conferences on the Raewyn Connell's call for a 'Southern' sociology. Dr Alatas focused on how theories from the non-Western majority world can be put into conversa-

tion with the 'canon' of Western sociology and literature. The second keynote, from Mary Holmes, challenged delegates to consider the central role of emotions in contemporary subjectivity and the reflexive way that people may utilise emotions in shaping their lives. The final keynote session featured a panel of Raewyn Connell, Jack Barbalet and Michael Guilding asking 'has the concept of neo-liberalism outlived its usefulness'. It was suggested that the concept can lead to lazy sociology when it is used to explain too much, and that the concept might not correctly characterize contemporary global capitalism. Yet, the consensus seemed to be that if contemporary sociologists didn't have a concept like neo-liberalism it would have to be invented.

The concurrent sessions were vibrant. I spent my time in attending session in the Sociology of Youth stream, in which most sessions were packed to overflowing and the debate was both charitable and spirited. From all reports the other concurrent sessions were equally lively and well attended. Seats were precious, with even some of the elders of Australian sociology left standing at the door with-

out a seat if they were late to a session. Some more cynical delegates suggested that some of the profs were doing their best to look old and frail, in an attempt to guilt their younger colleagues into relinquishing their seats.

My general impression of the conference was that there was less of a focus on 'crisis', either in the present or in the near future, for Australian sociology. Presenters seemed more positive than in recent years about the contribution being made by Australian sociologists. This optimism might be due to a growing sense of confidence – a sense that we have a voice, even if not the most influential, in public debates in contemporary Australia. Or it is possibly a correlate of a number of sociology departments hiring new staff and expanding over the past year or so. Or maybe it was simply a sense of relief that our funding circumstances did not seem as dire as that facing the small number of colleagues from the UK who braved the long trip to this side of the world for the conference.

A final note, although all the bars at the university had closed for the summer recess, the conference had a wonderfully social atmosphere. Many conversations started during the day continued long into the evening. Places to socialise off campus were quickly located, and stories will no doubt be told at TASA conferences for many years to come about the group of 15 or so mild-mannered sociology professors who were physically escorted (thrown out) of a bar near the campus at about 3 in the morning. My colleague, Ani Wierenga, suggested that a prize should be offered at next year's conference for the best sociological analysis (or even recollection!) of the chain of events leading up to this now infamous bouncer-boffin confrontation. Next year's conference will be held at the University of Newcastle at the end of November, under the theme 'Local Lives/Global Networks'. The former industrial city of Newcastle, on the coast two hour's drive north of Sydney, was recently named by the travel bible *Lonely Planet* as one of the top ten 'must see' cities for 2011. For our international colleagues, where resources allow, 2011 looks like a great year to come and experience a TASA conference. ■

# SCIENTIFIC CIRCLES – A PROJECT OF POLISH JUNIOR SOCIOLOGISTS

By Tomasz Kukulowicz, University of Warsaw, and Lukasz Srokowski, University of Wrocław

The section of ‘Scientific Circles’ is a part of the Polish Sociological Association (PSA). Around 100 students from 15 universities belong to the Section. The name of the Section comes from a popular form of student self-organization in Poland – scientific circles. These are groups of students who come together motivated to go beyond their obligatory university studies. Typical activities of student scientific circles and our Section of the PSA are: organizing student scientific conferences, discussions, meetings with ‘interesting’ people, carrying out small research projects, sometimes publishing magazines or books. Most projects are realized with a small, or even without, financial support.

The section of ‘Scientific Circles’ of the PSA was founded in 2004 by a group of MA and PhD students. The idea behind the Section was to create a country-wide forum that would enhance networking and cooperation among junior sociologists from different cities. PSA, especially the former president Professor Włodzimierz Wesolowski, welcomed the student activity and helped with the organizational and formal issues. Soon the Section started playing an ever-increasing role in the young sociological landscape, as new members joined and as new projects emerged.

The biggest project led by the Section during the last three years involved ‘Moving Workshops’. To date we have had 6 meetings with around 125 students and 25 senior scientists participating. At the basis of the project was an observation that sociology, as a scientific discipline, differs at each university. Moving Workshops last two days: 15 to 30 students from various universities come to one institute of sociology to learn from the academic staff there. The meeting is organized by students from a scientific circle, who invite their professors. All activities are concentrated around one leading theme and the program of each meeting must include a theoretical introduction as well as practical



*Young sociologists at a recent meeting of the Polish Sociological Association.*

exercises. Usually, some very short research is carried out – some empirical data are collected outside the university by students who then analyze them together with professors.

In our opinion the most interesting ‘Moving Workshops’ were organized in Poznan, in March 2009. They were devoted to the study of everyday life sociology and material culture. A brief history of sociology in Poznan was presented in the opening lecture. We learned about the first professor of sociology at Poznan University, Florian Znaniecki, and the postwar history of the Institute. The theoretical part of the meeting consisted of two lectures. Professor Rafal Drozdowski presented nine reasons why everyday life sociology had recently become fashionable. In the second lecture Professor Marek Krajewski introduced us to the study of material objects. He argued that the relations between people and artifacts are symmetrical. It is worth mentioning that both lecturers are the leading researchers of their topics in Poland. During the practical exercises students

broke up into groups of four and searched for common and uncommon things. During this field study, observations were noted or recorded using compact cameras and digital sound recorders in different districts of Poznan. After coming back to the University students presented the results of their work. The discussion showed that belonging to the category of uncommon things is strongly related to the social definition of the situation.

The creation of the ‘Scientific Circles’ of the PSA led to a spin-off project called the School of Young Sociology Leaders, designed to train leaders of our circles in group management, communication and negotiation. Every year the training lasted 4-5 weekends and took place in a different city. In this way junior sociologists could meet one another and, at the same time, different scientific circles could exhibit their activities. Even though the Leadership Training School was never formally attached to the PSA Section, most of its almost 100 graduates became members of the Section and, with great enthusiasm, contributed to its projects. ■

# WHO'S CONNECTED? SOCIOLOGISTS AND THE GLOBAL DIGITAL DIVIDE

By Jen Schradie, University of California, Berkeley

Card catalogues, typewriters, and microfiches were once technological tools of the academic trade. Today, many sociologists rely on JSOTR®, laptops and EndNote®. But what of sociologists from the Global South?

When researchers began studying the digital divide in the early 1990s, they examined the binary gap between people with and without Internet access. However, the complexities of everyday Internet use have driven the analysis to include stratification in activities, skill level, technological resources, and other variances. Some scholars (i.e. Ono and Zavodny 2007) have compared Internet connection rates between countries, but little research has examined the digital differences that academics face across the political and economic spectrum of nations. For the ISA, digital inequality among members could affect how we communicate with each other. For example, online collaboration may not necessarily solve the problems that sociologists from less endowed universities and countries have in affording travel to international conferences.

An eye toward the data illustrates the challenges that ISA members might face. First, the ISA categorizes members into A, B and C countries, based on the economy of one's home country. From the A category, the United States and the United Kingdom, countries with the most ISA members (see Table), each had an Internet access rate of 76% on average in 2008. Most likely, all academics in these countries have consistent and high-quality connectivity although precise data are not available. On the other hand, the two countries with the most members in the C category, India and Nigeria, have access rates of 5% and 16% respectively.

However, whether or not a country has an average connectivity rate does not speak to online access rates for sociologists, nor the complexities of what they are able to do online. Nigerian sociologists, for example, can have basic Internet access but may

face other constraints: not enough computers for their students; having to pay out-of-pocket for computer services; regular electrical outages; not having the latest software for data analysis and academic writing (i.e. EndNote®, Stata®, AtlasTi®); and limited access to JSOTR® and journals in general.

Philip Howard, a sociologist at the University of Washington, calls this an "intellectual divide". While conducting research for his latest book in Muslim countries around the world, *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (2010), he found that academics in less developed countries can benefit from the leadership of strong state institutions. In these countries, the best technologies and highest speed Internet access (i.e. broadband) are usually given to the national library and the major universities. However, it is at the discretion of the university, often in conjunction with the national library, to distribute any technological resources. This usually means giving the most resources to academic departments that provide the most "value" to the state. The result is inequality by discipline. For instance, states often view traditional engineering and medicine departments as providing the most public value. The social sciences are usually at the bottom of the heap, depending on the exact discipline, so sociologists may not have access to as many relevant journals, for example. Now that so many journals are online, subscriptions to engineering and public health journals, for instance, often have higher priority than sociology. Therefore, some sociologists are not able to read journal articles written by other sociologists. Others have 24/7 access at a click of a mouse.

What digital barriers do you or your students have? The ISA is interested in finding out what members' practical situations are so that it can aim to tailor what it offers in ways which meet members' needs and preferences. Send in your comments to Jen Schradie [schradie@berkeley.edu](mailto:schradie@berkeley.edu) and please indicate your country, position, and institutional location. ■

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Comparison of Internet Access Rates by ISA Country Type

	United States	United Kingdom	Brazil	South Africa	India	Nigeria
Internet Access Rate	76%	76%	38%	9%	5%	16%
ISA Economy Type	A	A	B	B	C	C
Number of ISA members	704	289	176	157	249	134

-Percentages based on Internet users as percentage of population from 2008. Data source: [World Bank, World Development Indicators](http://www.worldbank.org) - Last updated November 24, 2010. For interactive graphs, go to Google public data: <http://tinyurl.com/264z5fy>

-ISA information from ISA online data, June, 2010.

# NOTES ON AN ENGAGED SOCIOLOGY IN COLOMBIA

by Ana Lucía Paz Rueda, Icesi University

There are 15 sociology programs in Colombia, 6 in private and 9 in public universities. Professional sociology emerged in 1959 paying special attention to rural topics, political issues, social change and the analysis of the state. In the decades that followed, sociological interests expanded to include industrial and urban sociology as well as the sociology of culture. The need to refocus on national problems of violence and social fragmentation led to the quest for new methodologies in the 1970s, including “participatory action research”. In 1969, there was a political crisis that led to the consolidation of the discipline around grand sociological theories.

In the 1990s, the discipline reemerged with the creation of new sociology programs in the country. In the last fifteen years, the number of active programs has grown from 5 to 15. Most of these are lodged in Colleges of Social Sciences and Humanities, which create possibilities for interdisciplinary exchange. Of these programs 60% are 10 semesters long, while 40% are 8 semesters long, each requiring an average of 155 credits. Almost half of these programs emphasize applied research or social intervention. Professionalization is centered around the idea of transforming society and contributing to the understanding, analysis and solutions of problems in Colombia.

In Colombia, there are at least 22 research centers that include sociology and around 75% of these are attached to public uni-

versities. Sociological training focuses on methodology (25%), interdisciplinary courses (25%), sociological topics (18%) and theory (15%). Methodology courses balance quantitative and qualitative approaches and there is an increased interest in taking management and social policy courses. Theory courses are still strongly focused on the works of Marx, Weber and Durkheim who are taught in 9 out of 15 programs.

This brief comparison shows us that Colombian sociology has had a long trajectory and faces important challenges. There is potential for growth, as illustrated by the increasing interest of several academic organizations to work within a sociological framework. There are also, at least, three areas for improvement: 1) the strengthening of public debate around key issues for the country: the economy, justice, production of public culture; 2) increasing the attention given to new structured and systemic visions of the world that can capture emerging trends; 3) improving and expanding ways of reaching out into people’s lives. We need to create forms of dialogue that can be read not only by our colleagues, but by legislators and social actors. Sociology is well-equipped to create these connections, maybe due to its universalistic pretensions derived from philosophy or maybe because this is what defines sociology. We have to create intelligible forms of action in collaboration with others. We need sociologists who can think and make these connections, who can intuitively recognize them or invent them in theory and in practice. ■

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## FRESH KIDNEYS (CONTINUED)

*intermediate institutions* worldwide, like family, household, class, work conditions and labor market, schools, villages, cities, sciences, civil society movements, and monotheistic religions. They exist in a polycentric world where the increasingly diasporic character of the population is enconced within the boundaries of most of its state or quasi-state units. Cosmopolitanized processes also include phenomena like climate change, global financial risks etc. Cosmopolitanized ‘global families’, for example, embody both the seeming paradox of long-distance intimacy and the contradictions of the world; and these contradictions are worked out in them. Not all families embody all contradictions, but some embody some of them. There are marriages, parents, and couples with dual-nationality and they may embody the tensions between two countries or between the majority and minority communities in those countries, while migrant families may incorporate the tensions between the centre and the periphery. Global families and long-distance intimacy can be used to rethink conventional wisdom and to prepare a powerful new narrative of “distant love” and its contradictions. It mirrors a state of ignorance that has been nationally programmed and embodied in law. It follows that distant love and global families become settings in which the cultural wounds – the rage and anger that global inequalities in their imperial history continue to generate in the souls of the living to this day – are endured and fought out.

And there is a cosmopolitization of motherhood as well. Medically assisted reproduction opens a new brave world of options (we have no words for it!): the ‘egg donor mother’ or the ‘surrogate mother’; (to put it into a formula) ‘My mother was a Spanish egg donor’ or ‘my mother was an Indian surrogate mother’. Thus by bio-scientific manipulation global inequality is being incorporated into the human body and identity.

But isn’t the narrative of cosmopolitization then just a new version of the old narrative of colonialism and imperialism? As Stuart Hall famously writes: “We have always been the sugar in the cup of tea of English men”. There is indeed a continuity and a difference which have therefore to be clarified and recognized. The notion of cosmopolitization has to overcome the ‘spatial bias’ in most of the globalization discourse and become sensitive to the histories present in the ‘cultural wounds’ of today. But it is also about the anticipation of the future in the present, about ‘reflexive modernization’, because the ‘victories’ of global capitalism, in combination with communication and medical technologies and their ‘side-effects’ undermine the institutions and basic dualisms of Northern and Southern nation-state modernity – national/international, us/them, culture/nature, centre/periphery. We may even be witnessing a radical turn in the cosmopolitization of the world. Isn’t the ex-centre being “pre-colonized” by the “ex-post-colonized”, developing regions of the world, especially by China and India? China, for example, nowadays interferes in European affairs, pledging to fight the European crisis, while also protecting its investments. In embracing Europe,

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## MULTI-VERSALISM: A NEW PARADIGM? (CONTINUED)

science research, the knowledge that research generates, and the use that is made of it.

Other participants provided case studies based on fieldwork. Han Sang-Jin (Seoul National University) provided an excellent example of how Beck's "risk society", when studied in South Korea, provides a bottom-up interpretation of cultural traditions. The risks that South Koreans face are linked to the collapse of the moral fabric of a rapidly modernizing society, and in this context researchers should pay attention to the normative layers of Confucianism.

Nestor T. Castro (University of the Philippines) argued that the Filipino educational system privileges western concepts that do not necessarily match Filipino realities. In social psychology, for example, students are taught the concept of the "self" in contrast to the "other", but how could one account for the Tagalog word *kapwa*, which roughly means "the self-in-the-other" that refers to complementary pairs, i.e. the value of solidarity towards others? He thus argues for multi-versalist approach in the teaching of the social sciences in which social science concepts are generated from diverse sources, west and east. The hegemony of western science was also discussed by Kazumi Okamoto (Knowwhy Global Research) who examined difficulties Japanese researchers encounter in communicating with foreign scholars, especially in cases of disagreement in academic debates. The same problematic hegemony was highlighted by Tania Pérez Bustos (National Institute of Advanced Studies, Colombia) with regard to the androcentric assumptions of education in science and technology. Nese Karahasan (University of Ankara) talked about how cultural elements had influenced academic sociological research in Turkey over the last 20 years. I Ketut Ardhana (Udayana University, Bali) gave a presentation on Indonesian cultural studies and Carmen Bueno Castellanos (Universidad Iberoamericana Ciudad de México) discussed the field of social anthropology in Mexico. Castellanos urged a more equitable collaboration between the north and the south and between academics, on the one side, and NGOs, business and international organizations, on the other.

Participants also discussed how scientific knowledge can include indigenous knowledge. Michael Christie (Charles Darwin University, Australia) reported on a collaboration

between his university and Australian aboriginal society. For several years, researchers (including aboriginal co-researchers) have been working on linking digital technology to community sustainability, the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge, but also the use of traditional knowledge in university teaching and research. In the same vein, César Carrillo Trueba (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) provided an interesting example about the relevance of indigenous agriculture and medicine in Mexico.

Participants also took up Foucault's knotting of power and knowledge. Thus, I demonstrated how the university system and its system of social knowledge production greatly influence elite formation in the Arab East. Universities have often compartmentalized elites, separating those who publish globally and perish locally from those who publish locally and perish globally. I argued for dialogue and intercultural translation in order to bridge the global and the local: social research production, then, becomes universal through its dialogue with international peers and relevant through its conversation with the local communities. Pablo Kreimer (Quilmes National University, Argentina) elaborated the same global-local dilemma, based on his study of science, technology and society in Latin America. In "peripheral but globalized" societies, for example, there are tensions between scientific cultures embedded in transnational fields and local knowledge; or between laboratory practices, presumed to be context-free, and actors in civil society, who can only question the effects of science but not its epistemic basis.

Cláudio Costa Pinheiro (The School of Social Sciences and History, Rio de Janeiro) gave two compelling examples at the nexus of power and knowledge. First, the French demographer Alfred Sauvy's idea of the "Third World" was developed in Brazil and was first published in 1951 in a prestigious Brazilian academic journal, but it became a "universal" concept only when it was published the following year in the French magazine *Observateur*. The origins of "Third World" theory in Brazil were erased, reflecting the cleavage between the North (theory developer) and the South (theory consumer). However, in contrast to "Third World" theory, Pinheiro gave the example of dependency theory that was able to travel from Brazil to the Global South and North. Yet, for the North, this theory was associated with an "ideology" when it was really a powerful intellectual movement.

All in all this was an exciting conference, dealing concretely with issues that have been at the heart of debates in the ISA around the meaning of "global sociology". We would do well to work with and follow the debates in neighboring disciplines. ■

## FRESH KIDNEYS (CONTINUED)

China helps itself. This, too, is cosmopolitization.

So one thing is for sure: No matter if the classics of sociology have been pioneers in 'methodological cosmopolitanism' or not – today 'methodological nationalism' blinds both "Northern" and "Southern" sociology to the epochal facts of cosmopolitization.

Why? The national gaze – one land, one passport, and one identity – is a secular version of the Holy Trinity. Thus the national attitude towards social inequality is inverted. It stops at the borders of the nation-state. Social inequalities may blossom and flourish but always on the other side of the national garden fence; that is, at

best, cause for moral outrage, but it is politically irrelevant.

National boundaries draw a sharp distinction between us and them, politically relevant and irrelevant inequality. The legally institutionalized focus lies on inequalities within national societies; at the same time inequalities *between* national societies are faded out. The 'legitimation' of global inequalities is based on an institutionalized 'looking the other way'. Living, for example, in Europe, the national gaze is 'freed' from looking at the misery of the world. It operates by way of a double exclusion: It excludes the excluded. And the sociology of inequality, which equates inequality with nation-state inequality, is unreflectively party to that. It is indeed astonishing, how firmly global inequalities are 'legitimated' on the basis of tacit agreement between nation-state government and nation-state sociology – a sociology claiming to be value-free!

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## FRESH KIDNEYS (CONTINUED)

Raewyn Connell argues: “The way to break out of the frame of Eurocentric thought is, surely, to study non-Eurocentric frames of thought.” I do not agree. In mapping the motley of modernities that make up today’s world, we need to define, discover and combine *post*-Southern and *post*-Northern framings. The aim is not to reaffirm the illusions of an objective ‘god’s eye perspective’ from nowhere, but to find practical answers to the everyday sociological problem, sitting somewhere in France, Australia, Japan, Mexico, India, South Africa etc.: how to research the interminglings and mixings of the cosmopolitanized world?

Is this all what cosmopolitan theory has to offer? Where is its *critical* bite and ambition? Isn’t impure cosmopolitanization likely to feed into the ‘status quo’ to serve as a prop in global governmentality? Or does cosmopolitan theory have the staging power and wherewithal to boost its critical leverage? Can it bootstrap itself into critical self-reflexive cosmopolitanisms (plural!)? Yes, it can, but that is a different matter.

Thank you, Raewyn, for the alternative reading list! ■

“...WE NEED TO DEFINE, DISCOVER, AND COMBINE POST-SOUTHERN AND POST-NORTHERN FRAMINGS...”

## THE GLOBAL INTERFACE PROJECT: LINKING SOCIOLOGY AND MOVEMENT ACTIVISTS

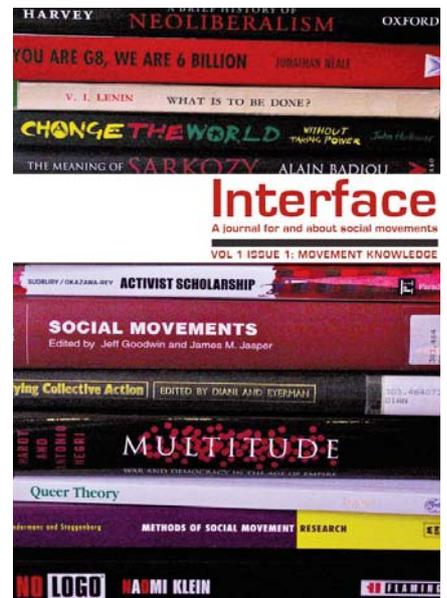
by Cristina Flesher Fominaya, University of Aberdeen

*Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements* is an open-access multi-lingual journal that seeks to build a global dialogue between activists and academics working with social movements, across language, cultural and ideological differences, and between disciplinary and activist traditions. The idea was born from a group of practitioner-academics who felt that existing academic social movement journals often seemed disconnected from the movements they were studying in two key ways: one, in that the theoretical concerns of the knowledge producers were not always that relevant or useful to the subjects of the research (the social movements themselves), and two, that they did not necessarily acknowledge the value or contributions of the movements themselves as knowledge producers. At the same time, movement produced knowledge, disseminated through movement websites and other media, often had a narrow focus on the issues that concerned them, but did not necessarily have much to say to other movements with different geographical and political realities. *Interface*’s founding editors had a vision of bringing these two important sources of knowledge together across what are still very real global divides (see Cox and Flesher Fominaya, Issue 1).

We wanted the structure of the editorial collective to mirror our global aspirations – and it took us two years to develop a model that worked for us. In addition to the fact that we are a virtual collective, some of whom have never met face to face, and that we have no source of funding, there are two distinguishing features that define the journal’s editorial approach. One is a decentralized editorial collective organized in regional semi-autonomous groups, with one to three editors and a group of collaborators. These groups handle submissions from their regions, and work with contributors in what we hope is a sympathetic and supportive editorial process. The second aspect of the journal is a somewhat unusual peer review process, in which our collaborators review each piece with regard to both its activist and academic potential. In principle, this means peer review by one activist and one academic, in practice, because so often these two are one, we ask reviewers to direct their comments to the relevance of the pieces for practitioners or academi-

cs. We strive to publish work that has relevance for both audiences, and that makes a contribution beyond the specificities of the particular empirical movement or issue in question. The issues are themed around specific concerns of the editors, who take it in turns in small groups to serve as coordinating editors for a particular issue.

Since its debut in 2009, we have published issues on movement knowledge, on the relationship between civil society and social movements, on crisis and revolutionary transformations, and on movements and alternative media. New issues are in process on repression and social movements and on feminism and women’s movements. All of our issues also include non-themed contributions. So far, with the help of many collaborators, we have published articles, activist interviews, editorials, action notes, key documents, debates, book reviews and review essays in six languages, by authors located in Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Mexico, Norway, Palestine, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, the USA, and Venezuela. Since March 2010, we have had web visits from readers in over 130 countries. We are open for contributions, readers, and collaborators at [www.interfacejournal.net](http://www.interfacejournal.net). ■



First Issue of *Interface* - Photo by Elizabeth Humphrys.