RC02 Past president’s report, July 2014
by Bill Carroll

Although I gave an interim report on our activities, at our business meeting in Buenos Aires, at the risk of a little redundancy, I will briefly look back on the four years since our last World Congress meeting at Gothenburg in 2010.

Much of our activities have centred upon several interim conferences, including the 2012 ISA Forum at Buenos Aires, where we were well represented with a full slate of sessions and strong attendance. Members of the RC02 executive also served as co-organizers for several other interim conferences, in conjunction with other academic societies. These conferences were supported with small grants from ISA.

In September 2011, a conference on Global Capitalism and Transnational Classes attracted a spirited contingent of our members to Prague, where the Centre for Global Studies served as host to a very successful conference. That meeting launched an interdisciplinary network on Global Capitalism and Transnational Classes, which has had a couple of subsequent conferences, and in which several of our members participate.

In August 2012, as I have said, we participated extensively in the second ISA Forum. A few months later, in October, RC02 was one of several sociological associations, including ESA and ASA to co-organize a conference in Moscow on economic sociology, Embeddedness and Beyond. This conference was mostly a Euro-North American affair, in terms of who attended and the issues taken up. RC02 (particularly Gina Murray and I) participated in all stages of the planning and we ran a track of sessions that took a more critical-global perspective.

(continued on page 2)
In August 2013, one of our outgoing VPs, Salvatore Babones, was lead organizer of a conference in New York that coincided with the annual ASA meeting. The conference was designed to bridge the gap between scholarly work and activism, and again was by all accounts a great success.

So, in all we have held four interim conferences in the past four years.

In 2010, ISA launched a program to harmonize the bylaws of its RCs, on issues such as election procedures. We made those changes, and our election just concluded incorporates a new approach. In our revised bylaws (now on our website), we also provide more detail on responsibilities of RC02 table officers. In particular, ‘The Vice Presidents are responsible for recruitment of new members and for maintaining the RC02 website.’ These changes are issues for the incoming executive to attend to.

Heidi Gottfried will talk about membership, but let me say on that issue that we seem to be holding our own and perhaps growing a bit. Comparatively, we are not among the very largest RCs, but not far behind them either. RC02 membership rates are quite low particularly for students (US$2.50/year), so this may help draw young scholars into our Committee. We have made some outreach moves. For instance, at the 2011 interim conference at Prague we distributed a flyer (featuring a photo of Rosa Luxemburg, as I recall), inviting colleagues to join RC02. Gina and Salvatore launched a membership drive in 2012-13, which had some impact. I think outreach is an important priority for us, looking ahead. Especially, how can we attract the emerging generation of sociologists whose research interests include economy and society? The World Congress will be in Toronto in 2018, with the Canadian Sociological Association as host association. I have been quite involved in Canadian scholarly circles, which have a lot of interest in political economy and economy and society, so I will put some effort into bringing more Canadian sociologists into RC02 in the lead-up to 2018. But I invite all our members to engage in some outreach/networking, to help build our scholarly community.

A final word of thanks to the entire RC02 Executive, especially Heidi Gottfried, for their various good efforts in helping to maintain and build our research committee over the past four years. It has been a pleasure working with you!

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“Company citizenship” and social inequality and exclusion in Japan: Path dependence of labor market re-regulation in the 2000s

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In the societies where secure employment has been the key for a stable life-course, the increase of non-regular employees is one of the major contemporary social problems. Japan is no exception; a deep cleavage between regular and non-regular employment is the foremost concern with regard to social inequality and exclusion. Today, non-regular workers account for more than 36% of total employment, characterized by low wages and exclusion from social security. Rare mobility, particularly from non-regular to regular employment indicates a high boundary and hierarchy between these two statuses. In order to improve the situation, the state re-regulated the labor market since 2000. Re-regulation included revisions of the Part-time Work Law (Paato Law) and the Temporary Dispatching Work Law (Haken Law). Despite these efforts, existing social inequalities and exclusion are still largely intact. I argue that the persistence of this social divide is due to the continuing legacy of “company citizenship” - the Japanese version of industrial citizenship - that creates and legitimatizes status segmentation in society.
Industrial citizenship is a set of status rights and obligations under certain employment-welfare regime, primarily appeared in employment relations that could be asymmetric in power relations of the two parties (Marshall [1950] 1992; Jackson 2001). In Japan, it took the form of “company citizenship” during the post-war economic development. Company citizenship was attached to the status of regular employee (Imai 2011), and shaped through cooperative labor relations under the governance of the developmentalist state. At the height of labor union activity in the immediate post-war period, employment and wage security and its application to all employees, including blue-collar workers, became the institutional foundations of Japanese employment relations. The later development from the 1960s to 1980s is basically characterized by the declining significance of labor unions. Corporate welfare schemes, supported by the state’s social security and tax policies, successfully mobilized workers to accept cooperative labor relations; and labor unions and workers began to accept various demands for company flexibilities and productivity, especially in the aftermath of the oil crises.

This development of state-firm-labor politics shaped company citizenship. In order to have access to the rights, such as secure employment, life-course adjusted wage and corporate welfare, on which workers (and their family members) are able to have a prospect of life, regular workers are expected to exhibit a strong commitment to achieve flexibilities for firms, which require them to have a specific disposition and life style that is often caricatured as “company men.” This institutionalization of company citizenship is associated with the rise of inequalities by firm size (state policies favored large firms), gender (the male-breadwinner ideology in wage and corporate welfare systems), and most recently, employment status. The deregulation movement from the mid-1990s led by employers, and was complemented by labor unions. Enterprise-based unions primarily are concerned with employment security of regular employees, and only secondarily with labor conditions of non-regular employees. As a result, non-regular employment expanded outside the segment of regular employment in terms of job area, temporality of contract, mobility path and organizational commitment.

The effort toward re-regulation emerged out of the concern over lesser contracts, higher and vulnerable mobility, and social exclusion (especially from corporate welfare) of non-regular workers. In the process of revising the Part-time Work Law, “equal pay for equal work” was brought up for the first time in the deliberation of labor laws in Japan. During this process, policy-makers considered whose work was comparable to regular employment. The idea of pay equity was abandoned by the two study groups prior to the revision of the law, as the Japanese labor management system is not based on occupation. Thus the discussion turned on an attempt to distance non-regular employment from regular employment by measuring the degree of responsibility within each organization. Accordingly, the revised law states that paato workers should not be discriminated when those “whose job and assignment may change and the rotation and job transfer is done in the same scope as regular workers.” This is a clear manifestation that commitment to corporate flexibility is a condition for full citizenship.

The re-regulation of temporary dispatching work became an issue after the radical deregulation in 2004 that permitted this form of work in manufacturing. Since then, haken increased significantly among men, and the massive haken-giri (lay-off of haken workers) in the midst of Lehman crisis became the symbol of widening disparity in Japanese society. This case highlighted yet another aspect of company citizenship as following path dependence. In the process, the foremost concern among the tripartite members and law makers were to protect male breadwinners from extreme livelihood insecurity. Both employers and labor unions implicitly agreed that if there were not too many breadwinners in this employment status, then there was no problem. The discussion hinged on whether there were too many of them or not. As long as this employment status is occupied by those who “intend” on earning supplemental income for the household, the inequality and exclusion inherent to this status was not considered a problem for either side.
These examples clearly reveal that company citizenship still strongly constrains how major actors apply the principles of equality and fairness in the policy-making process. The male-breadwinner ideology remains a major assumption and strong standard employment-centrism unquestioned the hierarchy between regular and non-regular employment. Re-regulation even formalized this logic, thus legitimates the social divide rather than creating the logic of inclusion. As long as the worker commits to work like regular workers, which means that the worker fulfills the requirements of flexibility by firms, then s/he is entitled to the same rights as regular workers. If not, differential treatment, inequality and exclusion are legitimatized.

Based on this analysis, it became clearer where to find the potential of change that may alter the current situation of inequality and exclusion in Japan. It is to look for some social forces and ideas that challenge and criticize the logic of company citizenship as the principle of equality and fairness in Japan’s employment-welfare regime. Only those who recognize and think that the current institutional logic is unjust and inappropriate are able to frame the alternative for future mobilization.

References


* This paper was originally presented as “The Link between Employment and Welfare and the Consequences for Social Inclusion of Non-Standard Workers” at the World Congress of Sociology held in Yokohama in 2014.

The Voice of #YoSoy 132 (#Iam132) in Mexico: A reflection.

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On May 11, 2012, a number of electronic and printed media outlets issued a sweeping negative opinion about the individuals who staged a protest against Enrique Peña Nieto, at that time a presidential candidate, at an event held in the auditorium of the Ibero-American University (Universidad Iberoamericana) in Mexico City. The protesters were denounced as outsiders, not students of the university, who had infiltrated the event. In response to this allegation, two days later, on May 14, 131 students who participated in the protests against then-candidate Peña Nieto, uploaded a video to YouTube to set the record straight. They state in the video that they are in fact enrolled students at the university, each one of them facing the camera while showing his/her student identification card and stating name and ID number. The video inspired students from other universities to join in support of the original 131 students; thus was born the #YoSoy 132 movement.

According to Paulina García (2012: 127-129), who has gathered testimonial accounts from some of the students who participated in the protest, the video was a response to the smear campaign waged against them in the media, which sourced its information from the team managing Peña Nieto’s presidential
campaign. The protest against Peña Nieto’s visit was initially organized via a Facebook invitation asking students to wear masks representing the face of former president Carlos Salinas. When Peña Nieto was speaking in the auditorium some individuals in the audience decided to manifest their discontent by holding up posters signaling their disapproval of the presidential candidate while others disrupted the presentation by shouting (García García 2012: 131). Social networking sites such as Facebook and YouTube were used to organize the student protests at the Ibero-American University as well as to upload the video that clarified the fact that the protesters were not outside saboteurs but registered students at the university. The video was the idea of two students, Ana Rolón and Rodrigo Serrano, the two of whom went to a news program Televisa, a local media company, to recount their side of the story and to show the finished video (García García 2012: 131-132).

The original student protest was not a spontaneous event. During the electoral campaign the university had organized, along with students, a series of talks under the theme of “The Good Citizen.” A few days before candidate Peña Nieto’s visit, a group of students in Communications had planned a protest but “[...] the big surprise that day was that there were too many students [...] incredible, there were other groups from the University that we did not even know, we had seen them in the hallways but never greeted them, [and] they had [also] planned to protest against Peña Nieto. When these groups met up they were emotionally moved, they began to share blankets [...] Two different factions took shape: those who united and started shouting, and the others, the ones who supported Peña Nieto (García García 2012: 137).

After the presidential election that saw Peña Nieto become the President of Mexico, a #YoSoy132 participant, Pablo Reyna, who was a student at the Ibero-American University, remarked that “[it was] an emotional hit [it was] disconcerting [...] there was a group of people that was really enthused with the energy of the 132 that [...] took to the street so that [...] Enrique Peña Nieto] would not achieve [...]the post of the presidency] and that did not happen” (Villegas 2012: 14). What did happen was that #YoSoy 132 disbanded into smaller cells that have supported a number of social protests with various goals. According to Iván Benumeo, a law student at the Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), this signaled the end of collective indignation and discontent in a country where “[...] individualism prevails [...] The key [...]is to spend less time on Facebook and more time in marches and public gatherings” (Villegas 2012: 15).

The original cluster of 131 students became #YoSoy 132 when students from other institutions of higher education joined them; they hailed from the National Polytechnic Institute (Instituto Politécnico Nacional), the Metropolitan Autonomous University (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana), and the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Organizers indeed use electronic social networks, among others, to organize social protests, as was evident in the protest of December 1, 2012 on the occasion of Peña Nieto’s inauguration as President of Mexico. This particular social protest was characterized by violence. In this case, the only institution that had the power to annul the election, the Electoral Tribunal, upheld Peña Nieto as the legitimate winner of the national electoral process. A number of social organizations in the country rejected this institutional response, claiming it was unjust, and then opted to express their discontent through confrontation and violence. Interestingly, the vandalism and destruction that ensued legitimized Mexico City’s government’s decision to deploy the police in full force. This strategy has become the authorities’ routine response, which has thereby weakened the robust fabric of social organizations that for decades had protested in the country (Zarmeño 1996: 42-44).

A segment of the #YoSoy 132 movement supported these street protests in Mexico City, which were also organized by some activists groups with leftist and anarchist leanings (Nieto 2013: 8). This information was gleaned not only from postings that some of the participants of the December 1, 2012 protests made on Facebook and YouTube, detailing some of their actions at the protest, but also, and more importantly, from police records that identify them as activists involved in social organizations focused on fighting the
system (Cuevas, 2013: 6-7). For example, Osvaldo Rigel Barreta, the only person processed for actions undertaken at the protests of December 1, 2012, was sentenced to a year of prison. His lawyer, however, stated that Barreta was sentenced for his political ideas and his appearance or dress. Furthermore, the sentencing judge arrived at his decision based solely on the testimony of the policemen involved in Barreta’s arrest (Rodríguez García 2014: 32).

The arrest of some of the participants in the December 1, 2012 protest were arbitrary, which led to further protests by the relatives of those detained by the police. These protests also saw the support of a #YoSoy 132 cell. Fifteen months later, on May 5, 2014, fourteen people were freed. The only one who remained incarcerated was Barreta, as mentioned above. A number of the people who had been detained made comments and observations about the experience that made it clear, according to Sierra (2014: 11), that the Mexican Penal Justice system is more inclined to penalize collective actions of protest. Thus, Alejandro Lugo, one of the fourteen who were freed, remarked that “[F]rom the moment of my arrest, I was threatened with rape [...] first the [...] riot police], then the police officers in charge of the investigation [...] In truth, it was a problem that affected fifteen months of my life [...] there were blows, cruel, inhuman treatment, the guards would take pictures with us derisively, they stripped us and humiliated us.” In the case of Carlos Chávez, he was arrested for his rebuke of a riot officer; the confrontation was captured in a video that was then distributed to some television news outlets. Chávez remarked that the arrest not only affected him personally but also had a lasting impact on his family’s health, pointing out that “I was really distressed that my mother had diabetes [and] my grandmother was in a dire state of health [...]”

The Mexico City Commission on Human Rights requested that the city provide compensation to those unjustly arrested on December 1, 2012. Former detainee Claudia Trejo, however, pointed out that “it is even schizophrenic to speak about a plan to compensate for damages when [Héctor] Serrano (the Secretary of Government of Mexico City) only speaks of financial compensation [...] Financial compensation is just one aspect of reparation.”

References


Rodríguez García, Arturo. 2014. “‘Precio’ por protestar: 5 años y 9 meses.” Proceso 1943, México: CISA/Comunicación e Información, S.A de CV, 26 de enero, pp. 32-34.

Sierra, Arturo. 2014. “Aseguran seis de los involucrados que el daño va más allá de una indemnización. Custionan pago víctimas de 1Dmx.” Reforma Ciudad, 6 de mayo, p. 11.


Call for RC02 Sessions: 15 March, 2015 24:00 GMT

We invite proposed session(s), including a short description and the language (English, French or Spanish), as well as contact details of session organizer (name, affiliation, country, e-mail). Our Program Coordinating Committee, consisting of Karen Shire, Patrick Ziltener, and Heidi Gottfried, will review submissions. Send proposals to Heidi Gottfried at heidi.gottfried@wayne.edu.

Other Important Dates:

Abstracts submission: 3 June - 30 September, 2015 24:00 GMT

Participants must submit abstracts on-line via Confex platform. Abstracts must be submitted in English, French or Spanish. Only abstracts submitted on-line will be considered in the selection process.

Abstracts selection: 4 October - 24 November, 2015 24:00 GMT

Session Organizer must complete selection of abstracts and provide a final presentation designation (oral, distributed, poster, round table). Session Organizer can move good quality abstracts unsuited for the session to the Program Coordinator's bin for transfer to another session.

Note: abstracts transfers should be done to the Program Coordinator's bin as early as possible so that good abstracts may be transferred to other appropriate sessions to enable organizers to consider these transferred abstracts and make decisions within the deadlines.

Notification letters: 30 November, 2015 24:00 GMT

Session Organizer must send notification letters to:

1. Authors and co-authors of accepted abstracts

2. Submitters whose abstract was rejected in this session but has been transferred to Program Coordinator for review and possible consideration in another session

3. Authors of rejected abstracts.

A final presentation designation (oral, distributed, poster, round table) needs to be stated; this information can be modified later once registration check has been completed.
Recent publications by RC02 members

Books


The economic stimulus which followed the 2007-08 global financial crisis has been succeeded by what we now call “austerity” measures - characterized by a renewed assault on public spending and further restructuring of social and labor market policies.

Claiming no viable alternatives exist, neoliberal politicians are selling austerity to the public as a virtuous necessity in the face of government deficits. With insights and inspirational stories of resistance from a range of scholars, as well as labor organizers and activists, *Orchestrating Austerity* tries to determine if there is something new in this era of austerity or if it is a continuation and intensification of earlier forms of neoliberalism.

http://fernwoodpublishing.ca/book/orchestrating_austerity


This book applies the methodology of actor-system dynamics to the complex interplay between economic and socio-political institutions and to the conflict over economic resources and systems. By Recognizing the various forces that motivate people and organizations to act and interact, the authors are able to analyze contemporary problems and offer practical new ways of dealing with critical socio-economic issues.

http://karasmithdesigns.com/routledge-library-editions-social-thomas-b/

This is a text book for undergraduate social science classes on social change. It covers human sociocultural evolution since the Stone Age, describing and explaining how humans were able to go from living in small nomadic bands to the world megacities of the present. The book uses evidence from archaeology, ethnography, linguistics, documents, statistical information-gathering agencies and survey research. The emergence of sedentism, the rise and fall of chiefdoms, states and empires and the growth and decline of cities in several world regions, including that part of North America that became the United States, are examined. The focus is on the development of complexity and hierarchies both within and between polities. There is a focus on how institutions that facilitated conquest, exploitation and trade over longer and longer distances produced larger and larger interaction networks. A world prehistorical, historical and comparative approach is used to tell the story of sociocultural evolution. The book also describes how the emergence of social complexity and hierarchy has been related to the changes in the structure of the individual personality. The book compares the emergence of a regional system centered in Europe with the early modern system in East Asia, and analyzes the long-term incorporation of regional systems into the global system of today. The evolution of the modern capitalist world-system since the fourteenth century CE is described with a focus on the rise and fall of system leaders: the Dutch in the 17th century, the British in the 19th century and the United States in the 20th century. Waves of global integration, interspersed with periods of deglobalization are described and analyzed. The text concludes with a consideration of possible futures for the 21st century.


Brazil has occupied a central role in the access to medicines movement, especially with respect to drugs used to treat those with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). How and why Brazil succeeded in overcoming powerful political and economic interests, both at home and abroad, to roll-out and sustain treatment represents an intellectual puzzle.

In this book, Matthew Flynn traces the numerous challenges Brazil faced in its efforts to provide essential medicines to all of its citizens. Using dependency theory, state theory, and moral underpinnings of markets, Flynn delves deeper into the salient factors contributing to Brazil’s successes and weaknesses, including control over technology, creation of political alliances, and instrumental use of normative frameworks and effectively explains the ability of countries to fulfill the prescription drug needs of its population versus the interests and operations of the global pharmaceutical industry.

Pharmaceutical Autonomy and Public Health in Latin America is one of the only books to provide an in-depth account of the challenges that a developing country, like Brazil, faces to fulfill public health objectives amidst increasing global economic integration and new international trade agreements. Scholars interested in public health issues, HIV/AIDS, and human rights, but also to social scientists interested in Latin America and international political economy will find this an original and thought provoking read.

[www.routledge.com/books/details/9781138832534/]

This book presents a discussion of happiness that takes the shape of a dialogue between contemplative knowledge and practice, or the wisdom traditions, and the social sciences. It examines the different definitions of happiness in relation to wisdom traditions, and the impact of these traditions on current research. It explores topics such as the pursuit of a good life, the pursuit of eudaimonia, and the meaning of economic and social suffering from the perspective of the social sciences. Overcoming barriers between disciplines and fields of knowledge, the book presents a beneficial cross-fertilization to achieve a wiser model of man.


As inequalities widen and the effects of austerity deepen, in many countries the wealth of the rich has soared. Why We Can’t Afford the Rich exposes the unjust and dysfunctional mechanisms that allow the top 1% to siphon off wealth produced by others, through the control of property and money. Andrew Sayer shows how over the last three decades the rich worldwide have increased their ability to hide their wealth, create indebtedness and expand their political influence.

Written accessibly for a wide readership, the book uses a moral economy approach and simple distinctions to burst the myth of the rich as specially talented wealth creators. Furthermore, as the risk of runaway climate change grows, it shows how the rich are threatening the planet by banking on unsustainable growth. It argues that crises of economy and climate can only be resolved by radical change to make economies sustainable, fair and conducive to well-being for all.

“Unmatched in persuasive argument and compelling illustrations, Andrew Sayer shows how the rich and the super-rich are destroying not just the economy but the planet too. Everyone should read Why we can’t afford the rich and spread the word.”

- Michael Burawoy, University of California, Berkeley

[http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781447320791](http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781447320791)
Articles and book chapters


Economies of Becoming

3rd VIS Conference
International Day of Happiness

March 20, 2015

Rettorato Building - University of Torino
Via Verdi 8, Torino IT

The 2015 edition of the VIS Conference series for the International Day of Happiness is dedicated to the exploration of what can be called a post-capitalist society. In recent years a growing number of reasons have been offered to support the view that the end of capitalism is around the corner. What is the evidence on which they are grounded? How far is it realistic?

The title of the Conference - Economies of Becoming - maintains the idea that we are embedded in various systems of economic relationships. If the emerging picture of our social and economic interactions fits with these descriptions, what are the moral, cultural and political consequences we face?

In the morning session it will clarified from different perspectives what are the main arguments in favour of this Great Transition and what could be the theoretical resonance of the various experimental strategies people adopt to cooperate for the common interest and in respect of life on our planet.

In the afternoon different renowned scholars such as Viviana Zelizer and Julie Nelson among others will deal with an emerging definition of economy as relational work (via videoconferencing).

Five expected sessions will be focused on different relevant issues such as co-production of technologies, feminist perspectives, contemplative economic theory and post-growth. A poster area will be open all day and it will be possible to meet the authors between 12.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. On the whole, they can offer pragmatic strategies of social transformation, creating islands of change mainly oriented to deintermediate and dehierarchize social and economic ties. We expect that this day will represent a step further towards the understanding of social suffering and the pursuit of individual and collective well being.

Morning

Main Hall

9.00-9.30 a.m.
Welcome Messages by
Gianmaria Ajani Rector, University of Torino
Marina Nuñolri Director, Department of Economic and Social Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics, University of Torino

9.30-10.00 a.m.
Vincenzo Giorgino Department of Economic and Social Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics, University of Torino
A new world is already here. An Introduction to the Conference

10.00-10.45 a.m.
Laszio Zsolnai Director, Business Ethics Center, Corvinus University, Budapest
Happiness and liberation: Economics Beyond the Self

10.45-11.15 a.m. Coffee break

11.15-12.00 a.m.
Margunn Bjørnholt Director, Policy and Social Research AS, Director: Oslo
How to make what really matter count in economic decision-making?

12.00-12.30 a.m.
Roberto Burlando Department of Economics and Statistics, University of Torino
Values, ethical stances and happiness in economic choices

12.30 Lunch

Afternoon

Main Hall, Mario Allara Room
and Multimedia Room

All day: Posters area
12.30 - 4.30 p.m.
On-site with the authors

3.30 - 4.30 p.m.
Videoconference: Economy as relational work

Viviana Zelizer Princeton University, Princeton
Julie Nelson University of Massachusetts, Boston

4.30 - 6.30 p.m.
Sessions
1. Economic theories and contemplative knowledge.
2. Feminist economics and gender in a changing society.
3. Technologies r’us. How can we co-create digital technologies to make this life the life we can love.

Call for papers:
Deadline January 30, 2015
Submit your works to: http://goo.gl/INJ660
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