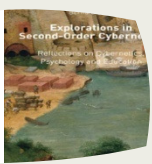




► 11TH INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE OF
SOCIOCYBERNETICS
CALL FOR PAPERS!!.....4



► ISA FORUM 2012 IN BUENOS
AIRES, ARGENTINA 11



► BOOK ANNOUNCEMENTS.....
25

**Research Committee 51 on Sociocybernetics
from the International Sociological Association**

RC51 Newsletter



Research Committee 51
on Sociocybernetics
ISA International Sociological Association

ISSUE 25 (WINTER ISSUE) DECEMBER 2011

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CONTENTS:

Editor's presentation	<i>Patricia Almaguer-Kalixto</i>	2
RC51 letter from the President	<i>Eva Buchinger</i>	3
11th International Conference of Sociocybernetics, June 2011 Faro, Portugal [Call for papers]		4
Journal of Sociocybernetics Thematic Issue on »Liquid Democracy« and »Complexity of Migration« [Call for papers]	<i>Michael Pateau</i>	7
New RC51 website	<i>Fabio Giglietto</i>	10
ISA Forum 2012 in Buenos Aries	<i>Hector Zamorano</i>	11
Review of the International Encyclopaedia of Systems and Cybernetics Edited by Charles Francois (2nd Edition, 2004).	<i>Bernard Scott</i>	16
Book announcements: <i>Second Order Cybernetics: Reflections on Cybernetics, Psychology and Education</i> and <i>Gordon Pask: The Cybernetics of Self-Organisation, Learning and Evolution.</i>	<i>Bernard Scott</i>	18
<i>Uses and Abuses of Intelligence: Studies Advancing Spearman and Raven's Quest for Non Arbitrary Metrics</i>	<i>John Raven</i>	19
Messages from the RC51 Secretary	<i>Czesław Mesjasz</i>	20
Sixth ISA Worldwide Competition for Junior Sociologists. [Call for Papers]		20
Events and calls for papers		23

Editor's introduction

Dear RC51 members:

This winter issue comes with information related to our next activities in the RC51. The Call for Papers for the 11th International Conference of Sociocybernetics has been announced by Manuel Lisboa and his team. The event will be held in Algarve University from 2nd to the 6th of July in Faro, Portugal. The conference will emphasize three main topics: a) decision making and action, b) violence and c) Social Movements. We aim to discuss the ongoing research and theoretical debates on these areas, linking systemic perspectives and the sociocybernetic approach. No doubt it will be an interesting debate and a great opportunity for other scholars to join us in our RC51 meeting. A parallel event will be held in Argentina in the context of the ISA Forum. We have 14 allocated sessions (including a Business meeting) in this important event where RC51 members have organized different sessions related to: a) technology, ecology and globalization, b) knowledge and cultural management development, c) modern sociological systems theory in social practice, d) diaspora and complexity of migration, e) sociocybernetic approaches to democratization processes f) observing, measuring and reconstructing emergent meaning. RC51 membersbooks will also be presented in the context of the ISA Forum.

Michael Pateau (RC51 Journal Editor) reminds us of the call for papers for two Special Thematic issues of our Journal of Sociocybernetics on "Complexity of Migration" and "Liquid Democracy". You will find further information in the following pages. Also in this issue, Fabio Giglietto (University of Urbino, Italy) shares with us the structure of the new RC51 website (beta version) and calls for opinions related to this new version and its format.

Book reviews: review of the *International Encyclopaedia of Systems and Cybernetics* Edited by Charles Francois (2nd Edition, 2004). Reference to two books of the series, "Complexity, Design and Society", edited by Karl Mueller of WISDOM, the Vienna Institute for Social Science Documentation and Methodology, and published by *edition echoraum*, Vienna. The first book is a collection of papers by Bernard Scott entitled *Explorations in Second Order Cybernetics: Reflections on Cybernetics, Psychology and Education*. The second book is a collection of papers by a well-known UK cybernetician, Gordon Pask. In the same section we also include the reference to John and Jean Raven's book *Uses and Abuses of Intelligence. Studies Advancing Spearman and Raven's Quest for Non Arbitrary Metrics*. You will find other events and conferences at the end of this issue including the *21st European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research* and the *Sixth ISA Worldwide Competition for Junior Sociologists*. We hope you enjoy the RC51 Newsletter and participate with information in our next issue!

Patricia Almaguer Kalixto
RC51 Newsletter Editor
palmaquer@labcomplex.net

RC51 Newsletter December 2011

Dear RC51 Members!

Letter of the President

Our community was quite active in 2011, and we will be quite active in 2012 too. In 2011 the highlights were undoubtedly the conference in Cracow and the relaunch of the RC51 website. We have to give thanks to Czeslaw Mesjasz for organizing the Cracow conference, as well as to Chaime Marcuello for administering the RC51 website over many years at the Zaragoza University and to Fabio Giglietto who installed and administers the website now at wordpress.com.

In 2012 we will be present with/in conferences in Europe as well as in South America. It will start in spring with our presence at the 21st EMCSR (European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research) in Vienna. Our member Wolfgang Hofkirchner serves as chair of EMCSR and further RC51 members are co-organizing EMCSR Symposia: e.g. Tatiana Medvedeva (Symposium D, Cybernetics of Country Development), Eva Buchinger (Symposium G, Observing Luhmann), Søren Brier (Symposium J, How to Integrate Language, Meaning and Mind with Cybernetic-Systemic Theories of Information), Matjaz Mulej / Stuart Umpleby (Symposium N, Complexity and Management: from the Concept of Innovation to Social Responsibility). EMCSR will be followed by the two summer conferences: our regular RC51 conference in Faro, Portugal in July and our participation in the ISA Forum in Buenos Aires, Argentina in August. For Faro and Buenos Aires this newsletter will provide detailed information. I will take the opportunity to thank the organizers – Manuel Lisboa and Dalila Cerejo who take care for the Faro conference and Hector Zamorano who manages our participation at the ISA Forum – and Margarita Maass and Chaime Marcuello who agreed to serve as “head of abstract committee” for these conferences.

In 2012 we will also deal with organizational issues such as the revision of our statutes. The ISA Research Coordinating Committee reviewed the statutes of all the Research Committees, Working Groups and Thematic Groups. The RCC Subcommittee on Statutes Revision provided a checklist indicating which changes need to be made to the present RC51 Statutes. It concerns mainly organizational issues such as inclusion of the “identification of membership fees”, “requirement for the Secretary/Treasurer to report the RC’s financial affairs to members at least at every World Congress” etc. The RC51 board will provide a draft statutes revision early next year, which will be discussed at the business meeting in Faro, and presented at the ISA Forum in Buenos Aires.

Last but not least, in 2012 we will publish the next issues of our Journal of Sociocybernetics. Two special thematic issues – one on “Complexity of Migration” and one on “Liquid Democracy” – are already announced and the respective call is included in this newsletter too. Your contributions are welcomed not only by our journal editor Michael Paetau and his team, but also by the whole RC51 community as audience.

I am looking forward to meet you in one of the forthcoming conferences!

Eva Buchinger
RC51 President

CALL FOR PAPERS

11th International Conference of Sociocybernetics

2- 6 of July, Algarve University, Faro, Portugal

“Complexity and Social Action: Interaction and Multiple Systems”

Recent events throughout the globe have put into perspective the need for new theory settings, new approaches and new insights into the current social dynamics that many consider on a verge of rupture. Financial crises, social uprisings, forced governmental collapses, and increasing inequalities within several spheres of the social world are some of the events that necessarily put collective and individual social action into new perspectives.

It is no longer possible to think of social phenomena in a disconnected way, since their foundations and limits are not clear. The understanding of social action and interaction, as cause and consequence of social phenomenon, depends on the capacity to consider and analyze all possibilities in action systems, their diversity and relations integrating micro, macro and meso perspectives. It is therefore, imperative for the sociocybernetic approach to address such a challenge. The study of the interaction between multiple systems can be a useful and sound new way of thinking, especially if it follows a transdisciplinary approach. From the variety of subjects relevant in this respect, the next RC51 2012 Conference in Faro, will emphasize the following:

The understanding of social action and interaction, as cause and consequence of social phenomenon, depends on the capacity to consider and analyze all possibilities in action systems, their diversity and relations integrating micro, macro and meso perspectives.

1. **Decision Making and Action:** Decision making is a highly complex embodied process resulting from the concerted action of a diverse set of interconnected systems that allow for the development of social action under the uncertainty that the future holds. Under this theme, we intend to explore the complexity of the intra-systemic and inter-systemic pathways framing decision-making and subsequent social action.
2. **Violence:** Violence is an interconnected system, socially and culturally produced and reproduced, and therefore in individuals, institutions and states. The production of violence is a phenomenon with deep interconnections

Papers addressing conceptual and theoretical issues in Sociocybernetics or reporting relevant empirical findings are welcome.

between the social, cultural, biological, emotional and symbolic systems. The discussion between the articulation of the individual system (composed of responses/actions/reactions/interactions), and the social and cultural system which provide the actor with the symbolic, and many times, unconscious tolls of actions and interactions, is crucial to advance the production of knowledge in this area.

3. Social Movements: The new social movements, now emerging in many countries, with different levels of economic development, combine a variety of new dimensions that exceed previously sociologically knowledge. The sociological analysis of these movements' actions requires, primarily, an intersystem approach of the complexity of allits dimensions, and secondly, two other dimensions of the social actors' selves: the relationship between themselves and the relationship that each social actor wants to have with old and new groups, organizations and institutions.

Papers are welcomed which address these issues. Beyond that other papers addressing conceptual and theoretical issues in sociocybernetics or reporting relevant empirical findings are also welcomed.

ABSTRACTS AND REVIEW PROCESS

Length of Abstract: 500 to 600 words

All abstracts must be sent to:

Chaime Marcuello (chaime@posta.unizar.es) Head of the Abstracts Committee
Manuel Lisboa (m.lisboa@fcsh.unl.pt) Chair of the Local Organizing Committee, and Dalila Cerejo (dalilacerejo@fcsh.unl.pt)

.The review process is double blind and the feedback to the authors may include suggestions for improvements and modifications. Accepted abstracts will published in an abstracts booklet.

DEADLINES

15th of January 2012: 500-600 word abstracts

1 March: Notification of acceptance

15 May 2011: Definitive registration

1 June 2011: Submission of full papers

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

Conference fees:

- RC51 Non-members EURO 100

- RC51 affiliated members (non-ISA): EURO 50

- RC51 regular members in good standing (ISA and RC51): No fee

In special cases (e.g., students) exemptions can be granted upon request.

CONFERENCE LANGUAGE

The official language of the Conference will be English.

CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

For information updates please consult the RC 51 website at (<http://www.unizar.es/sociocybernetics/>). For specific questions you may also directly contact the Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee, Manuel Lisboa (e-mail: m.lisboa@fcsch.unl.pt; telephone: +351217958453).

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João Filipe Marques
MárioViegas de Carvalho

VENUE AND ACCOMMODATION

The conference will be held at [Universidade do Algarve](#) in Faro, Portugal. There are several accommodation options in Faro and also at the Universidade of the AlgarveCampus. More details of hotels and accommodation prices will be provided at the [RC51 website](#). To find information about Faro local airport and visit: <http://www.turismoalgarve.pt/home.html>



Research Committee 51
on Sociocybernetics
ISA International Sociological Association

Journal of Sociocybernetics: Call for papers for two Special Thematic issues on “Complexity of Migration” and “Liquid Democracy”

Michael Pateau(RC51 Journal Editor)

The Journal of Sociocybernetics (ISSN 1607-86667) is a peer reviewed,electrical journal published biannually - Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter - by the Research Committee on Sociocybernetics (RC51) of the International Sociological Association (ISA).

Journal of Sociocybernetics Thematic Issue on »Complexity of Migration«

One of the next Issues of the JoS will be concerned with the worldwide problem of migration respectively with the problem of governance of migration.Governance of Migration is a matter of high complexity. Since some years, the governance of migration is one of the prominent subjects in many countries of the world. Not only in politics but as in science it is emphasized that the governance of migration will be one of the most important tasks of the coming decade.It refers to social, economic, cultural, legal, educational and moral questions which have to be treated on different levels.

On a macro level question of demographic trends, of the development of labour market, questions of cultural diversity and cultural change, burden of the national welfare systems, etc. must be regarded. On the micro level social research focus on personal strains of migrants, the impacts of tearing apart families, the consequences of losing an effective social and legal protection, the difficulties of cultural uprooting, inclusive the experience of animosities and racist discriminations. On the other hand there is the hope of migrants to improve their own living conditions, their income and further development or application of own skills.

The high complexity of the subject requires interdisciplinary approaches. Due to its self-conception that Sociocybernetics applies systems thinking and cybernetic principles in sociology and other social sciences in order to analyse social phenomena regarding their complexity and dynamics,itseems to beconsequent to accept this challenge.

Governance of migration does not mean only the regulation of migration streams (who is allowed to come in and who isn't, who will get a long-term residence authorization and who won't), but also it has to apply to conditions for living together of autochthonous and immigrated population. That involves questions for access to the labour market, access to education, and generally the possibilities for participation in civil society. Also it affects the possibilities for the emergence of cultural diversity, possible exclusions and racist discriminations.

But also the questions which are related to the new topic »Postmigration« should be in the focus of the journal's issue. The feeling to be extraneous refers to many individuals, which are living partially since a lot of years, in parts for some generations, in one of the immigration countries. They are German or Spanish or Hungarian citizens and have the respective nationality. But they have some attributes which do them stigmatize as a stranger. For a large part of people with a migration background migration itself is not part of their individual experience. But it survives as a biographical element, either as part of the family legend, or by attribution from outside because their appearance, accent, clothing or their names. And often these attributes will initiate other people to suspect the affiliation of migrants to the country. On this problem in last time came up the new discourse around the term »post-migration«.

Regarding the public discussion of the last years, one of the most discussed question is the relation between the prevalence of the (universal) fundamental human rights of the liberal constitutional state and the consideration of (particular) cultural diversities is discussed. The ideal of the liberal republican constitutional state are based on the principle that every citizen of society accept any other as an equal regardless of his/her particularities in respect of his/her gender, race, class, descent, religion, language, etc. But this mutual respect can only be realized if the particularities, which after all are relevant attributes of every individual, are respected by everybody else. Exactly at this point ordinarily the clash starts: When do a certain accentuation of particular cultural habits violate against the general accepted norms of the liberal constituted state, and how deal a pluralistic society with this conflict?

Why should be this subject an adequate topic for the Journal of Sociocybernetics? Sociocybernetics rejects any concept for govern social problems based on causal methods or hierarchical subordinations without regarding complexity, reciprocity and self-referentiality. Sociocyberneticsemphazises the systemic interrelation of all elements within a system, in which a certain problem occurs, and it asks for solutions which are adequate to the reciprocal effects of all relevant factors.

Journal of Sociocybernetics Thematic Issue on »Liquid Democracy«

One of the next Issues of the JoS will be concerned with the question to what extent the so-called »digital revolution« may shift the predominant concepts of democracy. Referring to the present transition-process of our societal relations of communication ten years ago André Gorz argued that the use of this term »knowledge society« would only make sense if one were able to demonstrate that relevant radical changes in society somehow related to changes in the handling of knowledge in society. Such a demonstration concentrated on the area of democracy will be the object of one of the next issues of the Journal of Sociocybernetics.

We want to focus the question if new media, especially so-called »social media«, may overcome the traditional dichotomy between parliamentary representative democratic tradition and grassroots oriented plebiscitary democratic elements. This issue has been primarily debated under the term of »Liquid Democracy«. It stands for the idea to make democracy more liquid, more transparent and more flexible. People should have the opportunity to participate in political affairs complementary to delegating the powers of the sovereignty to a body of human elected from time to time for four or five years. People should have the possibility to campaign effectively and collaboratively for the issues they are concerned about. Our questions are: Which social, political and technological concepts for such a liquid democracy exist? Which discourses in different areas and scientific disciplines occur? Which experiences and evaluations are available?

Because Sociocybernetics emphasises the complexity of systemic interrelation and asks for solutions which are adequate to the reciprocal effects of all relevant factors, the subject of »Liquid Democracy« is an adequate topic for the Journal of Sociocybernetics.

For both JoS Issues we welcome proposals for contributions

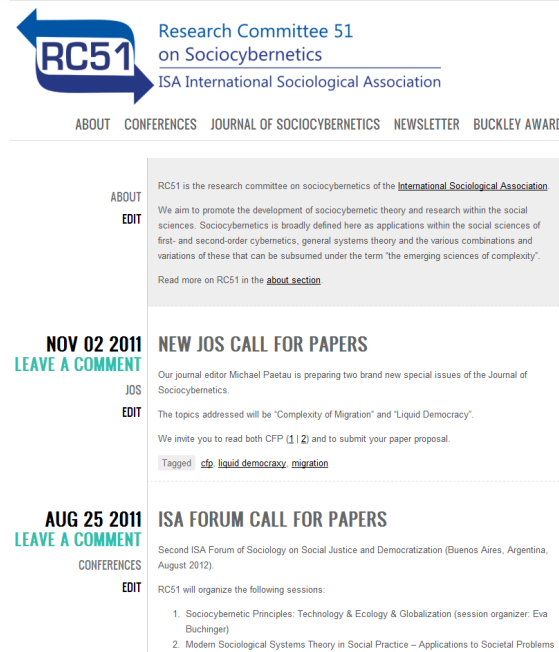
- with reference to theoretical or empirical research,
- of different scientific disciplines
- dealing with one or more of the questions described above and
- focusing the complex interrelationship between different aspects of migration or the consideration of feed-back processes of migration and the particular political measures to society in whole (for papers related to Complexity of Migration)
- focussing the complex interrelationship between different aspects of political participation and political power inclusive (for papers related to »Liquid Democracy«)

Scholars who intend to publish a paper should send it to the editor Michael Paetau: (michael.paetau@sociocybernetics.eu) by December 31, 2011.

A new website for RC51

Fabio Giglietto (University of Urbino, Italy)

It's a great pleasure to announce that [our brand new website is now online](#). It's a beta.



The screenshot shows the RC51 website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for ABOUT, CONFERENCES, JOURNAL OF SOCIOCYBERNETICS, NEWSLETTER, and BUCKLEY AWARD. The main content area features three posts:

- ABOUT**: A section with an 'EDIT' link. The text describes RC51 as the research committee on sociocybernetics of the International Sociological Association, aiming to promote the development of sociocybernetic theory and research within the social sciences.
- NOV 02 2011**: A post titled 'NEW JOS CALL FOR PAPERS' with a 'LEAVE A COMMENT' link. It mentions that the journal editor Michael Paetau is preparing two brand new special issues of the Journal of Sociocybernetics. The topics addressed will be "Complexity of Migration" and "Liquid Democracy".
- AUG 25 2011**: A post titled 'ISA FORUM CALL FOR PAPERS' with a 'LEAVE A COMMENT' link. It mentions the Second ISA Forum of Sociology on Social Justice and Democratization (Buenos Aires, Argentina, August 2012). RC51 will organize the following sessions:
 - Sociocybernetic Principles: Technology & Ecology & Globalization (session organizer: Eva Buchinger)
 - Modern Sociological Systems Theory in Social Practice – Applications to Societal Problems

The new Internet address is <http://sociocybernetics.wordpress.com> (please update your bookmarks). We decided to pick a minimalistic look & feel in order to enhance the importance of the contents. The old website structure has been reproduced in the new environment and the information about us (what is sociocybernetics, board and statutes) condensed under the [About](#) section.

The rest of the page space is dedicated to news in chronological order. Visitors can comment on any post or share the information on social media such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn. The website is now dynamic and database driven. This technical change will make it more flexible and easier to update. It will also be possible to delegate the editing of the website to a team of people responsible for different areas of the site. The traffic will be redirected from the old to the new website as soon as we close the beta test phase.

Please take a moment to visit the new website and contribute by sending your remarks and comments to fabio.giglietto@uniurb.it or to the [open thread in our LinkedIn group](#).



CALL - RC51 Sessions - ISA Forum 2012 in Buenos Aires. Last days for abstract submission!!

AGUST 1 - 4, 2012
BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Dear colleagues, this mail is to remain all of you the next dead-line: December 15th: on-line abstracts submission. You can access directly with this link:
<http://www.isa-sociology.org/buenos-aires-2012/rc/rc.php?n=RC51>

Hector Zamorano

Guidelines for grant application submission. Further details: <http://www.isa-sociology.org/buenos-aires-2012/guidelines-for-grant-application-submission.htm>

ProgrammeCoordinator

Héctor ZAMORANO, Argentina, zamorano@citynet.net.ar

RC51 Liaison in Argentina

Joaquín Zajac, Universidad de Buenos Aires, joaquinz@gmail.com

Number of allocated sessions including Business meeting: 14.

Deadlines

On-line abstract submission **from August 25 to December 15, 2011**. All Forum participants (presenters, chairs, discussants, etc.) need to pay the early registration fee by **April 10, 2012**, in order to be included in the programme. If not registered, their names will not appear in the Programme or Abstracts Book. On-line registration will open **August 25, 2011**.

Call for papers

Proposed sessions are stated in provisional order. Only abstracts submitted through [ISA website platform](#) will be considered.

Session A: Sociocybernetic principles: Technology, ecology and globalization

Organiser Eva BUCHINGER, Austrian Institute of Technology, Austria,
eva.buchinger@ait.ac.at

Sociocybernetics as research field results from the reciprocal influencing of cybernetics and the social sciences over decades. Whereas the cybernetic dimension is linked to names such as N. Wiener, W. R. Ashby, C. E. Shannon, W. Weaver and H. v. Foerster, the social science response was given by scientists such as M. Mead, G. Bateson, G. Pask, R. Merton and N. Luhmann.

RC51 “Sociocybernetics” is committed to these predecessors, but aims beyond that at the further development of sociocybernetic principles such as:

Feed-back-mechanism and their consequences Systems, systems rationalities and system couplings First-order & second-order observation and construction & reconstruction of reality Learning, control and governance. The development of these (and further) sociocybernetic principles in our community emphasizes either theoretical or practical aspects (or both of them).

For this session, abstracts for papers are welcome which cover (i) theoretical and epistemological issues by clarifying terms & concepts and their interpretation-change over the time and/or (ii) the practical application of sociocybernetic principles concerning e.g. technology (technological development & innovation, impact of technologies), ecology (climate change, biodiversity etc.), or globalization (democratization & governance, inclusion & exclusion, civil society & NGOs & intergovernmental organizations INGOs etc.).

Session B: Systemic perspective to think knowledge and cultural management development. Organiser Margarita MAASS, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, maass@labcomplex.net

Cultural management is one of the most important issues of social development. Because we have a high cultural diversity in Latin America countries, we need developing community work in order thinking social justice and democratization. It is necessary look for new ways to democracy. It is urgent developing the ability to solve problems institutions and third sector all together. We need strengthen links between our research groups and public actors. We propose a work session on interdisciplinary knowledge and cultural management development since the systemic perspective. The most important objective of this session proposal is not only the dialogue and reflection around this issue but also an important opportunity to foster greater synergies between academics and public sphere. The discussions and dialogues should provide the basis for collaborative and comparative research projects, in order to a “glocal” and a transformative change in our region.

Session C. Modern sociological systems theory in social practice: Applications to societal problems. Organiser: Karl-Heinz SIMON, University of Kassel, Germany, simon@usf.uni-kassel.de

Several attempts to establish a “modern” sociological systems theory has been achieved during the last 20 years. Niklas Luhmann is the main exponent of these attempts. Beside the pure theory “architecture” with its huge body of concepts

and epistemological considerations various specific studies exist now that bring these theoretical concepts into practice and try to approach successfully real world problems. Evaluation and criteria for success are also a topic to be discussed. Motifs by C. West Churchman and Karl Weick are of influence here.

The workshop will bring together scholars that use the system theoretical concepts for tackling societal problems. The range of problems reaches from typical social problems like integration, inclusion/exclusion, and violence, to special issues like innovation dynamic and the role of protest movements and pioneers for system irritation and social change.

Aim of the workshop is to bring together theoretical and practical challenges for sociological systems theory and to discuss the advantages (may be also disadvantages) of subsuming practice oriented problem solutions under a broader and challenging framework. The contributors are invited to report about the design of their problem solution processes and the utilization of system theory in order to support the process.

Session D: Diaspora and complexity of migration. Organiser: Michael PAETAU,
Center for Sociocybernetics Studies Bonn, Germany,
michael.paetau@sociocybernetics.eu

Since some years, the governance of migration is one of the prominent subjects in many countries of the world. Not only in politics but as in science it is emphasized that the governance of migration will be one of the most important tasks of the coming decade. In this session we want to concentrate on the interplay of different factors effecting the situation of migrants in the destination countries respectively in the so-called »diaspora« (cf. Hall 1990).

Governance of Migration – even if it is restricted to the area of the so-called diaspora - is a matter of high complexity. It refers to social, economic, cultural, legal, educational and moral questions. And all these questions have to be treated on different levels. On a macro-sociological level question of demographic trends, of the development of labour market, questions of cultural diversity and cultural change, burden of the national welfare systems, etc. must be regarded. On the micro level social research focus on personal strains of migrants, the impacts of tearing apart families, the consequences of losing an effective social and legal protection, the difficulties of cultural uprooting, inclusive the experience of animosities and racist discriminations. On the other hand there is the hope of migrants to improve their own living conditions, their income and further development or application of own skills.

Governance of migration does not mean only the regulation of migration streams (who is allowed to come in and who isn't, who will get a long-term residence authorization and who won't), but also it has to apply to conditions for living together of autochthonous and immigrated population. That involves questions for access to the labour market, access to education, and generally the possibilities for

the emergence of cultural diversity, possible exclusions and racist discriminations.

The session will be organized as a paper-presenting-session with discussion at the end of every presentation. We welcome proposals for contributions based on systems theoretical and sociocybernetic principles, with reference to theoretical or empirical research, dealing with one or more of the questions described above and focussing the complex interrelationship between different aspects of migration in the diaspora inclusive the consideration of feed-back processes of migration and the particular political measures to society in whole.

Session E: RC51 books presentation: “Society, ciberculture and Sociocybernetics” and “Sociology on the move” Organiser: **Margarita MAASS, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, maass@labcomplex.net**

Presentation of two publications issued recently by RC51 Sociocybernetics.br> The first book concerns the interaction of three conceptual components that guide the work of Labcomplex in Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in México City. The second book is a set of texts thematically organized, that emerged from RC51 meeting at the ISA World Congress of Sociology in Gothenburg 2010. Both texts will help to understand how Sociocybernetics is a perspective that enriches the social analysis.

Session F: Sociocybernetic approach to democratization processes. Organiser: **José A. AMOZURRUTIA, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, amoz@labcomplex.net**

Democratic processes can be viewed as a network of actors who share common ideals, but interact from heterogeneous positions. Their interactions remain cohesive by sharing common values and concepts, but frequently respond to a dynamic that may be contradictory within the group and in the context of their environment. These differences give rise to emerging conflicts that undermine the sense of group democratization processes, but as long as the group maintains those common values and concepts, it remains alive.

Heterogeneous positions may be conceptual, ideological and emotional. Their interactions may be coupled with inter-dependences and inter-definitions in their roles and responsibilities. Both challenges may give rise to new ideas and activities of the group where new scenarios emerge, i.e. a new scenario of complex ingredients than may be approached as a complex system. Sociocybernetic problem oriented approach can afford these challenges. Second order systemic thinking, self-organization perspectives and heuristic strategies may be modeled to configure democratic groups as a second order reflexivity groups the redirect trivial and vicious strategies of democratization processes.

We invite papers that address these problems. Papers that implement the theoretical perspectives of Sociocybernetic problem oriented approach to justice and democratization processes.

problem oriented approach can afford these challenges. Second order systemic thinking, self-organization perspectives and heuristic strategies may be modeled to configure democratic groups as a second order reflexivity groups the redirect trivial and vicious strategies of democratization processes.

We invite papers that address these problems. Papers that implement the theoretical perspectives of Sociocybernetic problem oriented approach to justice and democratization processes.

Session G: Observing, measuring and reconstructing emergent meaning

Organiser. Liliana RAMIREZ RUIZ, Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia, liliana_galas@hotmail.com

This session looks for contributions to the development of a better understanding in observing, measuring and reconstructing meaning as a central concept in Social Sciences. It deals with the great challenge immersed in the core of any social problem or conflict and may be observed across a great variety of disciplines.

Decision making regarding social issues relies on the meaning associated to events, communications, actions and interactions. Meaning is also present in the modes of action and the behavior of individuals, groups and society at large. Additionally meaning plays a fundamental role in the survival and reproduction of living beings. However, the development of meaning is not a smooth process, it suffers struggles making meaning itself unstable. For all these reasons meaning is an object whose nature extends beyond a single discipline and requires novel approaches to its understanding. The issue of meaning has been studied traditionally within Philosophy and Exegetic studies, nevertheless, it has a significant relevance in XX century within the Hermeneutic perspective. In the same way Phenomenological Sociology and its evolution through Semiotics, Linguistics and Symbolic representation Theories, meaning has been transformed in observable data. This makes that meaning could be present in organized signs, through different logics, between discourses or interpreted actions.

*Take in consideration ISA Forum 2012 rules: Rule 1: One cannot present a paper in the same session that one is chairing, and Rule 2: A person (including sole author, co-authors, discussant, plenary speakers, session (co)chair, critic, roundtable presenter, poster presenter) can only be incorporated in the Congress programme twice, no matter their role or function (except Programme Coordinators and session organisers). Rule 3: **All programme participants (paper givers, session organizers, chairs, discussants, etc.) must pay a full registration fee before April 10, 2012.***

Review of the *International Encyclopaedia of Systems and Cybernetics* Edited by Charles Francois (2nd Edition, 2004).

Introduction

A few weeks ago I forwarded to the RC51 members attending the ISA Forum in Buenos Aires next August a message from Charles Francois. In his long life, Charles has made many contributions to the fields of systems and cybernetics. Charles is perhaps best known for editing the *International Encyclopaedia of Systems and Cybernetics*. Charles lives in Buenos Aires. Although not well enough to attend the ISA Forum, in his message, he invited RC51 members to make contact and, if they wished, to visit him. Our Newsletter editor, Patricia E. Almaguer Kalixto, invited me to write a short review of the *Encyclopaedia*, as many members may not be aware of its existence and what it has to offer. The review also offers an opportunity to say some things about Charles, which I hope will motivate members to visit him.

About Charles Francois (from the publisher's website)

Charles François was born in 1922 and worked for the Belgian Foreign Office until 1987. From 1945 to 1960 he lived in Central Africa, first as an administration official, later as an independent entrepreneur. He first became acquainted with Cybernetics in 1952 through Wiener's seminal work published in 1948. In 1958 Charles François became a member of the then Society for General Systems Research (today the ISSS). He was, and in some cases still is, a board member of many societies of Cybernetics as well as being co-editor of four leading professional journals in the field and author of many books and essays. Since 1963 Charles François has lived in Argentina, where he founded the Argentine National Division of the ISSS in 1976, of which he is honorary president.

About the *Encyclopaedia*

The *Encyclopaedia* aims to give an authoritative account of cybernetics, systems theory and complexity science, covering theory and applications in fields such as engineering, medicine, biology and the social sciences. The first edition, with 450 pages, was published in 1997. A second edition, in two volumes with a total of 741 pages, was published in 2004. The second edition consists of 3,807 articles, arranged alphabetically from 'abduction' through to 'zoosemiotics', with cross-referencing and 1,500 bibliographical references. The editor has had the support of an Academic Board, consisting of leading figures in the relevant fields. He has also made use of the many suggestions and comments received from the *Encyclopaedia's* wider readership following the publication of the first edition. Ranulph Glanville (Glanville, 1999) has written a delightful essay about the *Encyclopaedia* and about encyclopaedias and dictionaries in general. Following the publication of the second edition, he wrote a short follow-up piece (Glanville, 2005).

Relevance for Sociocybernetics

As stated on the RC51 website, "Sociocybernetics is broadly defined here as applications within the social sciences of first- and second-order cybernetics, general systems theory and the various combinations and variations of these that can be subsumed under the term 'the emerging sciences of complexity'." Not many of us within the field of sociocybernetics can claim familiarity with all 'the emerging sciences of complexity'. The *Encyclopaedia* is a marvellous 'one stop shop', where the many relevant topics can be explored in some depth, with relevant citations and quotations. What particularly impressed me is that the articles in the *Encyclopaedia* are underpinned by a sophisticated constructivist epistemology. This is evidenced, for example, in the several articles addressing the multiplicity of (and often contentious) uses of the term 'information'. Sociocyberneticians will be pleased to see that key figures in the field (such as Parsons, Buckley and Luhmann) are well-represented.

Purchasing the *Encyclopaedia*

The *Encyclopaedia* is available directly from the publishers: <http://www.degruyter.de/cont/imp/saur/detailEn.cfm?id=IS-9783598116308-2>.

At a price of over 300 euros, the *Encyclopaedia* is quite expensive. It could be justified as an individual purchase, because it offers itself as a lifetime's useful resource. It can certainly be justified as a 'must have' purchase for any educational or research institution's library or as an in-house resource for any academic department or research team.

References

- Glanville, R. (1999). "A (Cybernetic) Musing: *Encyclopaedias and the Form of Knowing. A Celebration of Charles Francois' 'International Encyclopaedia of Systems and Cybernetics', a Sort of Self-referential Work of Reference.*" *Cybernetics & Human Knowing*, 6, 1, pp. 77–85. Available at http://www.imprint.co.uk/C&HK/vol6/glanville_6-1.pdf
- Glanville, R. (2005). "International Encyclopaedia of Systems and Cybernetics, second edition, edited by Charles Francois." *Cybernetics & Human Knowing*, 12, 1-2, 2005, pp. 175-178.

Book announcements: *Second Order Cybernetics: Reflections on Cybernetics, Psychology and Education* and *Gordon Pask: The Cybernetics of Self-Organisation, Learning and Evolution*.

Dear Friends in RC51,

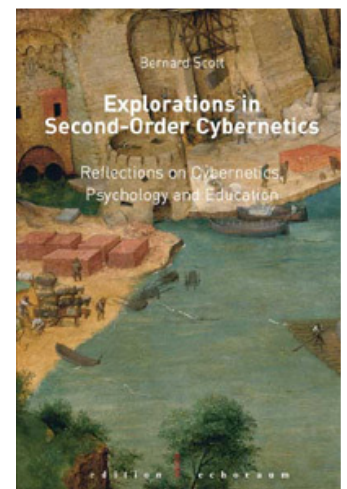
I am pleased to announce the publication of two books which may be of interest to you. The two books are part of a series, “Complexity, Design and Society”, edited by Karl Mueller of WISDOM, the Vienna Institute for Social Science Documentation and Methodology, and published by *edition echoraum*, Vienna.

The first book is a collection of some of my papers. It is entitled *Explorations in Second Order Cybernetics: Reflections on Cybernetics, Psychology and Education*. The papers span my varied interests amid my career path as a researcher and practitioner, with a particular emphasis on theoretical and conceptual issues.

The second book is a collection of papers by my former mentor, the well-known UK cybernetician, Gordon Pask (b. 1928, d. 1996), which I have had the honour to select and introduce. It is entitled *Gordon Pask: The Cybernetics of Self-Organisation, Learning and Evolution (Papers 1960-1972)*. I deliberately chose papers from an early period in Pask’s long career, as they show how his thought developed in creating his “conversation theory”, which was formally presented in the 1970s. The early papers show the breadth and depth of Pask’s scholarship as he addresses a range of topics in the brain sciences, artificial intelligence, ethology, sociology, anthropology, ethics, the political sciences, education and human psychology, all from a unifying, cybernetic perspective. Several of the papers languished relatively unread in hard to find conference proceedings. It has been a great pleasure for me to introduce them to wider audience.

More about the books can be found on the *edition echoraum* website (<http://www.echoraum.at/edition/neuersch.htm>). Both books can be bought from Amazon.de, as well as directly from the publishers.

Best wishes, Bernard (Dr Bernard Scott, Past President, RC51)



(Book)Uses and Abuses of Intelligence Studies: Advancing Spearman and Raven's Quest for Non Arbitrary Metrics

Edited by John and Jean Raven

The 26 chapters of this book bring together a series of studies stemming from Spearman's research into human abilities. Several chapters provide evidence supporting the use of Raven's *Progressive Matrices* in research. These chapters demonstrate that the psychological construct "meaningmaking ability" is, from a scientific point of view, every bit as secure as "hardness" in the field of mineralogy. The test works – scales – in nearly the same way in most cultures and subcultures.

Cultural differences and change in performance across generations must, therefore, be explained, not dismissed. Other chapters show that most of the commonly proffered explanations for these differences simply do not stand up to scientific analysis. The insights that emerge are not limited to work with the *Progressive Matrices*. It is made clear, for example, that fundamental problems exist in current approaches to the measurement of change in human abilities. Most conclusions drawn from intervention outcome studies comparing treatment effects in the "more" vs. "less" able (e.g., educational enrichment programmes) are, it emerges, fatally flawed.

Other chapters reprise Spearman's critique of the dominant measurement paradigm in psychology. Spearman understood that a factorial model of ability was inadequate, noting that "every normal man, woman and child is a genius at something" but that this could not be demonstrated using tests developed within the current psychometric framework. Likewise, he noted that the tests from which his *g* had emerged "have no place in schools" because they do not recognise the diverse talents that teachers have a responsibility to nurture. Other chapters show that most evaluations of people and programmes (and sometimes used to promote "evidence based treatments") are both unscientific and could even be considered unethical. The core problem is that we currently pay too little attention to the *comprehensiveness* of assessments. Chapters concerned with these issues develop an alternate framework which captures variance that is typically lost, and summarise research showing how a diversity of talents can be nurtured, recognised, and utilised in developmental environments in homes, schools, and workplaces.

Royal Fireworks Press, Unionville, New York, USA. ISBN 9780898243567

John Raven, 30 Great King Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6QH, Scotland. ISBN 9780955719509EDGE

2000 Ltd., Budapest, Hungary. ISBN 9789639760042

RTS Romanian Testing Services SRL, Romania. ISBN 9789731816227

US \$30; Euros 30; UK £20 For a downloadable order form, go to: www.eyeonociety.co.uk

Messages from the RC51 Secretary, Czesław Mesjasz

2010 Conference: The 10th International Conference of Sociocybernetics “SOCIOCYBERNETICS AND THE INCREASING COMPLEXITY OF SOCIAL LIFE” was held in Cracow, Poland ([Cracow University of Economics](#)), on 20-25 June 2011. We had very fruitful discussions on 12 sessions, 32 papers made by 31 participants. The RC51 Board meeting was held on 21 June 2011 and the Business meeting on 23 June 2011.

Member STATUS OF RC51: New info about our current status. In 2011 we had 119 members in good standing. The total number of our registered members is 127. Some members of our Committee either resigned in the period between 2010-2011 or did not extend their payments after 2010. Two new members joined our Research Committee in 2011. That is why we have to work more intensively as to make our members more active and to attract new members. In 2011 two important events will take place: the 11th International Conference of RC51 in Faro, Portugal and the ISA Forum in Buenos Aires – details elsewhere in the Newsletter

IFSR.- RC 51 is a member organization of IFSR, the International Federation for Systems Research. You can find information about this organization on <http://www.ifsr.org> . You can also find there contacts with other member institutions.

Sixth ISA Worldwide Competition for Junior Sociologists. Call for Papers

The International Sociological Association (ISA) announces the organization of the Sixth ISA Worldwide Competition for Junior Sociologists. The winners will be invited to participate in the XVIII ISA World Congress of Sociology which will take place in Yokohama, Japan in July 2014.

By Junior Scholars we mean people who obtained his/her first Master's degree (or an equivalent graduate diploma) in sociology or in a related discipline, less than 10 years prior to May 1st, 2013. In case of joint or multiple authorship, this rule applies to all authors of the submitted paper.

Candidates must send an original paper that has not been previously published anywhere. The paper should be no more than 6,000 words typewritten double-spaced on one side of the paper with margins of 3 cm and the pages numbered. An abstract (maximum 500 words) with five key words must be included in the paper. Notes and the bibliography should appear at the end of the text. Papers which do not conform to these rules run the risk of being rejected.

We prefer papers focusing on central sociological problems and/or socially relevant issues. The phenomena examined may be social, economic, political, cultural or of any other kind, but their interpretation or analysis must show a sociological orientation (for instance, through the identification of social processes underlying the phenomena under scrutiny, critique of commonsense interpretations or of well established theories, etc.).

Empirical research papers must go beyond descriptive reporting of results to broader, analytical interpretations. Papers will be judged according to perceptiveness with which issues are treated, the quality of empirical materials presented, the consistency with which an analytic framework is used, the originality of ideas, and the clarity of style.

Extensiveness of referencing or the use of advanced statistical methods will be considered to be of only secondary importance, so as to provide participants throughout the world with as equal an opportunity as possible. We are particularly interested in receiving papers from scholars in Third World Countries.

The winners of the previous Competitions are not allowed to compete. Papers may be written in one of the following languages: English, French, Spanish as well as Arabic, Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Russian. Assessors will be appointed for each of these languages. To give a fair chance for participants whose mother tongue is none of the above, there will be assessors in English, French and Spanish, respectively, for papers submitted by authors, who use any of these as a foreign language. All other scholars may also make use of this option if they prefer.

An electronic file of the paper and a cover letter (in .doc or .pdf) should be e-mailed as an attachment to Yoshimichi Sato at ysato@sal.tohoku.ac.jp by Wednesday, May 1st, 2013. The subject of the message should be "Junior Competition 2014."

In order to protect anonymity during the selection process, authors should not put their name on the paper itself, but the cover letter should include their family name (capital letters), first name, sex, date of birth, mother tongue, degrees, e-mail address, mailing address where they can be reached and (optionally) their present occupation. All this information should be given in one of the official languages of the ISA (English, French, and Spanish). An electronic acknowledgement of the electronic submissions will be given.

In order to protect anonymity during the selection process, authors should not put their name on the paper itself, but the cover letter should include their family name (capital letters), first name, sex, date of birth, mother tongue, degrees, e-mail address, mailing address where they can be reached and (optionally) their present occupation. All this information should be given in one of the official languages of the ISA (English, French, and Spanish). An electronic acknowledgement of the electronic submissions will be given.

Initially, a Jury will consider which papers reach a sufficiently high standard to be issued with a letter of official commendation and be listed on ISA website. Each language Jury will then preselect (by September 2013) a maximum of three papers. These finalists will receive Merit Award Certificates, a four-year membership in the ISA, and a registration to the XVIII World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama, Japan in July, 2014.

The ISA, however, cannot guarantee to cover costs for their travel and accommodations. All authors thus preselected will also be invited to participate in a five-day seminar prior to the Congress.

Out of the preselected finalists, the Grand Jury chaired by the ISA President Michael Burawoy will select up to five winning papers. Their authors will be immediately invited, all expenses paid, to participate in the World Congress. In case of multiple authorship, the subvention will have to be shared. Additional information may be obtained from Yoshimichi Sato, ysato@sal.tohoku.ac.jp, Coordinator of the Competition.

Committee of the Sixth ISA Worldwide Competition for Junior Sociologists:

Yoshimichi Sato, Chair, Tohoku University, Japan

Emma Porio, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

HabibulKhondker, Zayed University, United Arab Emirates

BenjaminTejerina, Universidad del País Vasco, Spain

<http://www.isa-sociology.org/wcys/index.htm>

Other events and calls for papers

Aug. 6-8, 2012: 6th Global Conf on Power Control + Optimization

The Conference on Power Control and Optimization PCO 2012 will be held in Mount Carlo hotel, Las Vegas, Unites States of America, from 6 - 8 August 2012. (ISBN: 983-44483-56). The scope of the conference is contemporary and original research and educational development in the area of mechanical, electrical, communication, sustainable energy, controllers, robotics, wireless sensors, biomedicine, computing, nano-science, management, environment, business, continuous and hybrid optimization.

Prospective authors from universities or other educational institutes and industry are invited to submit abstract and/or full paper by email before the deadline. All papers submitted before the deadline will be peer reviewed by independent specialists. The conference proceedings will be published in the PCO CD. Selected reviewed and registered papers will be published online by AIP proceeding.

All correspondence should be addressed to the conference secretaria: Tel: 605 3711416, 6085 443821 Email: pcoglobal@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.pcoglobal.com>

International Conference on Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics Feb.
15 - 18, 2012, Hyderabad, India.

Further details and submissions: www.icsci.net and icscicemail@yahoo.com

International Conference on Complex Systems (ICCS'12)

The Conference will be held at IbnZohr University in Agadir, Morocco on November 5 - 6, 2012, in memory of the late Professor Lorenzo FerrerFigueras, ex-president of the Spanish Society of General Systems. The conference will focus on the topics to which Professor Lorenzo Ferrer most contributed: Systems Theory, Complexity, Chaos, etc.
Website: <http://iccs12.org/>
Contact: nemiche@uv.es

21st European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research

The 21st European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research will take place in Vienna, [Campus of the University of Vienna](#), 10–13 April 2012.

Our world is at crisis. Global challenges abound. However, they have a “dark” and a “bright” side. The dark side is the imminent danger of the breakdown of interdependent societies with the perspective of extermination of civilised human life. The bright side marks a possible entrance to a new stage of evolution of humanity, to the self-organisation of a humane world society. Cybernetics, systems research, the sciences of complexity – all of them have the potential to endow the subjects of history with guidance and a means for mastering the current transformation. But the readiness of cybernetic, systems and complex thinking for the tasks ahead has to be continuously reassessed and improved. The time has come **to reflect on the aims, the scope and the tools of a multitude of approaches**. Platforms for the self-understanding of the whole field are needed now more than ever.

Since 1972, the European Meetings on Cybernetics and Systems Research (EMCSR) have been held in Austria every two years. They were organised by the [Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies \(OSGK\)](#) founded in 1969 (which established a special institution, the [Austrian Research Institute for Artificial Intelligence \(OFAI\)](#), in 1984), in cooperation with organisations such as the [Department of Medical Cybernetics and Artificial Intelligence, University of Vienna](#), and the [International Federation for Systems Research \(IFSR\)](#). The upcoming meetings will be organised by the [Bertalanffy Center for the Study of Systems Science \(BCSSS\)](#) in cooperation with the <http://www.ocg.at/> Society (OCG) and a number of other organisations in the field.

Their main focus will be on the **self-understanding of the field**, in particular, on

(1) illuminating the **underlying assumptions** that make approaches distinct from each other or are shared by them while

(2) questioning the **impact on society**.

The meeting is open to any researcher in the field, be it systems biology or information systems, complex adaptive systems or sociocybernetics, evolutionary economics or ecosystems research, systems philosophy or constructivism, self-organisation or cognitive science, network theory or artificial intelligence or any other specialisation that is rooted in cybernetics, systems theory or complexity theory.

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The **RC51 Newsletter** is open for permanent feedback to integrate new suggestions and ideas to achieve its goal: promote news among the ISA RC51 members and a broader scientific community interested in Sociocybernetics.

Please contact the Newsletter editor for any information you would like to include or any further suggestion.

Patricia Almaguer-Kalixto palmaguer@labcomplex.net

RC51 website <http://www.unizar.es/sociocybernetics/> ISA website <http://www.isa-sociology.org>



End of the RC51 newsletter Issue 25