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REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION

Title of Session: Mechanisms of Globalization: The Making of World Society

Name of Session Convener(s): Boris Holzer; Tobias Werron

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Comments: Session organized by ISA RC 35 (COCTA)

Session Abstract (up to 250 words):

What are the driving forces of globalization? In contrast to approaches that focus on particular fields such as the economy or politics this session aims to investigate generic and general mechanisms of globalization. Such mechanisms operate across different societal domains and are thus particularly useful for purposes of systematic and historical comparison.

For a start, two general mechanisms of globalization may be distinguished. The first mechanism is a relational one: Globalization is conceived in terms of “interconnectedness”, be it worldwide trade, migration networks, international organizations, multinational corporations or transnational personal relationships. The history of globalization then appears as a history of an increasing number, density and importance of connections across the globe. In contrast, the second mechanism focuses on institutions, and in a broader sense phenomenological and cultural factors. Institutionalized expectations accelerate the diffusion of models, norms and standards along different (coercive, imitative/competitive or professional) channels. Probably the most cogent argument of this type is made by world polity research in Stanford (John W. Meyer et al.). Other perspectives such as Roland Robertson’s work or systems theoretical version of world society theory (Niklas Luhmann, Rudolf Stichweh) put a similar emphasis on phenomenological or “world-cultural” arguments.

The session aims to investigate these and other mechanisms of globalization: How do they work together? How are they related to basic sociological concepts such as action, communication, differentiation and diffusion? Are there other plausible candidates for generic mechanisms? How can globalizing processes in the economy, politics, law, religion, sports, arts, science and so on be explained in terms of these mechanisms? And, finally, which globalization theories are able to incorporate such questions in their overall theoretical framework?

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.