

international social science council

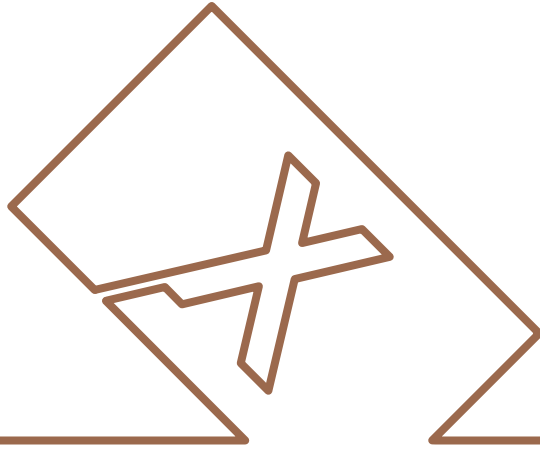


Since its foundation in 1952, the International Social Science Council (ISSC) has been at the forefront of trends in international social science research and collaboration. This commemorative booklet is published on the occasion of the merger with the International Council for Science (ICSU). It highlights and invites reflection on some of the key moments from the past 65 years of the ISSC and describes activities, central characters and institutional developments

that have made the ISSC what it is today. It highlights significant achievements of the most recent period, such as the World Social Science Report and World Social Science Forum, and key research programmes such as Transformations to Sustainability and the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP). It is by no means exhaustive and anyone interested in diving further into the ISSC's history will find a list of additional resources at the end.

On behalf of the ISSC Executive Committee, I'd like to thank and acknowledge everyone from our members, partners, Executive Committee and Secretariat who has contributed to the ISSC over the past decades. As this publication makes clear, the ISSC has always found its strengths in its ability to convene people, to make new connections across disciplinary or geo-political boundaries, and in the new horizons for research and understanding that result from opening up knowledge in ways previously thought impossible.

As we look ahead to the International Science Council, we can do so with confidence. From its early days, the ISSC has championed the value of social science to build understanding and to solve global problems. Today, when the world is facing unprecedented challenges, and the digital revolution has created unprecedented opportunities to connect with each other for the purposes of building shared understanding, I have no doubt that coming generations of social scientists will take forward our proud tradition.



The origins of the International Social Science Council (ISSC) lie in the aftermath of the Second World War, an era marked by the expectation that the social sciences would contribute directly to solving social problems. In September **1950** the World Congress of International Sociological and Political Science Associations advocated “the development, as rapidly as possible, of an International Council for Social Research to serve as a clearing house, a centre of information and consultation, an instrument for facilitating

co-operative and comparative studies”. A year later, the 6th General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) followed up this recommendation and passed the resolution that formally led to the foundation of the ISSC. It envisaged that the ISSC would survey existing social science research institutes and centres and examine what contribution they could make to the “most important problems of the present age”, including for the purpose of aiding these centres’ development and cooperation.



Claude Lévi-Strauss in 2005.
Photo: UNESCO/Michel Ravassard
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Levi-strauss_260.jpg), „Levi-strauss 260“, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/legalcode>

The ISSC’s constitutive General Assembly was held in October **1952**. In the beginning the Council consisted of ten people, two thirds of whom were chosen on the basis of recommendations from social science associations. The rest were to be outstanding specialists selected by the other Council members with the aim of bringing in wider disciplinary representation. The associations entrusted to nominate candidates for the ISSC were the International Association of Legal

Science (IALS), the International Economic Association (IEA), the International Political Science Association (IPSA), the International Sociological Association (ISA), the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) and the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES). Claude Lévi-Strauss (France, anthropology) was appointed Secretary-General, while Donald Young (United States, sociology) became President.

Following its creation the ISSC started carrying out research on issues reflecting the priorities of the day, such as the influence of changes of scale on the properties of social groups, the social implications of industrialization, compromises in different cultures, socio-cultural factors affecting productivity, or the utilization of mathematics in the social sciences. A number of reports on the development of social sciences in the world and the evaluation of international cooperation programmes were also produced.

The International Bureau for Research into the Social Implications of Technological Progress (BIRISPT) was created in 1953 as a research arm of the ISSC. It was led by Georges Balandier, a French anthropologist. From Gandhi's views on machines and technology, to links between industrial change and juvenile delinquency, to nuclear energy for peace and the relationship between social change and technological progress, BIRISPT involved a wide network of international experts in an important number of pilot studies and comparative research projects, including, for instance, future Nobel prize winner Simon Kuznets.



The ISSC started publishing Social Science Information (SSI)/ Information sur les sciences sociales in 1962. This bilingual, pluri-disciplinary journal reported and reflected on critical intellectual and institutional social science developments worldwide. The ISSC ceased its involvement with SSI in 1986; today the journal continues to be published by Sage.

In 1963, as the Cold War began to thaw, the ISSC established the Coordination Centre for Social Science Research and Documentation – better known as the ‘Vienna Centre’ – to support cooperation and collaborations between Eastern and Western European social scientists on problems of shared relevance and interest. Its Vienna-based secretariat, first led by Adam Schaff and later by Stephen C. Mills, maintained a strict balance between Eastern and Western

Europe. For three decades the Centre was one of the few international institutions allowing genuine cross-national research collaborations between Eastern Europe and the West. It coordinated comparative studies on topics such as time budgets, regional development aid, university diplomas, innovation in agriculture, and aspects of the family. The Vienna Centre was formally closed in 1993, its relevance having declined in the changing geo-political context.

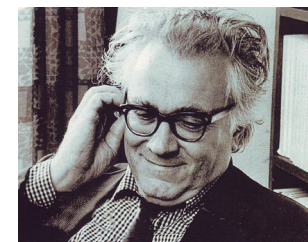


In **1965** the ISSC established Standing Committees for programmes of research in three new areas: comparative studies, data archives and environmental disruption. It also established the International Centre for Intergroup Relations (in collaboration with the École des Hautes Études Pratiques, France) the same year. The studies, bibliographies and trend reports in these areas produced by the ISSC over the following decade had a lasting impact.

From being a council of social science luminaries, the ISSC evolved in **1972** to become a federation of international disciplinary associations, following the model of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (CIPSH) and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU). The structural change increased membership, with the accession of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA), the International Law Association (ILA), the International Geographical Union (IGU), the International Society for

Criminology (ISC), the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), the World Association of Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) and World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH). Furthermore, in 1973 the ISSC established the Conference of National Social Science Councils and Analogous Bodies (CNSSC) to facilitate cooperation between national social science bodies. The CNSSC (now the International Federation of Social Science Organizations, IFSSO) was admitted as a full ISSC member in 1979.

Stein Rokkan took office as ISSC President in **1973**. Together with Secretary-General Samy Friedman, they attempted to re-energize the ISSC's activities by initiating four new areas of thematic and structural work: World Models, to study and review computer models for forecasting long-term trends of change; Urban Networks, to advance comparative analysis of interactions among cities and the consequences of locational patterns for inequalities; World Social Science Development, a Committee of 'Third World' social scientists developing a set of joint activities, and Social Conditions, an advisory group identifying priority tasks for research and action in the social sciences.



Stein Rokkan served as ISSC President from 1973 to 1977 and developed a number of new activities.



*Olive Shisana, ISSC
President 2010-2013*

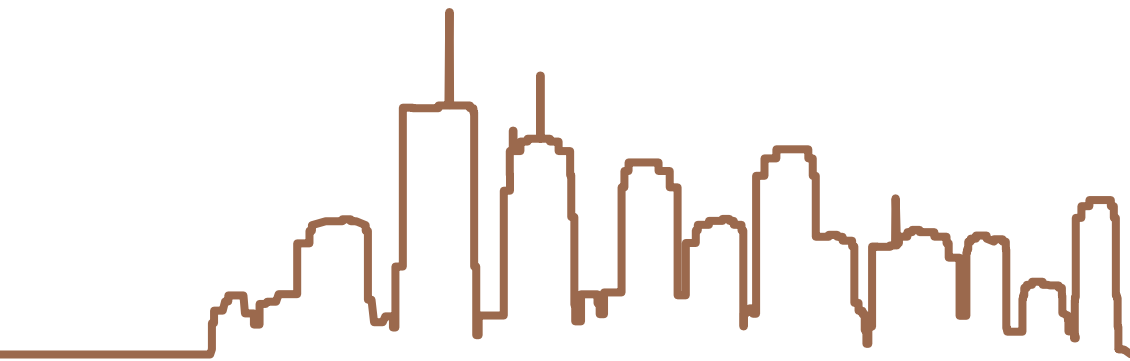
In **1983**, under the leadership of Candido Mendes, President, and Luis I. Ramallo, Secretary-General, the ISSC adopted a number of new priorities which were closely associated with UNESCO programme activities of the time. These included economic theories and problems of development, peace, and technological change. However, the expectation that such alignment with UNESCO might

help secure funding for new activities was not fulfilled, as the withdrawal of the USA and United Kingdom from UNESCO in 1984 led to a freeze on subventions, with a knock-on effect on the ISSC. A group of major national funding bodies, organized in the Oakley Caucus, stepped in to remedy this situation and help advance international social science research by supporting some ISSC activities.

The first woman to join the ISSC's Executive Committee, psychologist Germaine de Montmollin, was appointed only in **1973**, and it was not until the 1990s that women became more prominent in the ISSC. From the mid-1980s, a number of new activities relating to women were launched, including a Consultative Group on women formed from 30 women's groups of the member associations – which met in 1986 and 1987 – and a 1990 newsletter reporting on women's studies across the range

of members. In more recent years the ISSC-sponsored Committee on Gender, Globalization and Democratization has taken forward some aspects of this work with aim of gathering knowledge from all parts of the world to improve the social, economic and political position of women in the era of globalization. The ISSC's first female President, Else Øyen, was elected in 1996, followed in later years by Lourdes Arizpe (President 2002-2006) and Olive Shisana (President 2010-2013).





Initiatives of the 1980s connected the social and natural sciences, such as the Human Dimensions of Global Change Committee (HDGC), established in 1988. Shigeto Tsuru, the first Japanese member of the Executive Committee, had organized conferences and written on anthropogenic environmental disruption as early as the 1960s. In the context of growing public concern about the environment, the ISSC initiated the HDGC programme (Standing Committee) to study interactions between human activities and the whole Earth System.

In 1996 ICSU became a co-sponsor of the HDGC programme, which was renamed the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP). Ten years later the United Nations University (UNU) also became a co-sponsor. IHDP established a lively and engaged network of national committees in countries from Australia to Vietnam, and a portfolio of research projects. Several IHDP projects transitioned into Future Earth from 2014 onwards.



In 1999 the Scientific Director of CROP, Else Øyen, was invited to present a paper at the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of the Social Sciences.

Else Øyen, Vice-President for Scientific Affairs, established the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP) in 1992, with support from her home institution, the University of Bergen (UiB), Norway. CROP's mission is to build independent and critical knowledge on poverty, and to help shape policies for preventing and eradicating

poverty. Over two decades, CROP has built a vibrant international network of scholars and institutions and published a large body of studies on different aspects of poverty, including elite perceptions of poverty and the interconnections between poverty and environmental change.

In **1992** a constitutional revision allowed regional bodies for the social sciences, such as the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), to become full members of the ISSC. CLACSO had been founded in 1967, following an ISSC meeting on comparative social research in developing countries held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), founded in 1973, joined the ISSC in 2006. The latest regional social science council to be formed is the Arab Council for Social Sciences (ACSS), which launched in 2008 and joined the ISSC in 2013.

The ISSC signed its first six-year Framework Agreement with UNESCO in **1996**. This system allowed UNESCO funding to be channelled to activities of the ISSC and its members that aligned well with UNESCO's own priorities. This also meant that the proportion of ISSC income from UNESCO sources increased to almost 90 per cent by 2001. Subsequent Framework Agreements reduced the amount of funding from UNESCO.



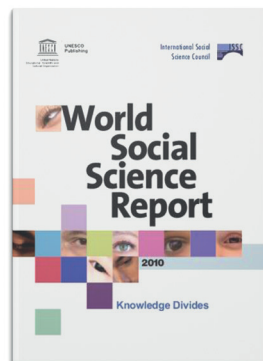
ISSC President Gudmund Hernes is interviewed on the sidelines of the 2009 World Social Science Forum in Bergen, Norway.

In **2002** the ISSC's membership included 14 disciplinary Member Associations, 18 national or regional Member Organizations and 17 Associate (non-voting) Members. Thanks to the efforts of Secretary-General Ali Kazancigil, membership grew to include important national research councils. A constitutional revision in 2010 led to the creation of a new membership category, Member Institutions, in order to allow universities, foundations or other research bodies with a strong interest in the social sciences to join the ISSC.

In **2008** the initiation of the Integrated Research on Disaster Risk Programme (IRDR), launched together with ICSU and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), set the tone for an opening towards other disciplines and focus on global challenges that would characterize the following decade. IRDR is an integrated research programme focused on dealing with the challenges brought by natural disasters, mitigating their impacts, and improving related policy mechanisms.

Under the leadership of Gudmund Hernes, President, and Heide Hackmann, Executive Director, the ISSC convened the first World Social Science Forum in **2009** in Bergen, Norway. The topic was 'One Planet - Worlds Apart?' Since then, the Forum has established itself as a unique event gathering scientists and practitioners from all over the world to discuss important societal challenges, take stock of social science contributions and capacities, and make recommendations for

future research, practice and policy. The 2013 Forum, in Montreal, Canada, focused on 'Social Transformations and the Digital Age', while the 2015 edition, in Durban, South Africa, took as its theme 'Transforming Global Relations for a Just World'. The 2018 World Social Science Forum – the first to be held under the auspices of the new International Science Council – will focus on the topic of 'Security and Equality for Sustainable Futures'.



From 2012 to 2015, the World Social Science Fellows programme, supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), represented a new activity to develop capacity among early-career social scientists around the world. Over 200 early-career scientists were selected to participate in a series of seminars, conferences and networking events on pressing topics. The aim of the programme was to foster a new generation of globally networked research leaders who would collaborate in addressing global problems with

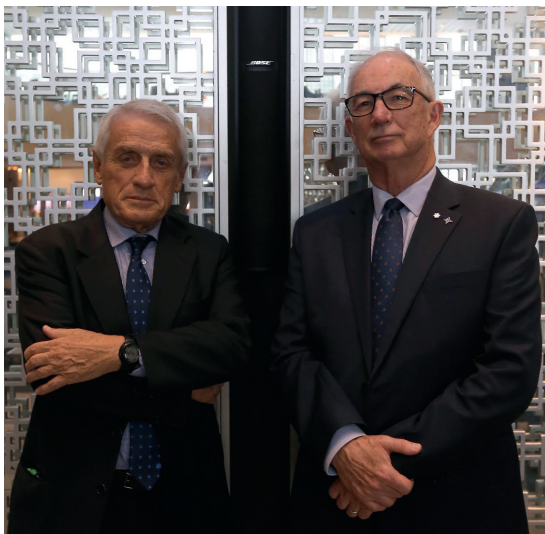
particular relevance for low- and middle-income countries. This commitment to supporting early-career researchers – and especially those based in the Global South – is also reflected in the Leading Integrated Research for Agenda 2030 in Africa (LIRA 2030) programme launched in 2016. LIRA 2030 funds research projects across Africa which bring early-career scientists from different scientific disciplines together with key stakeholders. It is co-organized with ICSU and the Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) and is supported by Sida.

In 1999 the ISSC played an important role in the production of the first UNESCO World Social Science Report and a decade later became the driving force behind the production of a regular series of such Reports, co-published with UNESCO. In 2010 the ISSC produced the World Social Science Report 'Knowledge Divides', which reviews how social science knowledge is produced, disseminated and used in different parts of the world. The 2013 Report, co-published with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

(OECD), focused on 'Changing Global Environments'. It issued an urgent call to the international social science community to deliver solutions-oriented knowledge on today's most pressing environmental problems. The 2016 Report, 'Challenging Inequalities: Pathways to a Just World', prepared in collaboration with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK, looks systematically at various dimensions of inequality and how they intersect and interact to shape people's lives and sets out an agenda for research on inequality.

In 2012 the ISSC was among the founding sponsors of Future Earth, a new research programme for sustainability. Future Earth was launched to deliver knowledge from across the disciplines that can help societies meet their ambitions for sustainable development in the coming decades. It is governed by a council including ICSU, the ISSC, the Science and Technology in Society (STS) forum, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), the Belmont Forum of research funders, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNESCO and UNU, and is supported by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

The Transformations to Sustainability programme, supported by Sida, was launched by the ISSC in 2014 as a contribution to Future Earth. The programme aims to support interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research led by social scientists to contribute usable knowledge on transformations towards sustainability. The programme is supporting three international networks for a period of three years. As of 2018 a new phase of the Transformations to Sustainability programme developed by the ISSC, the Belmont Forum of research funders and the NORFACE network of social science funders is funding twelve international projects for three years.



ISSC President Alberto Martinelli and ICSU President Gordon McBean during the 2017 meeting in Taipei. Photo: Pichi Chuang.



International Science Council

In July 2018 the ISSC merged with ICSU to form the International Science Council

At a joint assembly held in Taipei in 2017 the members of the ISSC and ICSU decided to merge to create the International Science Council, the largest international science organization of its kind. This landmark decision was the culmination of a two-year process of exploring the opportunities and implications of closer institutional alignment which began in 2015. Reacting to the vote, Martinelli said

“Now more than ever before, a powerful and credible voice is needed to advocate the value and values of all science to society. The challenge of living sustainably and equitably in a rapidly changing world means that the need for scientific understanding has never been greater.” The ambition behind the merger is clear: the new International Science Council aims to be greater than the sum of its parts, a unique organization with a strengthened influence on the global stage.

Further resources

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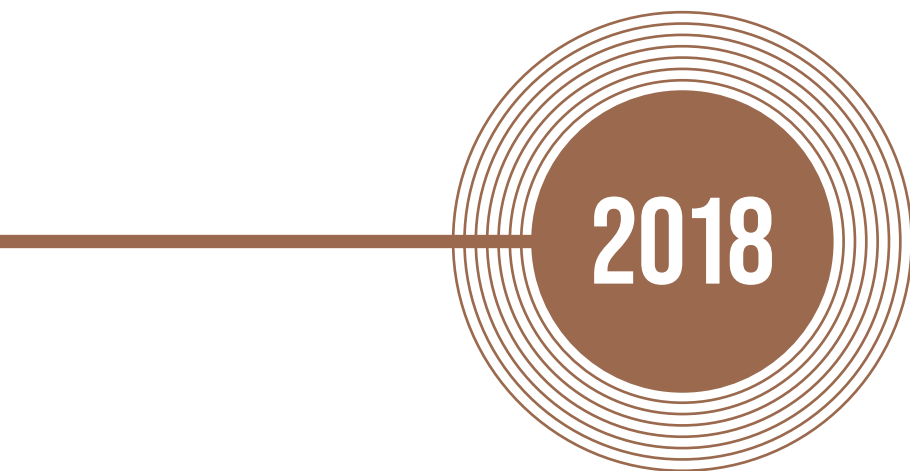
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