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REGULAR SESSION

Title of Session: **Civilising and Decivilising Processes: Key Trends of the Twenty-First Century**

Name of Session Convener(s): **Stephen Mennell/Robert van Krieken**

University/Organization: **University of Dublin/University of Sydney**

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Comments: **The session organizers are also members of the Figural Sociology Working Group in the ISA's RC20 on Comparative Sociology.**

Abstract (up to 250 words):

This session will be open to, but not restricted to, current research in the following areas:

- a) "Civilising and Decivilising Processes beyond Europe": comparative studies of civilisation around the globe, in relation to the wide diversity of forms of state formation and cultural development, in regions such as Asia, South America and Africa, as well as the social scientific analysis of globalisation and the expansion of a 'world society'.
- b) the question of processes of civilisation in stateless societies, and such an analysis might enrich contemporary social anthropology;
- c) the analysis of the current dynamics of processes of civilisation, and the extent to which it should be understood as improving control over human relations, in areas such as the sociology of emotions, the sociology of sport, media and communications, education, etc.;
- d) the study of the 'barbarism of civilisation', decivilisation or 'dyscivilisation', the analysis of totalitarian states, genocide, colonialism and post-colonialism;
- e) an author-meets-readers session on Stephen Mennell's *The American Civilising Process* (Polity, September 2007), framed as a more general exploration of the utilization of figural sociology to analyse the specific character of American society and history.