



The 39th World
Congress of the
International Institute
of Sociology
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www.iisoc.org/iis2009

SPECIAL SESSION INFORMATION

Title of Session: Farewell to the “Second World”? Many worlds or one world?

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Comments: -

Session Abstract (up to 250 words):

Social science is a battle-field for concept formation. The Tübingen sociologist Friedrich H Tenbruck once remarked that there were no underdeveloped countries in the early 20th century. Or were there? Since we had not conceptualised them they were less visible.

Post-1989 transformations make the concept of the so-called Second World obsolete, since its common denominator was a no longer existing ideological community. This might either call for a search for new indicators for the countries involved or perhaps a re-conceptualization of the global state system.

The three worlds were as concepts never undisputed. After all Tsushima 1905 and the fall of Singapore 1942 sounds the knell for Western First World global dominance – but not for Modernity.

The notion of the Three worlds did not cover the global state system as a whole but attempts to complete the picture and fill the lacunas were never a “hit”; “Clash of civilisations”, “The West and the rest”, “Eurabia”, etc, had too much of a non scholarly agenda to gain credibility in terms of being useful for cumulative knowledge formation. The implosion of the Soviet empire calls for an up-date. The ideological factor is by no means stone dead, since nationalism gets stronger in the search for new identities, just like in 19th century historicist movements. There are several *Spätinder von 1848* in East and

central Europe, and assumedly also in the new independent states growing out of the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

However, the road to rational Modernity is path dependent with a handful of *Sonderwege* only in Europe (Liah Greenfield). The historical past as source of identity is a dual process, looking in the rear mirror when driving forward: “The future started long ago”. Oversupply of new concepts indicates crisis, since it is a safe prediction that only some will survive. The combined effects of the state eroding as a natural unit of analysis and the implosion of the Russian empire calls for realignment and renewal in an age of increased globalization. Global problems suggest a modernized polity.

This panel hopes to bring together scholars across the famous and momentous 1054-divide.

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 March 31, 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 April 7, 2009.