
ISCAR International Congress

ISCAR supports the organization of a triennial international Congress for the presentation of re-search within the sphere of the Society's interests. The first congress was held in Seville, Spain, September 20-24, 2005. The second was in La Jolla, USA, September 9-13, 2008. The third has been planned in Rome, 2011.

Communication among ISCAR members

- An electronic newsletter is sent to members several times per year.
- ISCAR sections are being formed all over the world. These sections often have their own web pages, and in some cases organize conferences, Ph.D. courses and related activities.
- Sections with specific topical interests: See: <http://www.iscar.org/section/>
- a web portal is under construction at <http://www.iscar.org>

Becoming an ISCAR member

ISCAR welcomes all researchers who are interested in the Society's conceptual focus on theoretical and empirical research on societal, cultural and historical dimensions of human practices. At present ISCAR has members from a wide range of disciplines interested in the study

of human development and societal practices including psychology, education, philosophy, history, sociology, linguistics, anthropology, work research, computer sciences, information systems, knowledge management, clinical neuropsychology and rehabilitation, occupational therapy, criminology, and social work.

Visit www.iscar.org and become a member now!

ISCAR Membership Benefits

ISCAR offers a series of benefits to members. There are subscription discounts for the journals *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, *Culture & Psychology*, *Cultural-Historical Psychology*, *Critical Practice Studies – Outlines*, *Nordiske Udkast*, *Ethos*, and *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*.

There are discounts on several books published by Aarhus University Press, Cambridge University Press, Lehmanns Media and a reduced Congress fee for members who participate in ISCAR's Congress. And most importantly, through the newsletter and the sections, it is possible to keep oriented about new events and developments, as well as find colleagues with similar interests.



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CULTURAL & ACTIVITY RESEARCH

Objective

The International Society for Cultural and Activity Research (ISCAR) is a scientific association that aims at:

- developing multidisciplinary theoretical and empirical research on societal, cultural and historical dimensions of human practices
- promoting mutual scientific communication and research cooperation among its members

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First Steps

ISCAR was formally constituted in June 2002, reflecting a decision to integrate two organizations — International Society for Cultural Research and Activity Theory (ISCRAT) and Conference for Sociocultural Research — that were each oriented to supporting scientific communication about different aspects of sociocultural, cultural-historical and activity theory approaches. These organisations arose out of meetings and activities that had started initially and independently in

the early 1980s, which subsequently developed into quadrennial Congresses (five ISCRAT Congresses from 1986-2002, and three Conferences for Sociocultural Research from 1992-2000) — involving researchers from five continents.

ISCAR aims to recognize and respect these diverse origins and interests, and preserve conditions for their expression within the Society.

Primary frame of reference

The primary frame of reference that has historically brought researchers together from different disciplines into ISCAR has been an interest in a related set of psychologically-oriented theoretical perspectives that were first formulated in the 1920s and 1930s by such researchers as L.S. Vygotsky, A.N. Leontiev, A.R. Luria, M. M. Bakhtin and S.L. Rubinshtein. International attention on these perspectives by researchers started in the 1960s, especially by psychologists, educational researchers, and linguists. Subsequently there has been interest from researchers interested in collective practices from various other disciplines in social and human sciences, as well as philosophy.

Common point of reference

A common point of reference that appears in most, if not all, research conducted by ISCAR members is a focus on the study of specific cultural practices and/or the genesis and development of mental processes, where practices and processes are conceptualized as

historically and collectively developed, mediated through the use of tools and signs, and constructed through participation in these practices. Investigations are directed to both individual and/or collective aspects.

Ongoing themes

An important ongoing theme in the development of the theoretical tradition has been the relation between theory and practice. This interest arises in part from a concern within the general theoretical perspective to have a research approach that can contribute to the improvement of societal practice and in part from an epistemological view that psychologically-oriented theories must be developed in relation to the practices in which persons engage.

A related ambition, common to many empirical studies, is to integrate microanalysis of specific practices with socio-historical and basic theoretical problematisations.

Another interest for some ISCAR members is to explore the main philosophical traditions that underpin the cultural-historical study of practices. This includes the dialectical logic and historical materialism of Hegel and Marx, toward which the original psychological traditions were oriented, but many also work with concepts, principles and methods from pragmatist, narrative, poststructuralist and existentialist philosophies.

In short, there is a diversity of theoretical, practical and philosophical interests found among ISCAR members today.

Some of the topics of particular interest include:

- conditions and contexts for learning in educational institutions and elsewhere
- the design and use of technological tools in relation to work and educational practices
- the conditions and characteristics of work practices and/or their transformation and development
- forms of collectivity, community, and participation
- cultural diversity and processes of inclusion and exclusion
- identity formation in diverse cultural contexts
- children's play and transition to schooling
- conditions and contents of schooling and instruction for diverse groups (cultural minorities, atypical physical or psychological development) and various subject-matters
- the role of communication and dialogue in forming meaning in work, play, family, and school
- the relationship between self and culture from a historical perspective
- collective memory