



Newsletter

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*ph: Keivan Missaghi

Letter from the vice-president

Dear RC03 Members,

As vice president, I am standing in for our committee president Marta Klekotko in this issue. Firstly, I want to thank everyone who submitted sessions and, subsequently, abstracts for the upcoming ISA Forum of Sociology, which will be held in Rabat Morocco from July 6 to 11, 2025. We have been informed that the ISA received a record of 9210 abstracts from 148 countries. Those who submitted abstracts should expect to receive notifications of acceptance by December 5th and the final program will be released afterward.

If you are unable to attend this year's Forum, I would like to remind you that the ISA will be holding its next World Congress from July 4 to 10, 2027 in Gwangju Korea. Though this may seem far off in the future, the RC03 executive is already brainstorming ideas for how our committee can have strong representation at the event. If you are interested in being part of these discussions, feel free to contact me at matt.patterson@ucalgary.ca or Marta at (marta.klekotko@us.edu.pl). We look forward to hosting some lively sessions on community research in Korea!

I'd also like to take this opportunity to encourage you to submit community profiles to be included in this newsletter. The community profiles allow us to learn more about the research that is being conducted across our membership, as well as appreciating the large diversity of what "community" means across the globe. If you are studying a community that you'd like to profile in our newsletter, please send your idea to our editors Francesca Donati (f.donati12@campus.unimib.it) and Alicia Domínguez (adomgon1@upo.es).

Yours Sincerely,

Matt Patterson, Vice-President of the RC03

Announcements

1. Call for participation in **Re-Co-wide Webinar Series** is open! Join the Working Group!
2. Apply for the **Research Network and the Co-organized Activities**. Enhance collaboration between members!
3. ISA Forum, Marrakesh 6-11 July, 2025
4. Architecture Media Politics Society (AMPS) conference: Livable Cities, 2025, Lisbon. <https://amps-research.com/conference/lisbon-livable-cities/>

Contacts

New Website: RC03 has a new, revamped website. You can find it at: <https://www.upo.es/cspl/rc03-isa/isa/>

Please send future announcements to adomgon1@upo.es or f.donati12@campus.unimib.it

Case study

"'Cultural Buzz' on the Neighbourhood: The Impact of the URBAN I Initiative.

By Cristina Mateos and Clemente Navarro

University Pablo de Olavide, Spain

(For more information on this study, please visit:

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-20885-0>)

The URBAN I initiatives were European urban development programmes aimed at revitalising under-resourced neighbourhoods. Beyond their intended socio-economic impact, the question here is whether the URBAN I initiative also influenced cultural consumption in these areas, transforming the neighbourhoods into lively cultural spaces, encouraging residents' engagement and/or attracting creative activities. There are two main strategies for creating this "cultural buzz": the community-oriented approach and the innovation-oriented approach. The first centres on local residents, aiming to make culture accessible to everyone, while the second uses cultural spaces to boost economic activity, attracting tourists and creative professionals.

The URBAN I project favoured the community-oriented strategy, primarily promoting cultural spaces that serve local residents. Through this approach, the initiative contributed to an increase in the density of cultural offerings—meaning the number and variety of cultural facilities available to residents. The project's focus on making culture accessible at the neighbourhood level aligns with a vision of culture as a public good, intended not only to entertain but also to unite communities and foster a sense of belonging. Public art, open public spaces, and smaller-scale cultural events were among the typical features promoted by URBAN I, reflecting a broader urban policy shift towards integrating culture into daily neighbourhood life.

The real question, then, is: did these initiatives work?

Cultural scenes are defined by their unique blend of cultural activities, spaces, and the lifestyles they promote. For example, a neighbourhood might have a scene centred around traditional cultural venues and family-oriented events, or it might foster a more avant-garde atmosphere that attracts younger or creative groups. In this sense different cultural scenes attract different target and might have a different impact on the neighbourhood. Our findings indicate that while the cultural density increased significantly in experimental areas, the shift towards innovative or economically driven cultural scenes was more modest. This suggests that while URBAN I succeeded in enhancing cultural access and participation, it did not fundamentally change the character of these neighbourhoods by attracting new creative industries or generating economic growth through culture. In other words, this community-oriented strategy provided residents with greater access to cultural experiences, fostering a more cohesive neighbourhood environment, but this alone was not sufficient to drive economic transformation. Given the broader economic revitalisation goals of the URBAN I initiatives, a strategy to achieve both social cohesion and economic revitalisation through cultural development could involve integrating cultural initiatives with other urban development policies. Urban planners may need to adopt a more integrated approach that blends community-oriented cultural initiatives with policies designed to attract new social and economic activities. For example, pairing cultural initiatives with business incentives or tourism promotion could potentially shift the cultural scene towards a more economically vibrant model, appealing to a broader demographic and directly supporting the local economy.

This reflection on the role of cultural policies in urban development leaves open a central question: how can cities best harness the power of culture to support both community well-being and economic vitality?

Activities and news from RC03 members:

Today's academic research poses methodological and epistemological challenges. Here are two resourceful contributions from our members:

Baker, Alison (2024). Socially Just Research with Young People. Creating Activist Solidarities in Times of Crisis. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-69296-3>.

This book bridges the fields of critical youth studies, community psychology, and sociology to offer a transdisciplinary analysis of youth voice, participation, and activism, as well as of creative and inclusive knowledge-making practices. Presented in three parts, the book traces our journey of praxis as we documented the narratives and testimonies of young people and then mobilised this knowledge to co-imagine and co-create a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) collective aimed at fostering connection and healing during the stringent lockdowns of 2020 in Victoria, Australia. Community building and art-making became central to memorialising their experiences of grief and loss, whilst also opening up new ways of seeing, being and doing. With no end in sight to our current coalescence of crises, this book serves as an invitation to those working alongside young people to consider what we must carry with us if we are to reimagine and remake our world. (for more information see: <https://link.springer.com/book/9783031692956>)

Corey, Dolgon (ed.) (2024). The Oxford Handbook of Sociology for Social Justice. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197615317.001.0001>.

The Oxford Handbook of Sociology for Social Justice is a collection of over thirty chapters focused on how sociological research and applications can be used in various struggles for equality, safety, and liberation. The authors describe and promote sociological concepts, theories, and methods that have empowered academic scholars to support political organizing, popular education, and innovative and grassroots policymaking, in an effort to democratize knowledge production and

provide some of the ideological and political tools to dismantle exploitative colonial and patriarchal structures, as well as the colonial roots of the discipline itself. This Handbook is a compendium of international scholars presenting real-life examples of how sociologists can “make a difference,” in myriad forms of research, teaching, and action. Ultimately, the Handbook shows an alternative path for young sociologists and those who still believe the discipline can be a powerful force for social justice. (for more information see: <https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/58211>)

From the books to the field

International action research summer camp organised by our member Corey Dolgon in collaboration with the Suttner University.

"Participatory and community-based forms of social problem analysis are core elements of empowerment and change “from below”. Related processes and methodologies have proven effective in fighting social inequalities and finding useful and sustainable solutions towards progressive social transformation. The Action Research Summer Camp takes place every June in the incomparably beautiful Austrian Alps. It runs for one week and invites students, activists, academics, unionists, community workers, members of NGOs and others to build a community of practice in Participatory Action Research. Together with our social partner in Innsbruck, the Waldhüttl community project, we learn about and reflect on collaborative, participatory problem analysis and political action." (for more information see: Action Research Summer Camp Short course / summer school | Suttner Universität)

Academic research is built on the ideas of many. Engaging with the work of our colleagues is essential for fostering debate and building knowledge collaboratively.

Here are some of the latest contributions from our members:

Clemente, Navarro; Maria José, Guerrero-Mayo; Alicia, Dominguez. (2024). Integrated strategies for sustainable local development. A notebook about innovations in planning, implementation and evaluation, CSPL-Universidad Pablo de Olavide.

Clemente, Navarro; Maria-Jesus, Rodriguez-Garcia; Angel, Zapata. (2024). La heterogeneidad espacial de los efectos de la gran recesiónLa influencia contextual de los espacios metropolitanos y no metropolitanos en España (2004-2017). RES. Revista Española de Sociología, Vol. 33, Núm. 1

Donati, Francesca; Emanuele, Polizzi. (2024). Così vicine, così lontane. L'associazionismo tra propositi collaborativi e fatiche organizzative. In Caltabiano, C.; Vitale, T; Zucca, G (ed.) La prospettiva civica. L'Italia vista da chi si mette assieme per cambiarla. Fondazione Feltrinelli.

Donati, Francesca; Maria-Jesus, Rodriguez-Garcia. (2024). Gender mainstreaming in urban projects: A measurement proposal applied to Spanish urban regeneration policies. Cities, 150, 105090. pp.1-11