

extreme practices & behaviors become more normative, conceptions of the body & self-identity are challenged & pushed beyond limits that were historically viewed as acceptable. As a construct, extreme is a means to situate & theorize divergent practices that highlight the relationship between the body, identity, media, & consumption. This presentation will engage current issues surrounding the nature & significance of extreme cultural practices & embodiment within this context.

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Kovacheva, Siyka K. (Dept Sociology, U Plovdiv, Bulgaria [tel: (+359 32) 44 88 90; fax: (+359 32) 64 97 57; e-mail: skovacheva@mbox.contact.bg]), **Empowerment of Young People in Their Transitions from Education to Employment**, *International Sociological Association, Durban, South Africa*, (ENG)

¶ This paper addresses the challenges that youth policy faces in assisting young people's social integration under the conditions of growing risks & insecurity. How can the patterns of disadvantage be broken, so that young people get engaged more actively in the process of their own labor market integration and wider social inclusion? The paper attempts to answer this question on the basis of a study of unemployed youth & active employment policies in two local labor markets in Bulgaria, carried out in the autumn of 2005. The research made use of a survey of registered unemployed aged up to 29, biographical interviews with disadvantaged young women & men & interviews-in-depth with experts working in public, private & non-for-profit organizations offering programs in support for youth transitions. The results show that activation can have the desired lasting effect when widening access to educational & training options & relying on positive incentives & young people's intrinsic motivation.

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Kraan, Karolus, de Leede, Jan, Kwakkelstein, Tobias & den Hengst, Mariëlle (TNO Work & Employment, Hoofddorp, The Netherlands 2130 AS [tel: 00-31-23-5549-482; fax: 00-31-23-5549-305; e-mail: Karolus.Kraan@tno.nl]), **Virtual Work: New Insights into the High Road**, *International Sociological Association, Durban, South Africa*, (ENG)

¶ The availability of ICT is increasing the virtuality of our world of work. Virtual teams differ from traditional teams on two characteristics: geographical dispersion & technology-mediated communication. This article focuses on the conditions for high road virtual teams: high performance & low stress. Based on a review of recent studies on virtual teams, we present a number of key conditions: degree of virtuality, job demands, autonomy, social support, team leader support & use of communication tools. We collected data on virtual teams in a global software company. Based on a multiple regression analysis, including the interaction effects of high versus low virtual workers, we found that high job demands are critical for virtual teams: they lower efficiency & increase the likelihood of job stress. Furthermore, a better use of communication tools is only positive for the efficiency of high virtual workers. Finally, we found that approachable team leaders are positive for only the low virtual workers, not for the high virtual workers.

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Kraan, Karolus & Oeij, Peter R. A. (TNO Work & Employment, Hoofddorp, The Netherlands 2130 AS [tel: 00-31-23-5549-482; fax: 00-31-23-5549-305; e-mail: Karolus.Kraan@tno.nl]), **Do New Production Concepts and a New Management of Employment Relations Yield Higher Employee Performance and Lower Job Strain?**, *International Sociological Association, Durban, South Africa*, (ENG)

¶ In this paper old versus new production concepts (NPCs) & employment relation instruments, are studied, separately & in combination, to find out which yield high employee performance & low job strain. Therefore, in 2005, TNO conducted coupled surveys among 149 supervisors & employees. In the past decades, in reaction to dysfunctions of Tayloristic & professional bureaucratic production concepts & employment relations, several new forms of employment relations & NPCs, appeared. Examples are the Socio-technical New Production Concept & customised employment relations. In this study both this NPC & customised performance targets demonstrate positive associations with employee performance. According to Socio-technical theory the design of employment relations is relatively unimportant, as human resources are mobilised primarily by the production concept. Our results for this NPC show the legitimacy of this assumption, because its high employee performance is irrespective of the employment relations. On the contrary, in the other NPCs & in professional bureaucracies, respectively employment relations characterised by an increased period needed for learning the job & customization of perfor-

mance targets, can compensate for their lower employee performance. Furthermore, the results do not show increased job strain, due to new production concepts, or new employment relations.

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Kraus, Vered & Yonay, Yuval (U Haifa, Mount Carmel, Israel [tel: 972-4-8320380; fax: 972-4-8240819; e-mail: kraus@soc.haifa.ac.il]), **Women Labor Force Participation in the Middle East**, *International Sociological Association, Durban, South Africa*, (ENG)

¶ Despite the increase in the share of Middle Eastern women in the labour force, their standing in the paid market is still very low compared to women in other regions of the world economy. In order to understand the roles & status of women & their changes, it is necessary to examine culture, economic development, & political factors. We plan to compare the standing of Israeli Palestinian women with Palestinian women with other Middle Eastern countries. Given the high level of industrialization in Israel & its advanced social services, we would expect that Israeli Palestinian women would have better labour opportunity structure than women in other Middle Eastern countries. Yet we should not forget that they have faced those opportunities from an extremely disadvantaged position of political subordination to the Jewish state.

2006S00952

Kravchenko, Sergey A. (MGIMO U, Moscow, Russia 119454 [tel: 7-095-434-94-26; fax: 7-095-434-94-26; e-mail: sociol@mgimo.ru]), **Game-ization as a New Form of Alienation**, *International Sociological Association, Durban, South Africa*, (ENG)

¶ Modern world is characterised by a peculiar process—game-ization—that is the introduction of game principles & heuristic elements into pragmatic life strategies. It helps to master the neodeterministic character of new social realities. At the same time, the game-ization as a new form of alienation enslaves a man. The game-ized individual as if keeps aloof from himself. It stands to reason that the game-ization has required actors with the adequate game habitus, who are able to use uncertainties & risks to their advantage, that is, to act swiftly & unpredictably for opponents. It is a very important factor in producing "nonplaces, non-people, & nothings" (G. Ritzer). Thus, the game-ized individual has become the symbol of success & wealth. No wonder that masses of people all over the world want to be a part of it. But the alienated man produces new idols for himself that is simulacrum of happy chances.

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Kravchenko, Sergey A. (MGIMO U, Moscow, Russia 119454 [tel: 7-095-434-94-26; fax: 7-095-434-94-26; e-mail: sociol@mgimo.ru]), **Sociology in the Changing World: Game-ization as a New Approach to the Problem**, *International Sociological Association, Durban, South Africa*, (ENG)

¶ The modern world acquires new qualities. One of them is game-ization. Under it I subsume the following: (1) Introduction of game principles & heuristic elements into pragmatic life strategies. Such introduction enables individuals by means of self-reflection to adapt to new uncertainties & to perform efficiently their actual professional & social roles in a constantly changing society. (2) New paradigm of rationality, typical for modern conditions of indefiniteness & the expansion of institutional risks in which order is born from chaos. (3) The factor of contracting & reproduction of virtual reality of imbalance type. People are becoming game dependent thus forming a game-ized 'chorus', which is manipulated by others. The game-ized practices are 'just trifles', not serious things. But it is a very important factor in erecting crosscutting social circles as well as in producing 'nonplaces, non-people, & nothings' (G. Ritzer). (4) And last but not least the game-ization can be a new sociological paradigm with a set of theoretical & methodological instruments suitable to analyse the rhizome discourses, explain paradoxes of the postmodern society.

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Kravchenko, Sergey A. (Sociological Dept, Moscow State Inst International Relations, Russia [tel: 7-495-434-94-26; fax: 7-495-434-90-66; e-mail: socio@mgimo.ru]), **Postmodernity and the Game-ization of Political Life in Russia**, *International Sociological Association, Durban, South Africa*, (ENG)

¶ Under game-ization I subsume the introduction of game principles & heuristic elements into pragmatic life strategies that enables individuals by means of self-reflection to adapt to new uncertainties. The game-ization in politics manifests itself in the diluted structures & actions. The very idea of politics as a purposeful activity, that according to M. Weber presup-