RC51 Sociocybernetics Sessions

Dear member/friend: Find in the following pages the list and description of each RC51 session proposed for the XIX ISA WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY to be held in Toronto, Canada (15-21 July). Remember that the deadline to submit an abstract is on September 30, 2017 24:00 GMT. Feel free to distribute this among your academic colleagues and professional networks.

Program Coordinators:
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Proposed Sessions:

"Fake News" Is the Invention of a Liar

Art Process As a Non-Trivial Machine

Community Movements: A Sociocybernetical Approach to Citizen Lobby.

Digitalization and Societal Innovation: One Shaping the Other

Environmental and Ecological Knowledge Systems: Enquiring the Role of the System Observer.

Femicide/Feminicide, Global Diagnosis and Responses

Modelling Social Forces

New Principles of Designing Social Systems and Social Realities

Socio-Economic Inequality and Complexity of Social Systems

Sociocybernetics, Simulation and Anticipation: Paradigms and Challenges

Systemic Science and Multidisciplinarity: New Tools for Facing Complex Problems.

The Interdisciplinary Approach of Complex Social Systems: Analysing Elements and Processes of Power, Violence and Justice

The Sociocybernetics of Cultural Transmissions and Transformations

Towards Critical Sociocybernetics: The Role of Power in the Steering Processes of Social Systems

1. "Fake News" Is the Invention of a Liar

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English

Fueled by an highly contentious US Presidential campaign culminated in the widely unexpected success of a candidate accused to be even a pathological liar, the debate on so called "fake news" prominently surfaced on newspapers' front pages, television news and in the academic conversation. As it often happens for huge public discourses originated around non well-defined and catchy tags, the magnitude of the debate does not necessarily results in a better understanding of the issue or in effective solutions for the problems it poses.

This panel seeks to address these shortcomings by framing the issue of "fake news" in the context of second-order cybernetics as defined by Heinz von Foerster. Radical constructivism is often seen as a driver for the wide mistrust in established institutions (and therefore Luhmanian's functionally differentiated systems of society) that prepared a fertile ground for the spread of "fake news". However, the ethical principles behind second-order cybernetics may provide a framework to overcome the ongoing process of self-segregation and aid to re-establish a much needed common ground between groups of believers supporting an increasingly diverging version of truth. The same intrinsic risk of divisiveness - pointed out by HvF - that comes with the word "truth", is today at play in expressions such as "alternative-facts", "post-truth" and, of course, "fake news".

Grounding on such theoretical framework, the panel thus seeks theoretical and/or empirical contributions addressing these issues.

Session Organizer:

Fabio GIGLIETTO, *Università di Urbino Carlo Bo, Italy, fabio.giglietto@uniurb.it*

2. Art Process As a Non-Trivial Machine

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English and Spanish

Within artistic and non-artistic circles, artists and non-artist talk about talent, inspiration or intuition as the mechanisms that creators have to their dispossal to construct an expressive object. None of these concepts have proven efficient in explaning how a poem, a painting, an sculpture, an interactive documentary, a music piece or a play teather have been built. Even more, knowledge and epistemology within the artistic processes have been vanished from the aesthetic and philosophical discussions.

Such situation has changed since doctorate programs in arts have appeared in universities around the world. Nevertheless, there is a deep need to find better ways to explain: how is that an artist constructs knowlegde within her/his practice?, what is that knowledge about? And how can we talk about it? With what kind of language?

Therefore, this session looks up for writing proposals dealing with the following questions: is it possible to think of the construction of artistic objects as a psico-socio-cultural system? It is to say, as a non-trivial machine, from the sociocybernetics stand point of view? We are interested on how to identify cognitive processes and mechanisms put into play by artists and through what common language artists and non-artists could engaged into an interdisciplinary discussion about artsistic epistemology.

Session Organizer: **David HERNANDEZ CASAS**, *UNAM, Mexico, saladeltiempo@gmail.com*

3. Community Movements: A Sociocybernetical Approach to Citizen Lobby.

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English

The growing demand for transparency asked by the civil society has been living parallel to discontent and distrust of the institutional policies, causing the appearance of new management phenomena of influence and legitimate pressure on decision-making public, anteroom to citizen lobby.

The study of the defense of private interests with the intention of influencing the legislative and executive powers has not been reciprocated, with the detailed attention of the doctrine, and when

itself has been studied the focus has been exclusively considered traditional, not adapting it to the reality of social and community movements not only in Spain, but in Europe.

Facing with this little doctrinal interest is proposed to extend the concept and adapt it to the european reality, which have been introduced the facts of 'grassroots' and 'astroturf' two forms of community systems in lobbying that turn,s literally, the social perception of lobbying. The Affected by Mortgage Platform and the self-styled "social tides" have put on the table a new form of pressure, so the first objective is the revision of the traditional concept of lobbying to include practices of astroturfing and grassroots of different social movements with a sociocybernetical approach.

This would show empirically whether this model of participation represents a new approach to concepts such as lobbying or revolving door, analyzing to what extent and modify the participation of new organizations of interests and lobbyists.

Session Organizer: **Pedro NAVARRO**, *Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain, pnavarrol@zaragoza.es*

4. Digitalization and Societal Innovation: One Shaping the Other

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English

It is a common understanding that digitalization is profoundly changing our societies. Hopes concern better public services; better jobs; better private enjoyment; better health services; and overall smart living. But there are also threats such as loss in privacy, cyber-violence, and control by algorithms (robotics, self-driving vehicles air/land). However, digitalization happens within societal relations shaping digitalization as well as being shaped by digitalization. Consequently we can speak about societal innovation.

-        The session should contribute the clarification of the concept of societal innovation related to digitalization, dealing with both aspects: shaping and being shaped. System and socio-cybernetic complexity approaches may prove helpful here.

-        In starting to clarify the categories it is suggested to define societal innovation as macro-level and social innovation as micro/meso level phenomenon (individual and/or organizational actors, roles). Both are intgerrelated by technological, organizational, and institutional innovations. Thus, societal innovation unfolds as processes in which actors (individuals, organizations) use digital technologies to create relations (networks, institutions) which in turn create actors (new roles, new organizations) and relations and so forth.

-        There are drivers and opponents within this intertwined process, motivated by money, values or being part of a swarm. This results in the questions of ethics of digitalization. Do we need them? Should there be one ethic or rather several ethics? Who defines them?

Theoretical as well as empirical contributions are welcome dealing with one or more of the aspects mentioned above, including alternative conceptions and reflections of our presently transforming societies.

Session Organizer: **Eva BUCHINGER**, *Austrian Institute of Technology AIT, Austria, eva.buchinger@ait.ac.at*

5. Environmental and Ecological Knowledge Systems: Enquiring the Role of the System Observer.

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English

Birrer (1999) identifies environmental issues as one of the fields where first order systemic perspective have strong development (i.e. modeling of environmental systems); however, it holds ambiguity when it refers the role of the system's observer. This is because, since its origins, ecology pioneers promoted a complex, holistic and systemic approach to analyze the relationship between humans and nature (Odum, 1963); but, they did not always set the position of the observer explicitly within the system´s construction.

For us, the definition of environmental knowledge not only considers the biophysical dimension of nature, but as proposed by Hays (2000: 98), it also includes knowledge about collective decisions on the environment.

The session aims to collect and discuss papers which offer proposals and steps towards the analysis of the knowledge systems (KS) of nature, with a particular emphasis on the conceptual and theoretical papers which contribute to developing a new understanding of such system´s construction.

The session welcomes papers that review ecological knowledge systems, environmental knowledge systems, local environmental knowledge systems and/or other categories of knowledge systems of the natural bio-system, emphasizing a sociocybernetics perspective. This is, using systems theory and second order cybernetics (Geyer and Van der Zouwen 2006), concepts such as system reflexivity and second-order observation (Foerster 1973), issues such as self-organization, emergence, positive and negative feedback (Geyer 1995) and/or other means of reflexivity of the process as a way of understanding the process of systemic construction.

Session Organizer: *Patricia ALMAGUER-KALIXTO*, *Interdisciplinary Institute on Human Ecology and Sustainability, INTERHES, endev.research@gmail.com*

6. Femicide/Feminicide, Global Diagnosis and Responses

RC29 Deviance and Social Control (host committee)
RC51 Sociocybernetics
RC32 Women in Society
Language: Spanish, English and French

The way nation states respond to femicide has become the focus of international attention in developed and developing countries. While more than half the countries with high femicide rates are concentrated in South Africa & Latin America, no country is free from this type of violence. For example, inadequate state responses as well as historical and current impacts of colonization have been identified as contributors to high femicide risks faced by indigenous women and girls in Canada. This underscores the need to understand how states are responding to femicide, regardless of world region. The establishment of specialized investigation and prosecution units has been recommended by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to address the perceived impunity for those who perpetrate femicide. Some countries have passed legislation pertaining to femicide or codified femicide as a crime. These are positive steps. The challenge, however, is moving from legislative/policy initiatives to effective prevention which requires a better understanding of how society – social structures, processes, and relations – continues to contribute to this form of violence. A variety of approaches, including the sociological and sociocybernetical study of femicide, play a core role in the evolution of our understanding of this form of violence against women. This session seeks papers from social scientists, in an interdisciplinary way, examining the contributors and responses to femicide over time and across various regions or who are reflect upon historical and current responses.

Session Organizers:
Myrna DAWSON, *University of Guelph, Canada, mdawson@uoguelph.ca*,
Barbara G BELLO, *University of Milano, Italy, barbaragbello@gmail.com*,
Dalila CEREJO, *New University of Lisbon, Portugal, dalilacerejo@fcsh.unl.pt*,
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Rosemary BARBERET, *John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, USA, rbarberet@jjay.cuny.edu*

7. Modelling Social Forces

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English

Society is man-made, but when we are born into it and start acting, it is a given. Social processes are going on in structures given at that moment, often behind our backs, moving society in unwanted directions. Attempts at controlling and steering such social forces turned out quite ineffective, and organizational actors, which are supposed to do so (like governments), are quite helpless. "Social forces" does not refer to some global conspiracy group, but to the mechanisms and processes built into society at a given moment.

To change this situation and to influence social forces in a way that society moves into a directiion desirable for the citizens, Raven insists that first of all such processes behind our backs need to be understood. As multiple circular feedback loops are involved, which are interrelated, interacting and producing both positive amplifying and negative counteracting effects, conventional analysis does not help. What is needed to understand such processes are graphs and diagrams (systemograms) modelling such interrelated feedback loops. In a second step computer models simulating their dynamics are needed to understand and to find out about longterm and side-effects as well as to identify points of intervention.

Welcome are papers presenting and discussing examples of such modelling or modelling and simulation methods promising to serve the purpose. The methods may range from graphs and Petri-nets to system dynamics and genetic algorithms.

Raven, J. (1995). The New Wealth of Nations: Unionville, New York: Royal Fireworks Press www.rfwp.com; Edinburgh, Scotland: Competency Motivation Project. http://eyeonsociety.co.uk/resources/fulllist.html#new_wealth

Session Organizer: **Bernd HORNUNG**, *University Hospital Giessen and Marburg, Germany, hornung@med.uni-marburg.de*

8. New Principles of Designing Social Systems and Social Realities

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English
Formerly, social systems theories were regarded as an extension of natural science. We could discuss the connection between technology and social systems in the last century by suggesting that social systems were not artifacts or products of technology. However, since the start of the internet era, we have been experiencing a big paradigm shift. Specifically, after the ICT revolution, we could not help but consider a society, not only as a system which constructs a certain reality, but also a constructed system, in other words, a kind of artifacts. From here onwards we need to look for new principles to help deal with designing social systems. In this session we would like to discuss the new principles of designing social systems and social realities. Any kind of contributions related to the above-mentioned issues is appreciated.

Session Organizers:
Saburo AKAHORI, *Tokyo Woman's Christian University, Japan, akahori@lab.twcu.ac.jp*
Hiroshi DEGUCHI, *Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan, deguchi@dis.titech.ac.jp*

9. Socio-Economic Inequality and Complexity of Social Systems

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English
The challenges of social and economic inequality have been known since the onset of civilizations. Already in the 20th Century several major works on that topic were published by Amartya Sen but a new significant impulse has been given to the discussion on that topic after the publication of research by Thomas Piketty and co-authors. Those publications were followed by other works of Joseph Stiglitz and Branko Milanovic. They were accompanied by more or less "shocking" reports and results of empirical research papers illustrating dramatic discrepancies in distribution of income and wealth in the world society (OECD, UNDP, UNU/WIDER, World Bank), The discussion on inequality includes two major approaches. The first one embodies narrow empirical approaches, often without a deeper explanation of causes. In the second approach, inequality is analyzed within a framework of broad ideological and political considerations. There exists a research gap, in which the middle-range theoretical discourse based on systems thinking, and complex systems studies, in particular, can be placed. Analogies, metaphors and mathematical models deriving from complex systems studies can be helpful in a better understanding of causes as effects of socio-economic inequality. Applications of the following ideas can be considered: consequences of Pareto distribution, Lorenz distribution, Zipf's Law, scale-free networks, thermodynamic models and analogies, hierarchical structure of systems, holarchy, heterarchy, functional differentiation of systems and other formal models. Parallely, qualitative ideas of complexity such as the Luhmann's concept and others can be applied. The collection of proposed ideas is obviously not limited.
Session Organizer: **Czeslaw MESJASZ**, *Cracow University of Economics, Poland, mesjaszc@uek.krakow.pl*

10. Sociocybernetics, Simulation and Anticipation: Paradigms and Challenges

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English and Spanish

In this session on *Sociocybernetics, Simulation and Anticipation: Paradigms and Challenges*, to be held in *Regular Session* format (maximum five 20-minute presentations), is expected the participation of academics, researchers and practitioners in the fields of Sociocybernetics, Simulation and Anticipation, so they can join efforts and share their paradigms and challenges with the central purpose of proposing an overview of the state of the art and the opportunities of working together. Complementary to simulation paradigms, the possibilities of better futures have always been interested in large institutions, businesses and governments. The classic perspectives based on quantitative analysis and processed through statistical projections or strategic planning have been pushed aside to give rise to perspectives that consider more qualitative analysis and short and medium periods of analysis against long-term expectations studies. Interest on anticipative forms and related forms of reactivity, preactivity and proactivity require greater knowledge on the genealogy of the associated structures and social processes as well as the environment that have led to key social actors in groups, institutions or communities. Simulation is a particular application of the Sociocybernetics, but you need to make explicit the relationships they have over and, in particular, is urgently to produce reference texts that enable future generations to understand their potential and apply their instruments to propose a better world through better simulations of possible futures.

Session Organizers:
Luciano GALLON, *Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Colombia, luciano.gallon@upb.edu.co*
Jose Antonio AMOZURRUTIA, *UNAM, Mexico, j.antonio.amoz@gmail.com*

11. Systemic Science and Multidisciplinarity: New Tools for Facing Complex Problems.

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English

One of the main theoretical contributions from Systemics to social science is the consideration that each scientific domain only offers a partial point of view on an object, whose most reliable representations need to take into consideration the findings from a plurality of scientific fields.
While in its early phase, this debate had a merely epistemic relevance -it was just a matter of reliable information among scientific communities-, in the most recent years it has been assuming an important operational meaning. In fact, most of the issues that are affecting the globalized word entail a policy-modeling activity, which need information from many diverse domains; from natural sciences of course (fighting climate change, for example, entails the need for information on geophysics, biology, engineering etc.), but also from social sciences (introducing a green technology into a given territory requires a deep knowledge on that territory's social and cultural structure, the local élites, the legal existing norms etc.).
This session bases upon the assessment that contemporary sociology holds a double function: on one hand, providing reliable information on the social aspects of global issues; on the other, developing models of systemic management of decision making, coordinating diverse scientific communities and stating communication patterns between science and society.
Theoretical and empirical papers that focus on this double function, are welcome.

Session Organizers:
Andrea PITASI, *Gabriele D'Annunzio University, Italy, profpitasi@gmail.com*
Massimiliano RUZZEDDU, *University Niccolo Cusano Rome, Italy, mruzzed@hotmail.com*

12. The Interdisciplinary Approach of Complex Social Systems: Analysing Elements and Processes of Power, Violence and Justice

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English

Complex social systems that we built in interdisciplinary research, recurrently present elements and processes of power, violence and justice. We propose a work session on interdisciplinary knowledge since the systemic perspective in order to identify the effects of these discurses in pro or against social changes. The most important objective of this session proposal is not only the dialogue and reflection around Elements and processes of power, violence and justice in the interdisciplinary approach of complex social systems, but also an important opportunity to foster greater synergies between academics and public sphere in order to think the transdisciplinarity. 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 Organizer: *Elisa Margarita MAASS*, UNAM, Mexico, *margarita_maass@yahoo.com.mx*

13. The Sociocybernetics of Cultural Transmissions and Transformations

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English

This session invites papers, empirical and/or theoretical, that address issues concerning cultural transmissions and transformations using sociocybernetic methodologies and concepts. Here, by "culture" is meant the attitudes and values, often tacit, of a particular collective or community as expressed in individual behaviours, interactions and productions of "artefacts" in the broadest sense (for example, encompassing spoken and written texts and other symbolic forms and found or constructed concrete objects) . It is intended to be distinguished from "social institutions" that are explicitly constructed to guide and control said behaviours and interactions.

Possible topics to be addressed include:
- Conceptions and definitions of "culture".
- Case studies of cultural transmission and transformations, including historical examples.
- Relations between culture and "personality" and other individual differences.
- Interactions between different cultures, including studies and commentaries on what some authorities refer to as the so-called "clash of civilisations" and others as "intercultural conversations".
- Culture and exposure and susceptibility to "counterknowledge" (pseudohistory, pseudoscience, pseudomedicine).
- Attempts to change culturally transmitted attitudes and behaviour (for example: counterterrorism, rehabilitation of criminals, alienation and problems of mental health).
- Reflections on and critical appraisals of the culture of the sociocybernetics community itself and its similarities and differences with other disciplinary groupings and "communities of practice".

Session Organizer: **Bernard SCOTT**, *International Center for Sociocybernetic Studies, Germany*, *bernces1@gmail.com*

14. Towards Critical Sociocybernetics: The Role of Power in the Steering Processes of Social Systems

RC51 Sociocybernetics (host committee)
Language: English

This session seeks to gather researchers and social scientists interested in reflecting upon their conceptual tools in their experiences producing sociological and politological analyses. The aim of this session is to take concepts from critical theory and see how they work within a sociocybernetical, second–order cybernetics complexity studies and social systems theory

framework. We are particularly interested in observing the role of power in the steering processes of social systems. Some of the subjects that may be addressed are:

What is the place of power relations in systems theory, complexity studies and sociocybernetics?
How is violence to be understood from a sociocybernetical approach?
How power relations and violence practices become naturalized? How is it possible to denaturalize them?
This session invites contributions that address these questions through topics concerning power relations, violence, injustice and environmental problems, among other contemporary issues. Contributions should draw from concepts pertaining to contemporary critical theories. Contributions may compare or contrast the functioning of categories like subject, dispositif, antagonism, capital or culture industry with the conceptual supply of sociocybernetics, complexity studies and systems theory.
With critical theory we refer not only to its origins with the first school of Frankfurt (Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Benjamin), but include a wide range of thinkers such as Foucault, Agamben, some linked to psychoanalysis (e.g. Slavoj Žižek), schizoid-analysis (e.g. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari), feminist perspectives (e.g. Judith Butler or Gayatri Spivak), and de-colonialist thinkers such as Boaventura De Sousa Santos, or Walter Mignolo.

Session Organizers:

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The XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology will be on July 15-21, 2018 in Toronto, Canada.
You can find more information about congress registration, venue, etc. in

http://www.isa-sociology.org/en/conferences/world-congress/toronto-2018/

remember that if you want to present a paper, the deadline is on the 25th of September.

We look forward to see you in the RC51 activitites:

https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/wc2018/webprogrampreliminary/Symposium488.html