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Dear Colleagues:

Thank you all very much for your contributions to the work of our committee and to the field of sociological futures research!

We look back to a year of both exciting sociological research and multiple intersecting crises around the world. Many trends cause extreme worries, but new opportunities are opening up too. The Forum in Rabat was a success with 4,842 registered participants from over a hundred countries and territories. More than two hundred authors presented an extraordinary rich range of papers in our sessions, including many new members and junior scholars who impressed with their talents. A number of new publications were presented in our Author-Meets-Critics Sessions and the work on several more are currently under way, including papers presented at the Forum. The theme “Futures of the Anthropocene” continues to be a challenge for our research endeavors.

Digital Futures and the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen-AI) in the process of social research were met at the Forum and at subsequent events with particular interest and shall be also a special focus in upcoming endeavors. On these, as well as any other future-related theme, all members are cordially invited to join in and proposed yet more activities. Only collectively can we hope to tackle the challenges of the future.

Best regards and wishes,

Markus S. Schulz
President, ISARC07

Peace

“The International Sociological Association Research Committee on Futures Research (ISARC07) opposes war, violence, and oppression. ISARC07 calls for research on creating futures of peace. It calls for investment into research on exiting military logics, fostering dialogue, and building equitable, sustainable, and peaceful futures.”

Free Speech

“The International Sociological Association Research Committee on Futures Research (ISARC07) affirms the principle of free speech in open academic dialogues.”

In memoriam

RC07 has received notice from Japan that our cherished colleague and former President Reimon Bachika has passed away. We mourn this loss and look back to his immense service with great gratitude.

Reimon Bachika (1936-2023)

Reimon Bachika, born 10 March 1936 in St-Lambrechts-Herk, Belgium, took first vows on 8 September 8, 1956, became ordained priest on 6 August 1961, and went to Japan as a Scheutist missionary for the Roman Catholic Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae (Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, abbreviated CCIM). Having done religious studies in Louvain (1958-62), he then enrolled in and completed graduate and postgraduate studies in sociology and religion at the University of Osaka, Japan from 1967 to 1975.



Subsequently, Reimon Bachika became Professor of Sociology at Bukkyo University in Kyoto, Japan. Inspiring generations of students, Bachika taught at Bukkyo University for many years until his emeritation. Bachika served as President of the International Sociological Association Research Committee of Futures Studies (ISARC07) from 1997 to 2006, bringing together scholars from different disciplines, always a generous and kind facilitator who encouraged a proactive scholarly focus toward creating conditions for a harmonious life.

Bachika co-authored *Introduction to the Sociology of Religion*, 1996 (in Japanese, with M. Tsushima), edited *Traditional Culture and Religion in a New Era* (Transaction, 2002; Routledge, 2017), contributed to several other books, and wrote numerous articles both in Japanese and English on the sociology of religion, problems of culture, and futures research. For the ISA's journal *Current Sociology*, he coedited with Markus S. Schulz the special monograph issue on *Values and Culture: The Social Shaping of the Future* (*Current Sociology*, 2011, Vol. 59, no. 2).

Throughout his life, Reimon Bachika engaged with questions about the meaning of life, religion, spiritualism, values, symbolism, and the future. Drawing on his background in sociological as much as theological studies, his knowledge of Western and Asian societies, and religions as diverse as Buddhism, Shintoism and Catholicism, one of the central questions that drove his research was how to address common human values underneath different and—at times even clashing—symbolic manifestations. Connecting empirical inquiries and critical theory, his work on culture focused on the potentials for reconciliation, harmony, and peaceful futures.

Reimon Bachika has passed away on 24 March 2023, at age 87, in his hometown Kobe, Japan. His memory, scholarly work, and inspiration will live on.

2025 Competition Best Graduate Student Paper Award

Thomas Zenkl

The Taming of Sociodigital Futures: AI in Public Employment Service (PES) and the Digital Welfare State

The International Sociological Association Research Committee on Futures Research (ISARC07) is pleased to announce Thomas Zenkl (PhD candidate, University of Graz, Austria) as the winner of its third international competition for the best graduate student paper. His paper is entitled: "The Taming of Sociodigital Futures: AI in Public Employment Service (PES) and the Digital Welfare State." The winner was presented at the Forum in Rabat a certificate and support in the amount of US\$1,200. All papers submitted to the competition were evaluated by an international jury of distinguished scholars. The primary criteria for selection are originality of ideas, social relevance, conceptual rigor, analytical perceptiveness, and clarity of style. The Jury's recommendation was further reviewed by the Board of ISARC07. Congratulations to the winner!

Summary: Advanced algorithmic technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) are projected to profoundly impact public employment services (PES) and the delivery of labor market policies. Focusing on the perspectives of PES counsellors, this study examines workers' anticipations of future AI technologies. Based on face-to-face interviews ($n=23$), it identifies and explores the concept of "taming" as a primary tactic for managing and appropriating uncertain AI futures within the limits of current institutional and bureaucratic structures. "Tamed" anticipations of advanced algorithms are rooted within challenging working conditions (insufficient resources and time for clients), reconfigurations of roles and agencies (administration of systems instead of supporting clients) and nested within transformations of techno-bureaucratic regimes (from street- over screen- to system-level bureaucracies), which they envision to rectify and repair. Taming is thus applied as a lens to observe practices of anticipation that navigate precarities of daily work life beyond dichotomies of compliance and resistance. Despite the differences in tamed AI futures identified, the analysis shows corresponding properties: Tamed anticipations consolidate dependencies between human and machinic actors, demarcate what is (un-)tameable, and are inherently dialectical. Synthesizing structural problems and an imperative for human elements into futures that rely on advanced technologies, a truly "human" counselling situation is thought to be obtained through "machinic" means. To "tame" futures with and by anticipating certain AI technologies here means affirming ideas of a supposedly better working conditions (more humanity and margin of discretion) and regaining (or even improving) them through the computational means that are considered responsible for their loss.

To be published in *Frontiers of Sociology*, Vol. 10, 2025, doi: 10.3389/fsoc.2025.155667

The next edition of this Best Graduate Student Paper Competition is being planned for 2027. Stay tuned!

Forthcoming Nov. 2025; Discount code **EME30** to get **30% off** at bookstore.emerald.com

Communicating Change: Civic Innovation and Social Movements

Edited by Markus S. SCHULZ

How do social actors from civil society communicate in response to crisis? How do they use existing means of communication and invent new ones? How do they form social movements that connect activists and publics and foster inclusive deliberation? How do they overcome obstacles rooted in different cultural, economic, juridical, political, and social contexts? How do they articulate alternatives to retrotopian politics, authoritarian leadership, patriarchy, and neoliberal subjectivities? How do they generate democratic agency, strategies, visions, and the solidarities that nourish these? How do they communicate change?

INTRODUCTION

Markus S. SCHULZ: Communicating Change: Civic Innovation and Social Movements

PART I: CIVIC INNOVATION

Ligia TAVERA FENOLLOSA

Crisis Response, Civic Innovation, and Digital Media: Learning from the 2017 Earthquake in Mexico City

Magdalena KAROLAK

Citizen Participation and Online Environments After a Crisis of Democracy: Lessons from Iceland

Part II: DIGITAL FEMINISM

Marine GAUSS

French Digital Feminism: An Oppositional Praxis within the Dominant Public Space

Amy MOWLE

Digital Self-Disclosure in Neoliberal Times: Problematizing Feminist Consciousness-Raising on Social Media

Part III: CONNECTING FOR CHANGE

Doo Hyeong LEE

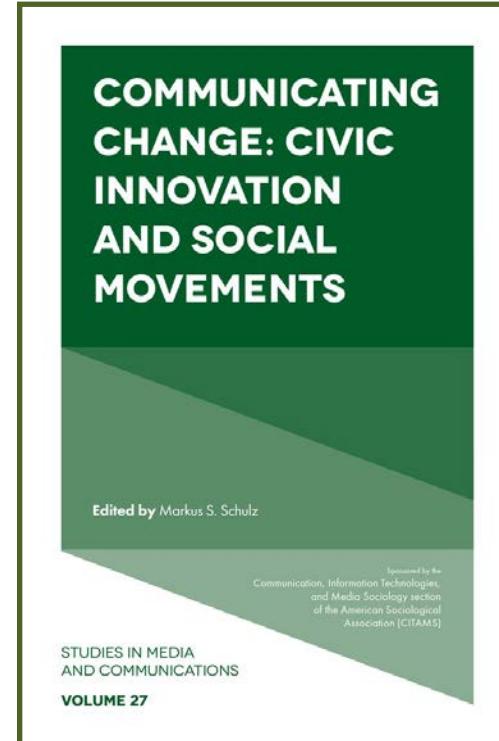
From Ideologists to Programmers: Activists' Roles in Contemporary South Korean Social Movements

Lidia LO SCHIAVO and Paola REBUGHINI

Critical Agency and Creative Imagination: Snapshots of the Future among Youth Networks of Activism in Italy

Markus S. SCHULZ

Communicating Across Borders: Unlikely Alliances and Poetic Visions



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Digital Futures between Domination and Participation

Edited by **Markus S. SCHULZ** and **Isabel da COSTA**

Digital technologies from the Internet and social media to artificial intelligence and robotics are reshaping the world. They offer joy, participation, and higher productivity, but they have also brought disruption, alienation, control, oppression, and exacerbated inequalities. This volume explores this ongoing transformation and its social implications between domination and participation. Outcomes at any given time are not taken as predetermined but as results of the decisions by a range of diverse social actors who compete, cooperate, or conflict with one another and can draw on differential access to resources within shifting political-legal frameworks and structural contexts. Scholars of communication, media studies, sociology, political ecology, employment and labor relations, science and technology come together to examine the social shaping of digital futures across different world regions and domains. - Contributing to these fields, the volume highlights the merits of interdisciplinary research and transnational perspectives to illuminate the intricate complexity in which digital technologies are shaped by and are shaping social relations of power between domination and participation. The authors present critical case studies that make timely progress toward a deeper understanding of these new dynamics and toward broadening the horizon for imagining preferable democratic future alternatives.



Content

Markus S. SCHULZ

Digital Futures between Domination and Participation: Introduction

Markus S. SCHULZ

Participatory Visions and Dominating Realities: Beyond the History of Digital Futures

Stefan LÜCKING

Beyond the Black Box: Negotiating Artificial Intelligence at the Workplace

Cong PENG

Struggling for Power over Time: Freelance Writers in China's Cultural and Creative Industries

Tin-Yuet TING

Two Tales of Digital Self-Entrepreneurship

Rima ŽILINSKAITĖ

Digitalization, Participation, and Science: Citizen Science as Type(s) of Prosumption

Attila MÁRTON

A Digital Future of Resilience: What Can We Learn from Ecological Thinking

Isabel da COSTA

Conclusion

Refusing Ecocide

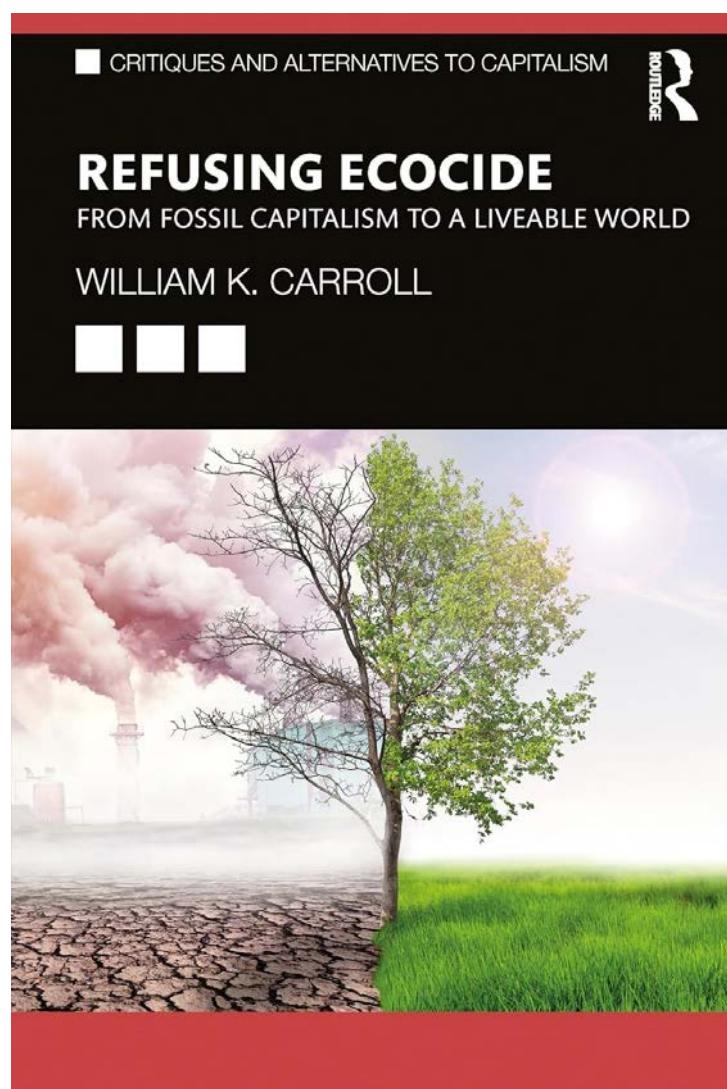
From Fossil Capitalism to a Livable World

William K. Carroll (University of Victoria, Canada)

Refusing Ecocide: From Fossil Capitalism to a Liveable World provides a critical analysis of the central role of fossil capitalism in causing climate change and argues that only alternatives based upon democratic eco-socialism can prevent the deepening of the climate crisis.

Employing three core concepts within historical materialism – capitalist accumulation, imperialism and hegemony – it locates the existential threat of our changing climate in the drive for increasing profit and growth, the domination of advanced capitalist states that strip resources and exploit cheap labour, and the consent to the capitalist way of life in the global North. With attention to the ways in which, powered by fossil fuels, capital has subjected the world to its predatory logic, this book charts this history and surveys the damage from the Industrial Revolution to today's deep civilizational crisis, arguing that the market-based and purely technological solutions of 'climate capitalism' are too little, too late.

A call for a multifaceted and multi-scalar shift away from capitalist accumulation, imperialism and class hegemony and instead towards democratic eco-socialism, it will appeal to scholars across the social sciences with interests in political and social theory, the environment and sustainability. Refusing Ecocide, published in November 2024, provides a critical analysis of the central role of fossil capitalism in causing climate change and argues that only alternatives based upon democratic eco-socialism can prevent the deepening of the climate crisis.



DeColonize EcoModernism!

The Androcene and Its Others

Ariel Salleh

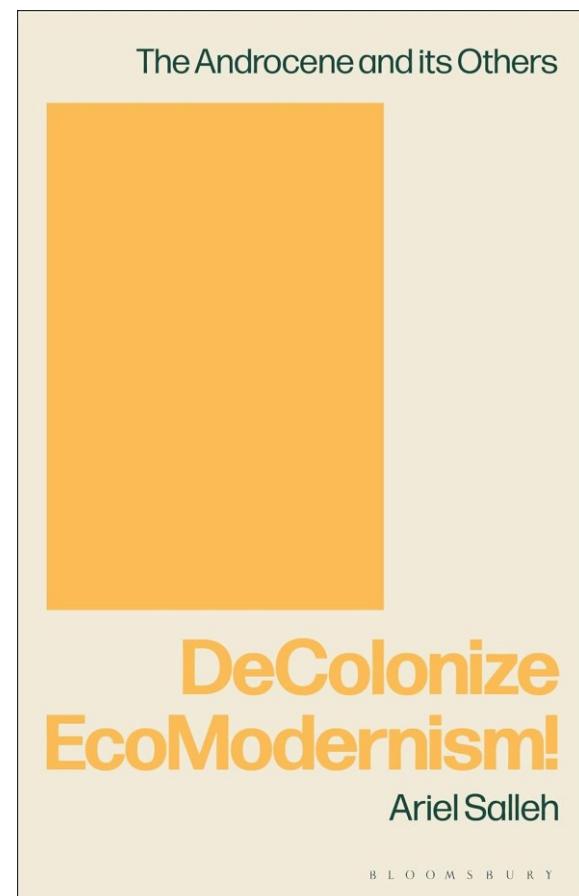
In the 21st century, the old colonial attitude of *terra nullius*, meaning a vacant place free for the taking, still lurks behind the global economic expropriation of peoples' lands and bodies.

Today, that theft is rationalised internationally by ecomodernist policy. This book engages with the patriarchal-colonial-capitalist mindset of the contemporary Androcene and its threats to Life-on-Earth, including global warming and nuclear risks, mining and the gene trade, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and digital coloniality.

Ariel Salleh spells out the social and ecological contradictions set in motion by neocolonialism. Inspired by decolonial thinkers from Arturo Escobar to Tyson Yunkaporta, and critics of technology like Vandana Shiva and Shoshana Zuboff, she argues that dispossession of First Nation peoples' livelihoods is not healed by consumerism in the name of 'development'. Breaking with ecomodernist policy such as 'the tech fix' of mainstream environmentalists, Salleh contests the patriarchal-colonial-capitalist imperium and its advocacy of Green New Deals, Earth Governance, Sustainable Development Goals, and Smart Futures.

Worldwide many decolonial activists see through the zero-sum imagination and its Earth Summits. Youth too, is defying the capitalist ruling class extinction trajectory, and some even challenge the fashionable post-human ideology circulating in high-tech quarters. Beyond 'exchange value', these Others of the Androcene are calling for self-governing bioregional futures, respectful of indigenous skills; they want local food sovereign economies, which meet people's needs while protecting nature's 'metabolic value'.

Spelling out the biopolitical violence of digitalization and genetic engineering, this book traces two decades of creative defiance by global peoples' movements against the contradictions of ecomodernist development and its ongoing imposition by nation states and international agencies.



Toward a Diagnosis of Our Times

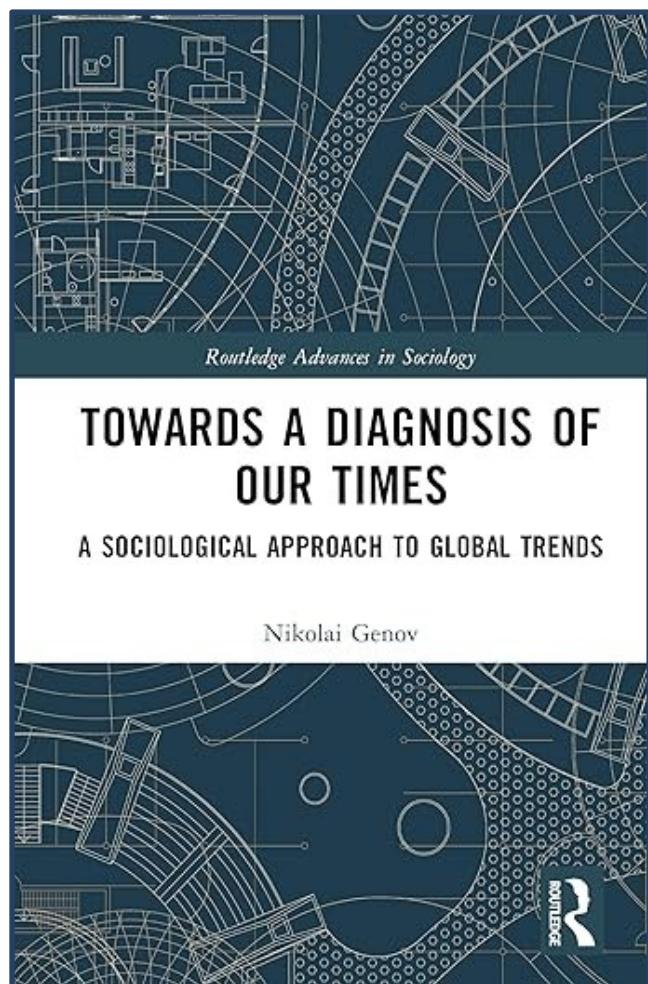
A Sociological Approach to Global Trends

Nikolai Genov

This monograph offers a critical diagnosis of the current epoch marked by globalization, de-globalization and re-globalization. Arguing that the concept of society gives way to that of globalization as an explanatory core, the author shows how Constructivist ideas open the way to four new conceptualizations of global trends: upgrading the rationality of organizations, individualization, spread of instrumental activism and homogenization of culture (RISC).

Each trend is presented by two explanatory models. The trend of upgrading rationality of organizations is exemplified by analyses of the volatile rationality of industrial organization and the tensions of regional integration. Individualization is dealt with by comparing the development and impact of leaders in Asia and the individualization in present-day war. Commercialization together with consumerism is analyzed as a component of the global trend of instrumental activism. The homogenization of culture is dealt with through discussions on the dynamic relations of values and norms and the controversial development of social science knowledge. The creative approach to global processes is finalized in a discussion on tensions and conflicts in each trend and in their interplay. As such, it develops a new analytical framework while identifying action fields and activities which reproduce stability and change in contemporary global society.

The intellectually refreshing, critical and constructive ideas of this volume will attract researchers, lecturers and upper-level students with interests in sociological theory, globalization, the sociology of culture, and the challenges facing contemporary civilization more broadly.

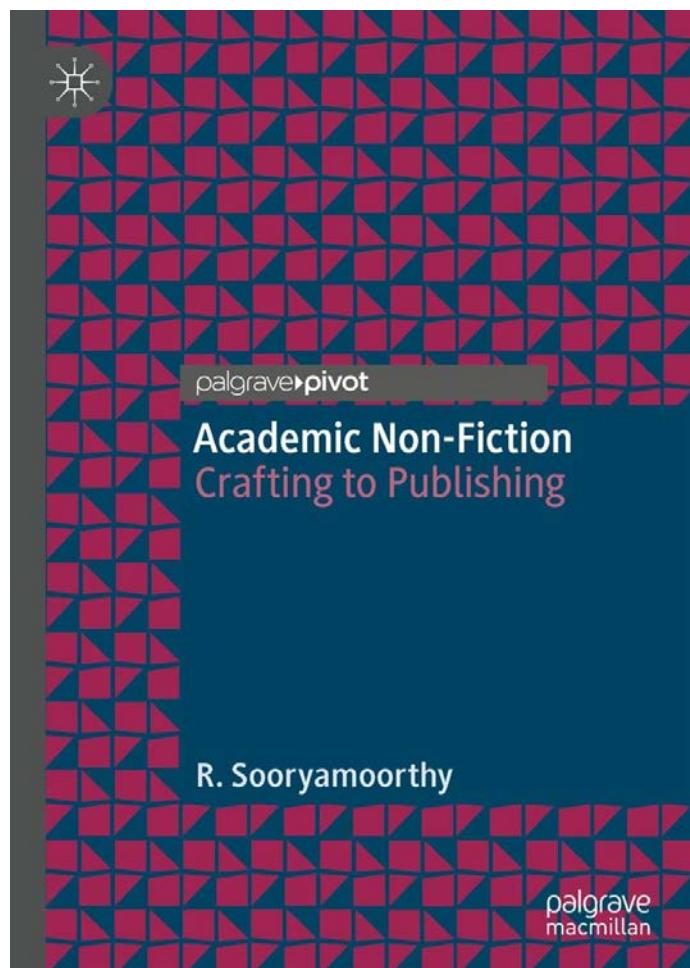


Academic Non-Fiction: Crafting to Publishing

Radhamany Sooryamoorthy

(University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

This book offers comprehensive directions to crafting academic nonfiction that is both rigorous and captivating, filling a critical gap in the genre. While academic nonfiction plays a vital role in fostering knowledge-based societies and driving economic growth, there has long been a need for a resource that helps authors create works that are as engaging as they are informative. Designed for both aspiring and established writers, this book provides practical advice and innovative techniques to elevate nonfiction writing. It covers everything from selecting marketable topics and developing effective writing habits to managing time and navigating the complexities of the publication process. Unlike most writing guides, it emphasises how to infuse nonfiction with the allure and engagement necessary to reach a broad audience without compromising accuracy or depth. With short, digestible chapters, insider tips on proposal writing, and insights into the peer review process, this book serves as a step-by-step roadmap to transforming academic writing into compelling works. Essential for writers aiming to produce nonfiction that not only informs but also resonates with readers, this resource is an indispensable tool for creating impactful scholarly work.



Generative Artificial Intelligence in the Research Process of Scholars and Students: Tool or/and Co-Contributor?

Webinar, 20 November 2025, 14h – 16h UTC/GMT, live and recording access via ISA account

This webinar focuses on generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in the research process. Although to an extent AI in general has already been applied to various purposes in the research process (e.g. automated machine learning for text analysis), the rapidly accelerating advancement and accessibility of GenAI in recent years have produced novel benefits and challenges. It has the potential to reshape teaching, learning and the conduct of research in the future. The webinar examines both the use of GenAI in the process of learning about the research process (i.e. how students use it) and doing social research (i.e. how researchers use it).

Another important question is whether and to what extent GenAI not only reveals itself as a research tool, but also how the technology has an imminent constitutive effect on the research process and the researchers themselves. The webinar explores where the boundary lies between the application of GenAI as an efficient tool in different steps of the research process and GenAI becoming a “substantial” contributor alongside (or in place of?) a researcher.

The webinar does not aspire to produce any conclusive statements. It aims to facilitate a critical discussion among invited speakers and to prompt the audience to reflect upon the uses of GenAI in their research process practice.

The webinar is collaboratively organised by Inga Gaižauskaitė (RC33 Logic and Methodology in Sociology), Michael Grothe-Hammer (RC17 Sociology of Organizations), Lutfun Nahar Lata (RC21 Urban and Regional Development), Dirk Michel-Schertges (RC36 Alienation Theory and Research), and Markus S. Schulz (RC07 Futures Research).

Chairs:

- Inga Gaižauskaitė, Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences, Lithuania
- Lutfun Nahar Lata, The University of Melbourne, Australia
- Markus S. Schulz, Max Weber Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies, Germany

Kick-off Presentations:

- **What university students actually do with ChatGPT in their studies**
Michael Grothe-Hammer, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway
- **University Research and ChatGPT/GenAI: Academic technician or withering scholar?**
Dirk Michel-Schertges, Aarhus University, Denmark

Discussants:

- Jens Peter Andersen, Aarhus University, Denmark
- Aisha Naz Ansari, Aga Khan University, Pakistan
- Oscar Fontanelli Espinosa & Ligia Tavera Fenollosa, FLACSO, Mexico

RC07 on the Web

ISA RC07 Website: <https://www.isarc07.org>



RC07 on Social Media

ISARC07 endorses alternative social media. Follow @isarc07 on mastodon.social
Visit <https://mastodon.social/@isarc07>



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Stay informed. Participate in RC07 events and activities. Network with colleagues around the world. Enhance your career and professional acumen. Contribute to thriving futures research and crucial scholarly endeavors.

Regular dues for membership in the ISA Research Committee Futures Research (ISA-RC07) are only US\$20.00 for an entire four-year period. Discounts are available for members in countries with softer currencies and for students (US\$10.00). There is also a membership category available for voluntary supporters (US\$40).

For more details and for registering directly via the ISA secure website:
<https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/membership/individual-membership/>.



**Assume or question
assumptions about the future?
Contest predictions?
Study risks and opportunities,
for whom?
Engage with stakeholders?
Imagine alternatives?
Futures are the focus of our research.
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NEWSLETTER

RC07 newsletter aims to be a means of communication among the members of RC07 as well as other scholars interested in futures research. It is published non-periodically according to the needs of our scientific community. In addition to announcements of events organized by our RC, or related to our research concerns, we include news from our members, reports of activities, information on new publications, ongoing projects and works in progress as well as short thought pieces on pressing issues and current debates in our field.

Please contribute to our newsletter and help making it an effective tool for interaction. Send your comments and any news item for the next newsletter to isarc07news@gmail.com.

Acknowledgments and Disclaimers

Cover design

Cover photo by the Editor shows the historic medina of Rabat, the Kasbah of the Udayas, the Grand Mosque, the river Bou Regreg flowing into the Atlantic, and Salé on the river's right bank.

Acknowledgments

Editor of this issue: Markus S. Schulz in collaboration with the ISARC07 Program Committee.

Special thanks for support in developing this newsletter and program go to Arts & Science Consulting (ASC), ProFutur, and Denkwerk Antizipative Demokratie.

Disclaimers

This program is subject to potential change, including, but not limited to, potential change in the sequence and composition of sessions, schedule, and venues. Please make sure to double-check times and locations upon arrival.

The opinions expressed in the items published here are those of the authors.

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