



The 39th World
Congress of the
International Institute
of Sociology
Yerevan, Armenia

JUNE 11-14, 2009

www.iisoc.org/iis2009

REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION

Title of Session: The sociology of Roma/Gypsies/Travellers – between mainstream and specialisation

Name of Session Convener(s): Professor Thomas Acton

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Comments: To allow maximum time for discussion, we intend that all papers to be discussed should be circulated by e-mail beforehand to all those we know will be attending, and available in hard copy at the session (requests to receive copies to T.A.Acton@gre.ac.uk, please.) This session will **NOT** have the function of acting as an introduction to the Sociology of Roma for participants completely unfamiliar with it. Rather we strongly encourage all those interested in what the sociology of Travellers/Gypsies/Roma has to gain from and contribute to broader sociological discussions to offer papers to other relevant regular sessions, and to organise other regular sessions where appropriate, and draw these to the attention of those interested in Romani Studies and who may wish to remain in e- mail correspondence thereafter to monitor and extend the impact of Romani Studies on sociology.

Session Abstract (up to 250 words): At the 2005 Congress there was a single regular session on the exclusion of Romani Studies from mainstream sociology, which focused the attention of several participants, and seemed to link the grand themes of the Congress relating the frontiers of sociology to its classical roots, and papers dealing with Roma in other sessions

Emboldened, at the 2008 Congress we organised four sessions, which we hoped would mark the mainstreaming of Romani studies. But it became plain we had not mainstreamed ourselves. Rather we had re-ghettoised ourselves and prevented ourselves from getting our

experience into and learning from, other regular sessions. There was a contradiction between presenting and pursuing, our agenda. The most radical critiques even suggested that the very act of constituting Romani Studies as a distinct field helped perpetuate the marginalisation of Roma/Gypsies/Travellers. So this time we offer just one session as a focus point for those interested in Gypsies/Roma/Travellers and encourage colleagues also to offer papers to other sessions.

Crossroads are where issues can get missed. For example, while meeting in Yerevan, we might consider why the Armenian elements in Romani, and the Armenian-matrix Lomavren dialect of the Lom Gypsies are as under-emphasised in Romani studies as they are important in Gypsy history. But all such issues are footnotes to the debate whether the dilemma the sociology of Roma seems to face, between specialisation and mainstreaming, is inescapable. We invite abstracts for papers examining and illustrating this theme from any substantive area of sociological work dealing with Gypsies/Roma/Travellers.

General information

During each afternoon of the congress, there will be room for a large number of parallel regular sessions. Each session is 90 minutes long and consists of an oral presentation of 4 to 6 papers. Session conveners are expected to administer and chair their session at the 2009 IIS World Congress.

Starting in mid-December, calls for papers to participate in approved sessions will be posted on the website. Interested participants will contact the session convener (you) directly with an abstract no later than February 28, 2009. The session convener should take in all submissions and select the best 4 to 6 papers to be presented and forward this information, including e-mail addresses of accepted authors, to the IIS Secretariat no later than March 15, 2009.