



CALL FOR PAPERS

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ESA26
17th CONFERENCE
WARSAW
25-28 AUGUST 2026



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The Conference

Strengthening Democracies: Social Action, Solidarity, and Sustainable Futures

17th Conference of the European Sociological Association

In these turbulent times, democracy is facing a concatenation of unforeseen challenges across the globe: a persistent polycrisis of concurrent shocks, risks, and perils impacting public health, the environment, and energy systems; triggering conflicts, wars, and population displacements; ushering in economic challenges and amplifying human misery. Europe is navigating not only the dilemmas themselves, but also public discontent regarding demographic problems, access to and distribution of resources, food insecurity and labour market instability. Mistrust in institutions and disillusionment with political systems have led to populism and upsurging far-right movements; threats to human rights are exemplified by xenophobia and transphobia, a backlash against LGBTQI+ as well as setbacks in women's and other minority rights. Witnessed is the militarisation of groups, proliferation of wars, and intensification of rearmament. These times of uncertainty have generated scepticism, the devaluation of facts, and a disregard for truth. Called into question are the institutions of democracy itself, the European project, and the prospect of future prosperity.

Moreover, the accelerated pace of the digital transformation—particularly Artificial Intelligence—is reshaping social realities by opening up new scenarios in all fields of social life. These technologies could offer new vantage points as well as the tools to address societal changes and inequalities, including support for migrant and refugee populations as well as for rural, less populated, remote regions and various peripheries. At the same time, high tech can also aid and abet the proliferation of post-truth narratives, political extremism, and authoritarianism. All of the above underscores the importance of public sociology here and now.

This complex societal landscape has deepened social and economic inequalities, increased precariousness, and diversely affected people's living conditions. Robust democracies and extensive civic participation are essential for fairer and more sustainable futures. Greater social inclusion, respect for diversity, gender equality, recognition of marginalised identities, and support for academic freedom can contribute to improved social cohesion, unveiling a horizon of hope and opportunity for transformative social change.

Collective social action and solidarity can empower communities to work for social, economic, and environmental justice, emphasising active engagement towards more democratic and inclusive societies. Both individual and collective human agency is crucial for building dialogue across different perspectives and for finding solutions that inform knowledge-based policies, politics, and practice.

The upcoming 17th European Sociological Conference—Strengthening Democracies: Social Action, Solidarity, and Sustainable Futures—will take place in Warsaw, Poland on 25-28 August 2026, bringing together social scientists from across the European continent and beyond for discussions, scholarly exchanges, and networking. Its topics include but are not limited to: the role of sociology and the social sciences in improving and strengthening democracies; theoretical and methodological pathways and tools for social transformation; the evolving role of sociologists in effecting positive change during

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turbulent times and on shifting social landscapes; the role of public sociology and creative approaches in both priming and strengthening dialogues towards more democratic and inclusive societies open for all. Social scientists are invited to submit proposals and to participate in this significant, international scientific event. ESA is looking forward to your submissions!

Confirmed Speakers:

Grzegorz Ekiert, Harvard University, USA

Joyeeta Gupta, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Rolf Lidskog, Örebro University, Sweden

Geoffrey Pleyers, Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium

Bandana Purkayastha, University of Connecticut, USA

And many more speakers to be announced soon.

Venues:

Opening Ceremony and Plenary 1



COS Torwar, Łazienkowska 6A, 00-449 Warsaw

(52.222514663392744, 21.042214958471384)

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Plenary 2, Plenary 3 and Closing Ceremony



Auditorium Maximum of the University of Warsaw, Krakowskie Przedmieście, 26/28, Warsaw
(52.241296985548196, 21.018731270227164)

Social Dinner and Party



Palace of Culture and Science, pl. Defilad 1, Warsaw
(52.23197596419361, 21.006027182321652)

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Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Day 1 and 2 sessions



Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Nowoursynowska 166, Warsaw

(52.16440355826097, 21.044533053480986)

University of Warsaw, Day 3 sessions



The Applied Linguistics and Modern Languages Faculties, University of Warsaw, Dobra 55, Warsaw

(52.24206538070197, 21.023991314669388)

City of Warsaw

Warsaw, the capital and largest city of Poland, is a vibrant academic, cultural, and political centre situated on the banks of the Vistula River. Known for its remarkable post-war reconstruction and its dynamic contemporary growth, Warsaw offers a rich setting for sociological reflection on urban change, social diversity, and collective memory. Today, it stands as one of Central Europe's most dynamic metropolitan areas and a home to numerous universities, research institutes, cultural institutions, and an active civil society.

The conference sessions will take place at two major academic institutions: Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW), one of the oldest and most prestigious life-science universities in Europe, and the University of Warsaw, the country's leading research university located in the heart of the city. Additional events will be hosted at COS Torwar, a well-known national sports and events arena, as well as at the iconic Palace of Culture and Science, a landmark of Warsaw's skyline and one of the city's central hubs for cultural and academic activities.

Visitors will have the opportunity to explore a variety of historical and cultural sites, including the Old Town (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), the Royal Route, and the Łazienki Royal Park with its palaces and gardens. Modern Warsaw offers equally compelling attractions, such as the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw or the Warsaw Uprising Museum, and the lively districts of Powiśle and Praga, known for their creative scenes and revitalized urban spaces.

Blending tradition with innovation, Warsaw provides an inspiring environment for scholars engaging with contemporary sociological themes and interdisciplinary dialogue.



Organisers

ESA President:	Kaja Gadowska (Poland)
Conference Committee:	Chair: Loukia - Maria Fratsea (Greece) John O'Brien (Ireland), Gerben Moerman (The Netherlands), Teresa Sorde (Spain), Kaja Gadowska (Poland), Michela Franceschelli (UK), Paulo Peixoto (Portugal), Ana Patricia Faria Pereira (Portugal)
Executive Committee:	Maggie O'Neil (Ireland), Ilenia Picardi (Italy), Marilena Macaluso (Italy), Krešimir Žažar (Croatia), Ana-Cristina Santos (Portugal), Ana Vidu (Spain), Milica Antić Gaber (Slovenia), Audronė Telešienė (Lithuania), Nilay Kaya (Turkey)
ESA Office:	Manuel Garcia-Ruiz (Communications), Małgorzata Odolczyk (Conference Assistant), Sandra Pinheiro (ESA Assistant), Jorge Almeida (Graphic Designer)
Local Organising Committee:	Chair: Mirosława Grabowska (Polish Sociological Association & University of Warsaw) Vice Chairs: Izabela Bukalska (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw), Julia Kubisa (University of Warsaw), Joanna Wyleżała (Warsaw University of Life Sciences)
LOC members	Rafał Boguszewski (Warsaw University of Life Sciences), Konrad Burdyka (Warsaw University of Life Sciences), Mikołaj Cześniak (SWPS University), Katarzyna Dębska (University of Warsaw), Małgorzata Herudzińska (Warsaw University of Life Sciences), Agnieszka Kampka (Warsaw University of Life Sciences), Joanna Konieczna-Sałamatin (University of Warsaw), Krzysztof Kuźmicz (Koźmiński University), Marta Makowska (Koźmiński University), Wojciech Połeć (Warsaw University of Life Sciences), Dagmara Szczępańska (Maria Grzegorzewska University), Rafał Wiśniewski (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw), Katarzyna Witkowska (Civitas University), Justyna Zielińska (Maria Grzegorzewska University)

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President & Executive Committee

2024-2026

ESA Research Network Coordinators

RN01 - Ageing in Europe	Outi Jolanki, outi.jolanki[at]tuni.fi Marcos Bote, mbote[at]um.es
RN02 - Sociology of the Arts	Dafne Muntanyola-Saura, dafne.muntanyola[at]uab.cat Paula Guerra, mariadeguerra[at]gmail.com
RN03 - Biographical Perspectives on European Societies	Baiba Bela, baiba.bela[at]lu.lv Ina Alber-Armenat, ina.alber[at]sowi.uni-goettingen.de
RN04 - Sociology of Children and Childhood	Phil Mizen, P.Mizen[at]Aston.ac.uk Vicky Johnson, Vicky.Johnson.ic[at]uhi.ac.uk Aleksandra Zalewska Królak, aleksandra.zalewska[at]uw.edu.pl
RN05 - Sociology of Consumption	Mikko Laamanen, mikko.laamanen[at]oslomet.no Francesca Forno, francesca.forno[at]unitn.it Senja Laakso, senja.laakso[at]helsinki.fi
RN06 - Critical Political Economy	Yuliya Yurchenko, y.yurchenko[at]greenwich.ac.uk Bernd Bonfert, bbonfert[at]em-normandie.fr
RN07 - Sociology of Culture	David Inglis, david.inglis[at]helsinki.fi Dominik Zelinsky, dominik.zelinsky[at]savba.sk
RN09 - Economic Sociology	Giacomo Bazzani, giacomo.bazzani[at]unifi.it Alberto Veira Ramos, aveira[at]polsoc.uc3m.es
RN10 - Sociology of Education	Anna Odrowąż-Coates, acoates[at]aps.edu.pl Alba Papakonstantinou, albabap[at]hotmail.com
RN11 - Sociology of Emotions	Cécile Vermot, cecile.vermot[at]supbiotech.fr Rotem Leshem, leshem.rotем[at]gmail.com
RN12 - Environment & Society	Aleksandra Wagner, aleksandra.wagner[at]uj.edu.pl Pia Laborgne, pia.laborgne[at]kit.edu Markus Hadler, markus.hadler[at]uni-graz.at
RN13 - Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives	Katarzyna Suwada, k.suwada[at]umk.pl Inga Lass, i.lass[at]unimelb.edu.au
RN14 - Gender Relations in the Labour Market and the Welfare State	Paula Koskinen Sandberg, paula.koskinensandberg[at]aalto.fi Rebecca Selberg, rebecca.selberg[at]soc.lu.se
RN15 - Global, transnational and cosmopolitan sociology	Marjaana Rautalin, marjaana.rautalin[at]helsinki.fi Sylvain Beck, sylvain_beck[at]yahoo.fr
RN16 - Sociology of Health and Medicine	Dino Numerato, dino.numerato[at]fsv.cuni.cz Ana Patrícia Hilário, patriciahilario[at]gmail.com
RN17 - Work, Employment and Industrial Relations	Valeria Pulignanadrio, valeria.pulignano[at]kuleuven.be Guglielmo Meardi, Guglielmo.meardi[at]sns.it
RN18 - Sociology of Communications and Media Research	Paško Bilić, pasko[at]irmo.hr Tatiana Mazali, tatiana.mazali[at]polito.it Eran Fisher, eranfisher[at]gmail.com
RN19 - Sociology of Professions	Christiane Schnell, christiane.schnell[at]tu-dortmund.de Nina Weimann-Sandig, nina.weimann-sandig[at]ehs-dresden.de
RN20 - Qualitative Methods	Tea Torbenfeldt Bengtsson, ttb[at]vive.dk Silvia Cataldi, silvia.cataldi[at]uniroma1.it

RN21 - Quantitative Methods	Kathrin Komp-Leukkunen, kathrin.komp-leukkunen[at]lut.fi Fabrizio Martire, fabrizio.martire[at]uniroma1.it
RN22 - Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty	Bert de Graaf, degraaff[at]eshpm.eur.nl Veronica Moretti, veronica.moretti4[at]unibo.it
RN23 - Sexuality	Christian Klesse, c.klesse[at]mmu.ac.uk Tanja Vuckovic Juros, tvuckovi[at]ffzg.unizg.hr
RN24 - Science and Technology	Melissa Sessa, melissa.sessa[at]irpi.cnr.it Luís Junqueira, Luis_Orlando_Junqueira[at]iscte-iul.pt Stefania Capogna, s.capogna[at]unilink.it
RN25 - Social Movements	Elena Pavan, elena.pavan[at]unitn.it Daniel Platek, daniel_platek[at]wp.pl
RN26 - Sociology of Social Policy and Social Welfare	Volkan Yilmaz, volkan.yilmaz[at]tutanota.com Ingrid Fylling, ingrid.fylling[at]nord.no
RN27 - Regional Network Southern European Societies	Inês Vieira, ines.vieira[at]ulusofona.pt Olga Salido, olga.salido[at]cps.usm.es
RN28 - Society and Sports	Alessandro Porrovecchio, alessandro.porrovecchio[at]univ-littoral.fr Enrico Michelini, enrico.michelini[at]tu-dortmund.de Klara Kovacs, kovacs.klara[at]arts.unideb.hu
RN29 - Social Theory	Kornelia Hahn, Kornelia.Hahn[at]plus.ac.at Arthur Oliveira Bueno, arthur.bueno[at]uni-passau.de
RN30 - Youth & Generation	Annalisa Dordoni, annalisa.dordoni[at]unimib.it Dragan Stanojevic, dstanoje[at]f.bg.ac.rs
RN31 - Ethnic Relations, Racism and Antisemitism	Kim Robin Stoller, kim.stoller[at]iibsa.org Elke Rajal, elke.rajal[at]uni-passau.de
RN32 - Political Sociology	Michele Grigolo, michele.grigolo[at]ntu.ac.uk Louisa Parks, louisa.parks[at]unitn.it
RN33 - Women's and Gender Studies	Esther Oliver, estheroliver[at]ub.edu Stellamarina Donato, s.donato3[at]lumsa.it Alicja Zawistowska, a.zawistowska[at]uwb.edu.pl Sara Merlini, saramerlini[at]iscsp.ulisboa.pt
RN34 - Sociology of Religion	Marta Kolodziejska, ma.kolodziejska[at]gmail.com Kees de Groot, C.N.deGroot[at]tilburguniversity.edu
RN35 - Sociology of Migration	Ilenya Camozzi, ilenya.camozi[at]unimib.it Linda Haapajärvi, linda.haapajarvi[at]ehess.fr Rosa Gatti, rosa.gatti[at]unina.it Maxime Maréchal, maxime.marechal1[at]etu.u-paris.fr Laura Odasso, laura.odasso[at]univ-paris8.fr Ildikó Zakariás, zakarias.ildiko[at]tk.hun-ren.hu
RN36 - Sociology of Transformations: East and West	Matej Makarovič, matej.makarovic[at]fuds.si Agnieszka Kolasa-Nowak, agnieszka.kolasanowak[at]mail.umcs.pl
RN37 - Urban Sociology	Gabriele Manella, gabriele.manella[at]unibo.it Katarzyna Kajdanek, katarzyna.kajdanek[at]uwr.edu.pl
RN38 - Space, Society and Rurality	Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, apospapa[at]hua.gr Maria Jesus Rivera, mariajesus.rivera[at]unavarra.es

Notes for Authors

- Please do not send us a full copy of your paper (neither before nor after the conference).

- Abstracts sent by email cannot be accepted.
- Authors are invited to submit their abstract either to a Research Network (RN), a Joint Session (JS), a Research Stream (RS) or a Semi-Plenary (SP). Note that submitters of a SP abstract must hold a PhD (set date: 30 January 2026)
- Each participant can submit and present one paper.
- All submitting/presenting authors can be second author of one paper or more.
- Abstracts should not exceed 250 words.
- Abstracts will be peer-reviewed and selected for presentation by the RN/RS/SP coordinators.
- The ESA membership is not mandatory, except for RN/RS/SP coordinators and session chairs as well as all RN board members and the ESA Executive Committee. ESA members benefit from reduced conference fees!
- Note that the 17th ESA Conference will take place in an on-site format only, in Warsaw (Poland).

Session Types

- While Research Network and Research Stream sessions cover the immense variety of sociological inquiry, Plenary, Semi-Plenary and Midday sessions offer the opportunity to engage in core debates. All session formats will include time for open discussion.
- *Semi-Plenaries (SPs)* discuss the main conference theme from the viewpoint of different fields of research. They promote discussion between speakers, next to that with participants. SPs are based on proposals made by the ESA Research Networks and the Executive Committee. This time, two of them are open for abstract submission.
- *Research Network (RN)* sessions feature research papers submitted in response to this Call for Papers. The majority of sessions is organised by ESA's 38 Research Networks. RNs are open to all ESA members. All RNs hold a business meeting at the conference. New members are cordially invited to join one or several RNs of their choice. Note that many RNs organise Joint Sessions (JS).
- *Research Stream (RS)* sessions are made by sociologists from several European countries who come together to organise sessions on very specific sociological topics. RSs are self-organised bodies with a loose structure which is determined by the researchers who join the stream. While some RSs are regularly organising sessions at ESA conferences, other RSs offer ad hoc sessions around spur-of-the-moment topics.

Deadlines 2026

30 January Abstract submission deadline (for coordinators and reviewers: **beginning of March**

peer-review deadline)

Mid-March Notification of acceptance (sent to abstract submitters via ConfTool)

March/April Opening of Participant Registration in ConfTool

25-28 August 17th ESA Conference in Warsaw, Poland

Top Ten Things You Need to Know About ConfTool 2026

1. **Useful Links:** ConfTool 2026: <https://www.conftool.com/esa2026/>
ESA website: <https://www.europeansociology.org/>
Direct link to the ESA 2026 conference website:
<https://www.europeansociology.org/conference/2026>
2. **Important dates:** Abstract submission opens in December. The deadline will be January 30th, 2026. Participant registration will open in March/April when you will also receive notification about your abstract.
3. Create an account in ConfTool 2026 in order to **submit an abstract** and **register for participation** in the 17th ESA Conference in Warsaw, 25-28 August 2026. Registrations from previous ConfTools have not been transferred – you need a new account.
4. **Validate your e-mail address** in ConfTool 2026. Once you create a user account, you will receive an automatic confirmation message with a link – please click. This will ensure that you receive important information about your abstract and the conference. We also recommend to ensure that esa2026[at]conftool.com is on your whitelist.
5. You can always '**Edit User Account Details**' in ConfTool. There is a direct link for this in the 'Overview' of your ConfTool 2026 account. You can change your address, affiliation, information for the visa invitation letter offered through ConfTool, and much more.
6. If you and your co-authors change your mind about who will / can present the paper at the Warsaw conference, send us an e-mail. We can change this until the deadline for participant registration for paper presenters (until March/April).
7. During participant registration, when you choose the category for ESA members (who benefit from reduced conference fees), please make the effort to **double-check the status of your ESA membership** in the ESA members area ('My Dashboard'). If your membership has expired, you can renew it directly in ConfTool (by choosing the category which adds the ESA membership to your conference registration).
8. You can **visit and use your ConfTool 2026 account regularly**. Find out about the status of your abstract, your registration and payment details, print out your invoice, download invitation and confirmation letters, and browse the conference agenda once it is ready.
9. ConfTool 2026 is managed by real people. At the ESA, we will always try to help: esa2026[at]europeansociology.org
10. There is also more support in ConfTool's Helpful Hints for User Registration and Log-In.

Call for Papers for Semi Plenaries (SP)

SP7 - Sociological research in times of Artificial Intelligence

Organised by RN21 Quantitative Methods and RN24 Science and Technology

Coordinators: Kathrin Komp-Leukkunen, LUT University, Finland, kathrin.komp-leukkunen[at]lut.fi

Stefania Capogna, Link University, Italy, s.capogna[at]unilink.it

Yves Jeanrenaud, Ludwig Maximilians University, Germany,
yves.jeanrenaud[at]soziologie.uni-muenchen.de

Melissa Sessa, National Research Center, Italy, melissa.sessa[at]irpi.cnr.it

Aaro Tupasela, University of Helsinki, Finland, aaro.tupasela[at]helsinki.fi

Jussara Rowland, University of Lisbon, Portugal, jussara.rowland[at]ics.ulisboa.pt

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing our societies, and sociological research with it. AI denotes the capability of machines to carry out tasks of a human-made quality. While sociology has explored AI for decades, its interest in this topic has exponentially increased over the last years. The reason is the public release of generative AI technologies, which can create new text and images. This capability restructures labour markets, our private lives, education, policymaking, and consumption. It also shapes social imaginaries, influencing how we envision knowledge, creativity, and human-machine interaction. It also suggests the modification of empirical methods for sociologists. Moreover, it raises serious concerns about data security, ethics, stereotyping, and social exclusion. While companies push for a quick and extensive introduction of this technology, some policymakers try to ensure a responsible use of it. During this period of far-reaching social change, sociologists highlight concerns and opportunities. In line with the conference topic, this session wants to explore how we can strengthen democracies, facilitate social action, solidarity, and sustainable futures during this technologically driven social shift connected to AI. Abstracts are invited that discuss, for example, who the winners and losers of the proliferation of AI are, and how we can ensure that AI betters our societies. Moreover, abstracts may address the fundamentals of a sociology of AI, such as how sociologists can integrate non-human actors in their human-centred studies, and how sociological research methods evolve due to AI. Qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, and conceptual contributions are welcome.

SP8 - Queer(y)in the State. Sexuality, Gender and Social Movement Politics

Organised by RN23 Sexuality

Coordinators: Prof Christian Klesse, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, c.klesse[at]mmu.ac.uk

Dr Tanja Vuckovic Juros, University of Zagreb, Croatia,
tanja.vuckovic.juros[at]gmail.com

The success of nationalist and right-wing political parties across the world, including Europe, has reinforced the precariousness of women's and LGBTQ+ rights (Kuhar and Paternotte 2018). Heteroactivist movements have led an assault on the allegedly manipulative usage of 'gender-ideology' by liberal establishments and the morality-eroding effects of sexual diversity (Nash and Brown 2020). Anti-gender politics and heterosexual family values are closely entangled with right-wing political agendas, but they are not limited to those. Yet the targeted attack on women's or LGBTQ+ rights in countries where such parties have come to determine or influence government politics demonstrate the urgent need for novel theorization of the significance of the state in (re)producing heteronormative policies and reasserting gender binaries and biologicist sex classifications. Queer-feminist and transgender theorists have critically reworked neo-Marxist, feminist, and poststructuralist state theories to account for the uneven and contradictory investment of states into certain gender and sexual imaginaries (Cooper 1995, Castro Varela et al. 2016, Ludwig 2011, Currah 2022). Likewise, postcolonial or decolonial scholars have shown that the gender and sexual political agendas assumed by states need to be understood against the backdrop of a transnational field of political and economic power (Stoler 1995, Puri 2016, Graff and Korulczuk 2021). Much of this work has gone largely unnoticed within the main currents of the discipline. In this semi-plenary we wish to give voice to distinctive positions within the recent theorization of gender/sexuality/state nexus to foster debate on the wider conference themes of social action, solidarity, and sustainable futures.

Call for Papers by Research Networks (RN)

RN01 - Ageing in Europe

Coordinators: Outi Jolanki, Tampere University, Finland, outi.jolanki[at]tuni.fi

Marcos Bote, University of Murcia, Spain, mbote[at]um.es

Sustainable futures for and with older people

Ecosocial and political crises as well as digitalization of societies mark these turbulent times in Europe and elsewhere. Population ageing is presented as one of the biggest challenges facing Europe and causing pressure to reform political decision-making and public policies, and to rethink the generational contract and intergenerational solidarity. Dichotomous imagery of old age portrays older people as an economic burden or victims of numerous crises and digitalization while heterogeneity, diversity, and agentic roles of older people in communities and societies are underacknowledged. The RN01 Ageing in Europe invites contributions which address these issues from empirical, theoretical and methodological aspect. Submissions from researchers outside Europe are also welcome.

Submissions are welcome (but not limited to) for the following thematic areas:

- Civic engagement of older people in communities and societies
- Threats and risks of ecosocial crises for older people
- Digitalization and older people
- Social equality, inclusion and recognition of diversity and marginalised identities
- Transformations in eldercare policies, caregiving and care work
- Changing family formations and generational contract
- Cultural and media representations of older people and (un)dignified ageing
- Social justice and ageism at work, in politics and in policy-making
- Old-age social exclusion and poverty: interchanges between multi-level risk factors and lifelong processes

Joint sessions

JS_RN01_RN21: Quantitative Methods in Ageing Research: Novel Insights and Future Directions
(Joint session with RN01 Ageing in Europe and RN21 Quantitative Methods)

RN02 - Sociology of the Arts

Coordinators: Dafne Muntanyola Saura, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain,
dafne.muntanyola[at]uab.cat

Paula Guerra, University of Porto, Portugal, mariadeguerra[at]gmail.com

Art, AI and Sustainability: Building Global Citizenship in Sociology of the Arts

We live in a moment in which creativity, art, protest, and technology intersect, as these fields of action generate new forms of production, mediation, consumption and circulation of artistic work. Increasing digitalisation, AI, the automation of creative processes and digital platforms are reconfiguring modes of creation, cultural economies, and aesthetic experiences, while posing ethical, political, and sociological challenges. Emergent research alerts us to the fact that these transformations raise fundamental questions on topics such as the redefinition of authorship, artistic work, widening inequalities of access and consumption, sustainability and the social meaning of art itself.

These changes raise new ethical challenges for sociological research in the arts. The digitization of creativity revives classic debates about authorship and authenticity, not least considering, for example, of the recent controversies around works created with artificial intelligence, such as OpenAI's or Midjourney's algorithms, which have generated legal and symbolic tensions in the world of music, cinema and visual arts. The song "Heart on My Sleeve", created by AI and falsely attributed to Drake and The Weeknd, has also become a paradigmatic case of the contemporary crisis of authorship and control over cultural goods. At the same time, artistic projects that use artificial intelligence in a critical way, such as Refik Anadol's installations or the collective work of the Obvious group, show how technology can push the boundaries of creativity, challenging traditional notions of creative genius and artwork.

These technologies are profoundly transforming artistic work, as platforms such as Spotify, TikTok or Patreon have changed the conditions of visibility, monetization and precariousness of creative work, generating new forms of inequality and exploitation. The economy of platformization, based on algorithmic metrics and a logic of instant visibility, places artists between the promise of autonomy and the reality of structural dependence on digital corporations. Thus, contemporary art emerges as a field where processes of neo liberalization, struggles for recognition, and new forms of cultural resistance intersect, as observed in the boycott movements against streaming platforms or in collective campaigns for fair remuneration.

From a theoretical perspective, these transformations can be examined through sociological traditions ranging from Max Weber's notion of the rationalisation of society to Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of cultural fields and the struggles for symbolic capital, to more recent perspectives from digital sociology and science and technology studies (STS), which problematize the agency of algorithms, digital infrastructures and technical objects. Concepts such as cultural intermediaries, platform capitalism and algorithmic governmentality offer crucial tools for understanding the interactions between human and non-human agents in contemporary art ecosystems. Such individualistic trajectories in making art consolidates a capitalist mode of production while reducing artistic collaboration and reproducing structural inequality and gender violence. The processes of artification expands to all spheres of production.

But art is everywhere and with everyone, and despite the social transformations that fragilize and reduce artistic practice to an act of consumption, there is power for subversion in the social action and collective work through activism(s), social responsibility and professional/amateur art. Resistance through global citizenship looks for democratic mechanisms to reduce inequality in production as well as in consumption of the arts. Mainstream movies such as “One Battle after Another” convey strong political views that appeal to global and social responsibility to face injustice and inequality. In these times of democratic fragility all over the world, the sociology of the arts has a lot to say.

This call seeks to bring together research that critically analyses the role of technology in artistic production, mediation and reception, fostering a dialogue on the tensions between innovation and tradition, emancipation and control, human creativity and algorithmic creativity. In doing so, we reaffirm the role of the sociology of the arts in understanding these phenomena, encouraging interdisciplinary approaches that intersect cultural, digital, labour, and science and technology studies. Thus, we set out the following themes for the conference sessions:

- Activism/activism, social movements.
- Anti-racism, post- and de-colonial perspectives
- AI: authorship, ownership, provenance
- Artistic practices in interaction and communication
- Arts educations and arts in education
- Arts Management
- Art markets and consumption in algorithmic capitalism
- Labour conflicts and careers
- Health, bodies and emotions
- Communities, identities and belonging
- Creativity (and its discontents)
- Urban space, rurality and politics of place
- Evaluation, valuation and hierarchies
- Global citizenship, representation(s) in democracy
- Intersectionalities and gendered roles; Queer/non-binary perspectives
- Sociology of music
- Participation, inclusion and diversity
- Sustainability
- Theorising the arts
- Methods

Joint sessions

JS_RN02_RN07: Art, Artificial Intelligence and Other Discontents (Joint Session with RN02 Sociology of the Arts & RN07 Sociology of Culture)

JS_RN07_RN02_I: On Fashions in Sociology: Enemies or Friends of Good Practice? (Joint session with RN07 Sociology of Culture & RN02 Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN07_RN02_II: Cultures of Anti-Populism (Joint session with RN07 Sociology of Culture & RN02 Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN07_RN02_III: 'Dangerous' Books: Reading, Censorship, and Resistance (Joint Session with RN07 The Sociology of Culture and RN02 The Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN07_RN02_IV: Fragile Democracies: The Western as European Genre and the Reflection on the Basics of Democratic Societies (Joint Session with RN07 The Sociology of Culture and RN02 The Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN07_RN02_V: Sociology Under Attack, Sociologists in Danger: Cultures of Threat and How to Deal with Them (Joint Session with RN07 The Sociology of Culture and RN02 The Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN07_RN02_VI: The Third Culture of Sociology, Revisited: Sociology Between Science and Literature (Joint Session with RN07 The Sociology of Culture and RN02 The Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN22_RN02: Risks and Uncertainties: The Arts as Social Response (Joint Session with RN22 Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty & RN02 Sociology of the Arts)

RN03 - Biographical Perspectives on European Societies

Coordinators: Baiba Bela, University of Latvia, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Latvia,
baiba.bela[at]lu.lv

Ina Alber-Armenat, University of Göttingen, Institute for Sociology, Germany,
ina.alber[at]sowi.uni-goettingen.de

Biographical Research in Times of Social Transformation: Methods, Challenges, and Futures

While biographical approaches have long been central to sociological inquiry, new opportunities, responsibilities, and challenges raise important questions. The session invites contributions that revisit traditions and engage with the latest trends and innovations in biographical research methods in Europe and internationally. Possible themes may include (but are not limited to):

- Application of traditional biographical methods and methodological innovations: In what ways are biographical approaches expanding the analytical scope of sociology and deepening our understanding of diverse life experiences?
- Creative and participatory practices: How are participatory and collaborative dimensions being strengthened within biographical research, and what do they contribute to democratic engagement?
- Ethics and digital challenges: What new opportunities and ethical dilemmas arise with the growing role of artificial intelligence and digital tools in biographical inquiry and data analysis?
- Societal contribution: How can biographical research illuminate pathways toward sustainability, democracy, social action, and solidarity in the context of contemporary societal transformations?
- Public outreach and dialogue with wider audiences: How are biographical insights communicated through innovative, participatory practices, reshaping both interpretation and public understanding, and what challenges accompany their translation into creative and public forms?
- Biographical research in Poland: Polish qualitative sociology and the study of everyday life has a long and distinctive tradition, rooted in The Polish Peasant in Europe and America, the *Pamiętniki* (memoirs) movement, Florian Znaniecki's, Józef Chłasiński's, Jan Szczepański's legacy, as well as modern approaches with autobiographical narrative interview and oral history. We welcome papers on how Polish biographical sociology continues to evolve through classic and new methodological innovations and applications.

Joint session

JS_RN03_RN16: Collective and Participatory Approaches to Evolving and Embodied Lives (Joint session with RN03 Biographical perspectives on European Societies and RN16 Sociology of health and medicine)

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JS_RN03_RN35: Crossing Borders, Telling Lives: Biographical Research in Migration Studies (Joint session with RN03 Biographical Perspectives on European Societies and RN35 Sociology of Migration)

RN04 Sociology of Children and Childhood

Coordinators: Professor Phil Mizen, Aston University, UK, p.mizen[at]aston.ac.uk

Professor Vicky Johnson, University of the Highlands and Islands, UK,
vicky.johnson.ic[at]uhi.ac.uk

Dr Aleksandra Zalewska-Królak, University of Warsaw, Poland,
aleksandra.zalewska[at]uw.edu.pl

Present Tense, Future Imperfect? Action and Solidarity in the Lives of Children

The ESA conference themes of 'Strengthening Democracies: Social Action, Solidarity and Sustainable Futures' are central to our Network's core concerns about the status, participation, exclusion and agency of children, both now and in terms of the young people now and adults that they will become. Our Network has pioneered exploring children's lives in the present and how close attention to the lives of children disrupts easy assumptions about their passivity and dependence, and that they are makers as well as takers of the social relations and institutions in which childhood is embedded. Children repeatedly demonstrate that they are actively engaged in their worlds, that they possess critical awareness and understanding of their own lives and those around them, and that they are often ready and willing to act upon this knowledge, both in terms of their personal conduct but also in their engagement with the social and political life of the communities of which they are a part. Our Network has further pioneered knowledge of how this capacity for understanding and action are nevertheless constrained, and how many of the defining political forces and reanimated social divisions of our time impinge deeply upon what children know and do, as well as what they seek to be. We therefore invite papers that explore the connections between democratic, inclusive and participatory societies, and how children are enabled or constrained in engaging in social action, building cohesive social relations and participating in or imagining sustainable futures, and dealing with and experiencing violence and conflict, among many others. Papers may also consider these issues in relation to how children interact with one another, but also importantly through the exploration of intergenerational relations that promote mutuality, trust and participation. It is through attention to themes like these that our Network has transformed understandings of children and childhood, and papers may further consider the transformative role that children play in their societies, communities, families, friendship and peer groups, or on the impact of sociological and political research beyond the university, for instance on policy and practice.

Joint sessions

JS_RN04_RN13: Work, education and life balance of families: Children and adults active in the world (Joint session with RN04 Sociology of Children and Childhood and RN13 Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives)

RN05 - Sociology of Consumption

Coordinators: Mikko Laamanen, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway,
mikko.laamanen[at]osloomet.no

Francesca Forno, University of Trento, Italy, francesca.forno[at]unitn.it

Senja Laakso, University of Helsinki, Finland, senja.laakso[at]helsinki.fi

The Sociology of Consumption network invites contributions that explore the links between consumption and the strength of democracy, social responsibility and sustainable futures. In addition to the possible themes listed below and considering the overarching conference theme, we welcome studies on how consumption can address, strengthen or even undermine justice and sustainability in democracy and everyday life. It is particularly urgent to understand how everyday practices of consumption can shape civic life and ask:

- How does consumption create problems and solutions to global and local democratic challenges?
- In which ways do theories in the sociology of consumption illustrate social action towards solidaristic and sustainable futures?
- Overall, what are the trajectories of socio-political and environmental change via consumption?

Additionally, this call is open to contributions that are concerned with a broad range of contemporary challenges, from class-based patterns of consumption and cultural dimensions of distinction to everyday practices of (un)sustainable consumption and participation in (non)market practices. The contexts of examination range from food to cultural participation, waste to financialization, and from everyday life to global forms of collective action.

At the centre of the work at the Sociology of Consumption network is the rethinking of the relation between consumerism and citizenship. If the citizen is positioned as enacting their political power as consumers only, market choices replace democratic deliberation. This risks narrowing democracy to a transactional model, individualistic with a shade of malleable collectivism. In face of urgent social dilemmas, such as digital platforms' interventions to political discourses and process, and amplified environmental degradation through unsustainable, compulsive forms of consumption, sociological theory needs to grapple with how to balance individual freedoms with collective responsibility, and how to foster citizen responsibility through consumption practices and consumer cultures.

The Sociology of Consumption network draws on a theoretically plural and empirically diverse tradition of research. We invite papers that address various aspects of the sociology of consumption. Possible themes include but are not limited to:

- Consumption, capital and class
- Consumption, citizenship and collective action
- Consumer empowerment and solidarities
- Corporeality in consumption
- Cultural stratification
- Different generations and consumption

- Digitality in consumptions
- Distinction, identity and taste
- Ethics and politics consumption and production
- Food and food systems
- Gender and consumption
- Geographies—urban and rural spaces and places—of consumer culture
- (Im)materiality of consumption
- Inequalities and exclusions in consumer culture
- Leisure and consumption
- Life stages and consumption (incl. households and families)
- Lifestyles, work and leisure in consumption
- Neglected and / or forgotten topics and theories of consumption
- Sufficiency, degrowth and consumption
- Theoretical and methodological challenges in studying consumption
- (Un)sustainable consumption: mechanics and motivations
- Wellbeing and care in consumption

RN06 - Critical Political Economy

Coordinators: Yuliya Yurchenko, University of Greenwich, UK, Y.yurchenko[at]greenwich.ac.uk

Bernd Bonfert, EM Normandie Business School, France, bbonfert[at]em-normandie.fr

Solidarity, action, revolution? Questioning systemic unsustainability

Is there a space for hope amidst the global capitalist polycrisis? While our growth-obsessed economies intensify exploitation, extraction of labour and nature, social alienation, uneven material distribution, and pervasive consumerism, our political systems are marked by the entrenchment of the far-right, multipolar reorganization of the global (dis)order, militarism and multiplication of armed conflicts.

The Inability of left intellectuals and politicians to formulate coherent solutions to the questions of international security, climate emergency, poverty, inequality, racism, sexism, and displacement leaves the discourse to be the playground of the right, including outright fascists and theocrats. The widespread hesitation to take a clear stance against the life-streamed genocide of Palestinians and the (by now) de facto third world war with epicentre in Ukraine must be underlined here as well.

The world, its labour and nature, deserve better and yearn for systemic change. That demand is seen in growing discontent and solidarity actions at the same time.

The future is not just shaped by authoritarians. We can also see movements of resistance and solidarity facing the polycrisis head-on, as activists resist authoritarian control and prefigure new ways of societal (re)production beyond the hegemony of growth, competition and anthropocentrism. New technologies (such as AI, quantification, and automation) could also have a liberatory role to play, if they can be aligned with social and ecological needs rather than cannibalistic capitalism chasing profit at any human and planetary cost.

We invite papers addressing the state of state-capital-society complexes and nature relations, oppression, extraction, and resistance in all forms.

What are the challenges to and chances of a systemic change? Can we envisage a post-capitalist world? What is and what should be the role of social sciences, academia, and critical researchers in these times of turbulence, fake news, and generative AI? Is there hope for a revolutionised sustainable world and, if so, what every day and organised action ushers it in today? We look forward to discussing these and many more vital questions with you in Warsaw!

RN07 - Sociology of Culture

Coordinators: David Inglis, University of Helsinki, Finland david.inglis[at]helsinki.fi

Dominik Zelinsky, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia, dominik.zelinsky[at]savba.sk

Weakening and Strengthening Cultures: Conceptualising, Researching, and Acting

In what are widely believed to be darkening times across the whole world, a great litany of threats is looming very large. This is an increasingly troubling scenario that is well captured in the Theme of 2026 ESA conference. Better phenomena seem to be waning, and worse phenomena seem to be on the rise. Sociology is compelled to confront these often apparently dramatic changes of global, regional and national conditions. For cultural sociologists and sociologists of culture, various pressing and difficult questions have come to the forefront of discussion and concern.

First, which cultural forms – narratives, symbolisms, tropes, etc., which are often highly emotionally charged in nature – are being used to describe and analyse these apparently great changes? Moreover, how are these forms being produced and disseminated, and by whom and for which purposes? In what ways do cultural forms act performatively, bringing into existence the very changes that they diagnose? Should sociology embrace these cultural forms or critically interrogate them, or both simultaneously?

Second, a thematic of things in the world today either weakening and being deliberately weakened, or conversely being strengthened and taking on more forcefulness, suggests that sociologists concerned with cultural matters should? examine which cultures and cultural forms are waning and waxing at the present time. Which cultural phenomena are under threat and increasingly vulnerable, and which are taking on more power and being made more invulnerable? Is it only certain kinds of cultural entities that are getting stronger, or is the global picture more complex than certain sorts of cultural narratives would have us think? Can more positive cultural entities become more sustainable?

Papers in the RN07 stream will critically and self-reflexively investigate these matters, traversing how they are to be conceptualised, researched empirically, and acted upon. The latter points to situations where culturally-oriented sociology becomes public and civic sociology. What should sociologists who are concerned with cultural phenomena say publicly and do politically about cultural things that are rapidly getting weaker and getting stronger, or at least seem to be? What are the risks, challenges, and opportunities thrown up by what seem to be unprecedented times?

Joint sessions

JS_RN07_RN02_I: On Fashions in Sociology: Enemies or Friends of Good Practice? (Joint session with RN07 Sociology of Culture & RN02 Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN07_RN02_II: Cultures of Anti-Populism (Joint session with RN07 Sociology of Culture & RN02 Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN07_RN02_III: 'Dangerous' Books: Reading, Censorship, and Resistance (Joint Session with RN07 The Sociology of Culture and RN02 The Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN07_RN02_IV: Fragile Democracies: The Western as European Genre and the Reflection on the Basics of Democratic Societies (Joint Session with RN07 The Sociology of Culture and RN02 The Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN07_RN02_V: Sociology Under Attack, Sociologists in Danger:Cultures of Threat and How to Deal with Them (Joint Session with RN07 The Sociology of Culture and RN02 The Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN07_RN02_VI: The Third Culture of Sociology, Revisited: Sociology Between Science and Literature (Joint Session with RN07 The Sociology of Culture and RN02 The Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN07_RN29: From Liminalities: New Reflections on the 'In-Between' (Joint session with RN07 Sociology of Culture and RN29 Social Theory)

JS_RN07_RN37: Cultural Commoning in the City (Joint Session with RN07 Sociology of Culture & RN37 Urban Sociology)

JS_RN02_RN07: Art, Artificial Intelligence and Other Discontents (Joint Session with RN02 Sociology of the Arts & RN07 Sociology of Culture)

RN09 - Economic Sociology

Coordinators: Giacomo Bazzani, Florence University, Italy, giacomo.bazzani[at]unifi.it

Alberto Veira Ramos, University Carlos III de Madrid, Spain, alberto.veira[at]uc3m.es

In dialogue with the ESA 2026 conference theme—*Strengthening Democracies: Social Action, Solidarity, and Sustainable Futures*—RN09 invites contributions that analyze how economies, markets, organizations, and technologies shape democratic life and collective capacities for inclusion, equality, and ecological sustainability. We seek work that clarifies mechanisms, identifies institutional designs, and assesses policy options that sustain democratic practices. Relevant contexts include digital transformation, widening inequalities, geopolitical conflict, ecological transition, and contested knowledge.

Building on RN09's recent mid-term conference (Berlin, 3–5 Sept 2025), which called for a solution-oriented “positive turn” in economic sociology, we particularly welcome research that couples rigorous explanation with proposals for institutional, organizational, and policy innovation—work that can inform public debate and practice through clear conceptualization, careful evidence, and comparative insight.

Topics of interest (not exhaustive)

- Solidarity, commons, and alternative economies: cooperatives, mutuals, community wealth building, platform cooperativism; procurement and mission-oriented policies.
- Sustainability and the just transition: energy markets and green industrial policy; carbon pricing and climate finance; circular and bio-based economies; agri-food systems; metrics beyond GDP for welfare and planetary boundaries.
- Knowledge, expertise, and public sociology: standards, indicators, and impact evaluation; evidence use in policy and organizations; participatory and comparative methods; open and reproducible research.
- Democratic political economy: market organization and democratic quality; varieties of capitalism and democratic resilience; corporate political power, lobbying, and regulation; taxation, budgeting, central banking, and distributional consequences.
- Work, inequality, and social protection: labor market segmentation and precarity; skills, care and reproductive economies; collective representation and workplace democracy; intersections of class, gender, migration status, and race/ethnicity.
- Finance, money, and governance: financialization of welfare and infrastructure; fintech, crypto and payment systems; public banking, CBDCs/digital euro; accountability and risk.
- Digitalization and AI: platform economies, algorithmic management, data governance and standards; misinformation economies and media infrastructures; digital public goods and infrastructures; automation and employment.

- War, displacement, and securitization: sanctions, supply chains, and dual-use industries; humanitarian markets; refugee reception and integration economies; security, surveillance, and civil liberties.
- European perspectives and peripheries: regional divergence and cohesion; post-socialist transformations; border economies; rural and small-town dynamics; multilevel governance in the EU.
- Conceptual advances in economic sociology: rethinking embeddedness and relational work; new institutionalism and field theory; moral economies and valuation studies; cultural political economy; interdisciplinary approaches at the intersections of sociology, economics, and political science.

Submission scope and formats

RN09 warmly welcomes theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions across qualitative, quantitative, historical, and computational approaches. We encourage comparative designs and studies engaging with policy, organizational practice, or civil society.

RN10 - Sociology of Education

Coordinators: Anna Odrowąż-Coates, Maria Grzegorzewska University, Poland, acoates[at]aps.edu.pl

Alba Papakonstantinou, University of Athens, Greece, albapap[at]hotmail.com

Education, Inequality, and Social Action for Sustainable and Democratic Futures

How can education strengthen democracy, solidarity, and sustainable futures? RN10 invites proposals for the upcoming congress on “Strengthening Democracies: Social Action, Solidarity, and Sustainable Futures.” We welcome contributions on educational inequalities, intercultural and refugee education, neurodiversity, evaluation and accountability, dialogic learning, violence prevention, and the role of global institutions such as UNESCO and the UN. We especially encourage papers that link theory with practice and explore how education can drive real social change. Organising Research Network (RN10)

Education is central to the vitality of democracy, the advancement of solidarity, and the creation of sustainable futures. Yet around the world, education systems remain deeply entangled with structural inequalities, social exclusion, and policy contradictions that undermine their transformative potential. This Call for Papers invites critical, theoretically informed and empirically grounded contributions examining how education can either reproduce or disrupt entrenched hierarchies, inequalities, and injustices – and how it might be reimagined as a site of social action and democratic renewal.

We seek papers addressing one or more of the following areas:

Educational Inequalities and Social Justice

Analyses of persistent class, race, gender, or other inequalities in educational access, outcomes, and life chances; the role of cultural, social, and financial capital in shaping opportunities; and the possibilities for resistance, policy reform, and transformative pedagogy.

Global and Institutional Frameworks

Critical evaluations of the role of UNESCO, the UN, and other global actors in promoting quality education, solidarity, and sustainability; interrogations of the gap between global commitments (such as the SDGs) and local realities, especially for marginalised or “disposable” populations.

Evaluation, Accountability, and Educational Futures

Studies of evaluation procedures across educational levels and contexts, considering their impact on students, teachers, and systems; questioning whether current methods promote quality or reinforce inequities and unsustainable practices.

Migration, Refugees, and Intercultural Education

Sociological perspectives on the education of refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrant communities; the successes and failures of intercultural education in fostering inclusion, belonging, and democratic participation.

Neurodiversity and Heterogeneity

Research on how educational systems engage with (or exclude) neurodiverse and heterogeneous learners; explorations of inclusive pedagogies, policy frameworks, and practices that challenge deficit models and expand the meaning of ability, achievement, and participation.

Dialogic Learning and Community Engagement

Theoretical and empirical contributions on dialogic learning, collaborative approaches, and evidence-based practices (such as dialogic literary gatherings and learning communities) that strengthen democratic participation, solidarity, and achievement.

Addressing Violence and Creating Safe Spaces

Evidence-based interventions and policies to reduce violence in schools, with a focus on vulnerable groups; analyses of how social action and community engagement can protect children's rights and support more inclusive, peaceful educational environments.

We particularly welcome interdisciplinary perspectives and contributions that link educational practice with wider social, political, and ecological challenges. Submissions may address local, national, or transnational contexts and should offer critical insights into how education can support democratic, inclusive, and sustainable futures. Our call positions education as a critical arena for strengthening democracies, advancing social action and solidarity, and envisioning sustainable futures. We invite scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to contribute to a vibrant and transformative dialogue at the conference.

Joint sessions

JS_RN16_RN10: Crossroads of Health and Education in Democratic Societies: Challenges and Transformations (Joint session RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN10 Sociology of Education)

JS_RN27_RN10: Citizenship education in Southern Europe (Join session with RN27 Regional Network on Southern European Societies & RN10 Sociology of Education)

JS_RN35_RN10: Educating for Belonging: Experiential and Art-Based Pathways in Migration and Inclusion (Joint session with RN35: Sociology of Migration and RN10: Sociology of Education)

RN11 - Sociology of Emotions

Coordinators: Cécile Vermot, Biotechnologies in Society Research Group, Sup'Biotech Paris, France,
cecile.vermot[at]supbiotech.fr

Rotem Leshem, The Unit of Culture Research, Tel-Aviv University, Israel,
leshem.rotem[at]gmail.com

We invite participants to explore the central role of emotions in the consolidation of democratic societies, arguing that affective dynamics are not peripheral but foundational to processes of social action, solidarity, and the pursuit of sustainable futures. How collective feelings—such as indignation, hope, empathy, fear, joy or shame for example —shape political mobilizations? Nourish civic engagement, and sustain long-term commitments to democratic values? By integrating emotion into our understanding of solidarity and sustainability, we invite a rethinking of democratic participation not solely as a matter of institutions or procedures, but as a lived, felt, and relational practice.

Particular attention is given to grassroots movements and digital communities, where emotional expressions circulate and coalesce into narratives of resistance, care, and mutual support. Through empirical illustrations and theoretical insights, we invite participants to analyze how emotional labor—often feminized and invisibilized—plays a crucial role in sustaining collective practices of care and responsibility, especially in contexts of social vulnerability. Ultimately, it contends that strengthening democracies requires attending to the emotional textures of collective life grounded in empathy, recognition, and care. All high-quality abstracts that focus primarily on emotions, affects, and feelings will be taken seriously.

Proposed Sessions

Emotions in Family and Intimate Lives: Intimate and family life may seem like the primary sphere of emotions. While this notion could be contested on other grounds, closer analysis also shows how emotions in intimate spheres are complexly embedded into larger social processes and macro-sociological structures. Research on love and friendship is particularly welcome within this theme.

Collective Emotions, Identity and Solidarity: How do groups form and endure, and what role do emotions, affects, and feelings play in these processes? How does "collective identity" relate to emotions, and what insights does "collective emotions" offer in understanding solidarity?

Difference and Emotional Othering: Emotions, affects and feelings also play a fundamental role in creating boundaries between social groups. How do processes of othering work similarly yet also distinctively across different categories of diversity (race, class, gender, age, disability and health, sexuality, religion and others) as well as intersectionally? Emotional foundations of everyday discrimination in societies, which are structurally racist, sexist, ableist etc., are of interest here.

Migration, Globalization and Emotions: In discussions of globalization, emotions have not been given significant attention in global analyses. The role of emotions, feelings and affects in transnational and supranational organizations, international NGOs, transnational migrant communities and global networks of mobile professionals is still understudied. What challenges and opportunities for

individuals, groups and organizations are involved in these formations? And how are they linked to emotionality?

Emotions in Organizations: An important development of emotional labour studies has been the examination of emotions within organizations – focusing how organizational norms and regulations can both further and hinder emotions and their management at work. Empirical studies as well as theoretical considerations are welcome here.

Emotion, Reason and Law: The idea of rationality as unemotional has persisted within legal theory for a long time. However, research in law and social sciences has paid increasing attention to emotional patterns in legal practice. How can a sociological perspective contribute to this trend? What role do emotions play in everyday law practice? How are emotions integrated in constituting laws and in laws themselves? In what ways can a view which focuses emotions on this field broaden our understanding of the role of law within contemporary societies?

Emotion, Protest, Opposition and Social Movements: Recent global mobilizations underscore the vital role of emotions, affects and feelings in protest movements and civil society actions. Understanding resistance and social change demands attention to emotional dynamics. Comparative studies on the emotional aspects of protests are particularly encouraged.

Emotions, Politics and the State: Recent research has advanced our understanding of the 'politics-emotion nexus', yet the links between emotions, state power, and legitimacy remain underexplored. This session invites papers that examine these intersections, including how affective polarization shapes political dynamics and public perceptions of legitimacy, and impacts state-society relations.

Emotions, Finance and Political Economy: The rise of global capitalism and growing inequalities have heightened interest in political economy, yet the role of emotions remains underexplored. This session examines how emotionality shapes inequalities, its costs, and how emotions might drive change in economic and financial systems.

Emotion, Discourse, Media and Literature: While discourse theory has emphasized the role of language and interaction in shaping attitudes and identities, the study of emotions in social discourse is rapidly expanding. This session welcomes research on emotions in literature, media, and social media as key resources for discourse analysis.

Emotions, Morality and Normativity: Research on morality and emotions is often led by psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy. This session seeks sociological insights into the connections between morals, norms, and emotions, and how emotional dynamics shape the normative constitution of groups and societies.

Emotion and Religion: Some classics of sociology analysed religion with an eye for emotions. Yet, the Sociology of Emotions has paid little attention to religious affairs. What is the role of emotions in religion? How can contemporary religious life be understood in new ways through the analysis of emotions, affects and feelings? How can we use different sociological theories of emotions for analysing religion?

Theoretical Considerations of Affects, Feelings and Emotions: Sociological frameworks for analysing emotions, feelings, and affects have evolved over decades but remain ripe for innovation. As interest in these concepts grows, we encourage the development of new theories and their integration into

broader sociological and interdisciplinary contexts. Theories connecting emotions with status and power are particularly welcome.

Methodologies for Researching Emotions and Digital Methods: Building on previous discussions, this session explores how emotions can be studied empirically, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Topics include analysing emotions in data, refining methodologies for specific concepts, and gathering relevant data. The intersection of digital methods with the Sociology of Emotions is a key focus.

Joint session

JS_RN11_RN12: Human-Environment Relations and Emotions in Times of Crisis (Joint Session with RN11 Sociology of Emotions & RN12 Environment and Society)

JS_RN11_RN13: Unspoken Emotions of (Non)Parenthood: Despair, Loneliness and Regret (Joint session with RN 11 Sociology of emotions & RN 13 Family and intimate lives)

JS_RN11_RN32: Emotional Dynamics of Grievance Politics (Joint session with RN11 Sociology of Emotions and RN32 Political Sociology)

RN12 - Environment and Society

Coordinators: Aleksandra Wagner, Jagiellonian University, Poland, aleksandra.wagner[at]uj.edu.pl

Pia Laborgne, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany, pia.laborgne[at]kit.edu

Markus Hadler, University of Graz, Austria, markus.hadler[at]uni-graz.at

The RN12 “Environment and Society” section invites contributions that explore the intersections of social action, democratic governance, and sustainability in the face of global environmental crises. From climate change and biodiversity loss to pollution, land degradation, and their entanglement with social inequalities and geopolitical conflicts, which may culminate in severe ecological, humanitarian, and even genocidal disasters, this section seeks to advance critical sociological reflections on how societies can respond collectively and democratically to these challenges.

We welcome trans-, multi-, inter-, and mono-disciplinary perspectives that address both established environmental sociology topics and emerging issues shaped by contemporary realities. Scholars from around the world are encouraged to submit abstracts and participate.

The topics listed are by no means exhaustive – we warmly encourage fresh perspectives and innovative proposals.

Themes and sessions may include, but are not limited to:

- Biological Diversity and Nature Conservation
- Civic Engagement, Participation, and Environmental Governance
- Critical Perspectives on Carbon Neutrality and Energy Transitions
- Environmental Attitudes, Values, Beliefs, and Behaviors
- Environmental Education and Awareness
- Environmental Justice and Conflicts
- Environmental Movements, Citizenship, and Collective Action
- Feminism, Colonialism, and Other Forms of Social Hegemonies in Environmental Contexts
- Human-Animal Relations and Ethical Considerations
- Insights from Environmental Sociology on Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Times
- Knowledge, Ignorance, and Public Debate in Environmental Decision-Making
- Media, Communication, and Environmental Awareness
- Participatory Approaches to Sustainable Development
- Science, Technology, and Environmental Futures
- Social-Environmental Impacts of Military Conflicts
- Sociology of Climate Change
- Sustainable Cities, Territories, and Communities
- Sustainable Food Practices and Food Cultures
- Sustainable Mobilities and Infrastructure
- Theory and Methodology in Environmental Sociology

- Open Session: Society, Solidarity, and the Environment

We particularly encourage submissions that critically examine how social action, democratic participation, and solidarity can contribute to environmental sustainability, resilience, and justice.

Joint sessions

JS_RN12_RN24: Enacted and Contested Futures of the Ocean: Sea Societies, Marine Technologies, and Maritime Spaces (Joint session with RN12 Environment and Society & RN24 Science and Technology)

JS_RN11_RN12: Human-Environment Relations and Emotions in Times of Crisis (Joint Session with RN11 Sociology of Emotions & RN12 Environment and Society)

JS_RN16_RN12: Creating More Sustainable and Healthy Futures for All (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN 12 Environment & Society)

JS_RN21_RN12: Methodological Landscapes of Quantitative Environmental Sociology (Joint session with RN21 Quantitative Methods and RN12 Environment and Society)

JS_RN22_RN12: From Floods to Heatwaves: Environmental Risk Perception Across Europe (Joint session with RN22 Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty and RN12 Environment and Society)

RN13 - Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives

Coordinators: Katarzyna Suwada, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland, k.suwada[at]umk.pl

Inga Lass, University of Melbourne, Australia, i.lass[at]unimelb.edu.au

RN13 invites submissions addressing the diverse dynamics of families and intimate lives in contemporary societies. Families are both shaped by and contribute to broader social transformations—mass migration, shifting gender relations, economic and political change, technological innovation, environmental crises, and the aftermath of the pandemic. These processes bring new forms of uncertainty but also generate opportunities for solidarity, resilience, and democratic renewal.

At the micro level, intimate relations and family practices are central sites where values of trust, equality, and care are negotiated. At the meso and macro levels, changing family configurations intersect with welfare regimes, labour markets, and political debates over rights, inclusion, and sustainability. Understanding these linkages is crucial for imagining and strengthening democratic futures.

We encourage contributions that explore how families and intimate lives both reflect and shape societal change. Papers may focus on empirical research, theoretical advances, or methodological innovation. While engagement with the conference theme is welcome, all papers of relevance to family sociology are invited.

When submitting an abstract, please outline the research question, theoretical framework, methodology, main findings, interpretation, and up to five keywords. Additionally, please indicate which of the following themes your paper best relates to:

- Family patterns, values, and practices
- Diversified family boundaries and kinship networks
- Family relationships and life course stages
- Family formation and dissolution
- Same sex couples
- Gender division of work within couples
- Multi-local, multicultural, and transnational families
- Family planning, fertility, and reproductive technologies
- Work-family balance, work-family conflicts
- Family policies and interventions
- COVID-19: Challenges for families and family research
- Family research methodologies

Joint sessions

JS_RN13_RN37: Families & Housing: policies, strategies and practices in European cities (Joint session with RN13 Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives and RN37 Urban Sociology)

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JS_RN04_RN13: Work, education and life balance of families: Children and adults active in the world

(Joint session with RN04 Sociology of Children and Childhood and RN13 Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives)

JS_RN11_RN13: Unspoken Emotions of (Non)Parenthood: Despair, Loneliness and Regret (Joint session with RN 11 Sociology of emotions & RN 13 Family and intimate lives)

RN14 - Gender relations in the labour market and the welfare state

Coordinators: Rebecca Selberg, Lund University, Sweden, rebecca.selberg[at]soc.lu.se

Paula Koskinen Sandberg, Aalto University School of Business,
Finaland, paula.koskinensandberg[at]aalto.fi

Feminist contributions to strengthening democracies

In the spirit of the theme for the ESA 2026 Warsaw conference “Strengthening Democracies: Social Action, Solidarity, and Sustainable Futures”, RN14 invites paper presentations that envision what feminist contributions to strengthening democracies could look like. Feminism has multiple meanings that vary across scholarly fields. Here, we especially refer to action that is political and aims at dismantling intersectional inequalities, building a better society and better future especially for women and other disadvantaged groups. We aim to enhance social justice, as defined by United Nations sustainable development goals, including reduced inequalities, gender equality and decent work and economic growth, among others. Feminist research can contribute to achieving these important goals.

RN 14 welcomes contributions that cover topics such as feminist solidarity, social actions and activism, feminist responses, including policy responses, to social problems. In Sylvia Walby's words (in her keynote in our mid-term meeting) feminist scholars should “scale up” and aim for bigger impact through more ambitious work. In the conference, we wish to explore what this scaling up could look like, and what kind of theoretical and empirical work it could mean. The possible topics can entail, but are not limited to, the following:

- Feminist and intersectional analysis of the labour market
- Feminist approaches to studying welfare state policies and other welfare state features
- Feminist activism for better futures
- Risks and opportunities for social sustainability and more just societies
- Welfare state accountability, governance, and injustice
- Class relations and solidarity: how to strengthen democracy?
- Gendered power relations in the labour market and workplace
- Work and family challenges
- Gender violence and state responses
- Feminist activism in trade unions and other NGO's
- Feminist approaches to other topics that deal with gender relations in the labour market and the welfare state

RN15 - Global, Transnational and Cosmopolitan Sociology

Coordinators: Marjaana Rautalin, University of Helsinki, Finland, marjaana.rautalin[at]helsinki.fi

Sylvain Beck, University of Paris-Nanterre/CEMEA, France, sylvain_beck[at]yahoo.fr

Global phenomena, such as the recent pandemics, acceleration of climate change, the war in Europe, the subsequent energy and financial crisis, transnational migration, the spill-over of various armed conflicts and terrorism combined with movements founded on populism and conspiracy theories, have heightened awareness of the world as a single place, despite the many borders and barriers (physical and symbolic) which crisscross it.

Nation-states are still important players but there is no world government that has jurisdiction over national governments and other actors enabling them to dictate national policies. At the same time, many other actors, such as supranational institutions and networks, advocacy coalitions, non-profit organizations, local governments, corporations, claim a role in managing and shaping global and local processes, relations, rhetoric and societies.

However, research and theorizing about these issues has shown their complexity and this calls for a rethinking about the role of sociologists in analysing these phenomena and strengthening democracies. We need to think outside the box of methodological and theoretical nationalism and refashion ways to conceive social change, social action, solidarity, and sustainable futures. It is also important to challenge and rework ideas about rights and responsibilities beyond models of citizenship embedded in the nation-state system. It is evident that transnational relations are building global realities that cannot be captured by analysing societies as discrete national entities.

This call is for papers dealing with theoretical, methodological or empirical issues related to the supranational dimension of social reality; local-global relations; transnational and global shared practices, cultures and patterns of affiliation; the reshaping of borders at local, regional and global level; and the transnational features of everyday life.

Joint sessions

JS_RN15_RN28: Boundaries, Barriers, and (Multiple) Belongings through Sport (Joint session with RN15 Global, transnational and cosmopolitan sociology & RN28 Society & Sports)

RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine

Coordinators: Dino Numerato, Charles University, Czechia, dino.numerato[at]fsv.cuni.cz

Ana Patrícia Hilário, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal, patriciahilario[at]gmail.com

Strengthening Democracies: Social Action, Solidarity, and Sustainable Futures in Health and Medicine

ESA RN 16 Sociology of Health and Medicine invites abstract submissions for sessions that engage with the overarching theme of the conference, “Strengthening Democracies: Social Action, Solidarity, and Sustainable Futures.” We particularly welcome proposals that address this theme through perspectives from the sociology of health and medicine, broadly conceived.

Health care and medicine constitute key social spheres in which democratic participation, solidarity, and sustainability are continuously reproduced, negotiated, and contested. As such, they offer a highly relevant context for examining the nature and impact of social and collective action, interrogating the development of trust and collective responsibility, and exploring how institutional practices shape equitable and environmentally sustainable futures. These dynamics are increasingly influenced by the accelerated development of digital technologies—particularly artificial intelligence—which reshape governance, access, and accountability in health systems. Contributions that engage with these processes can offer deeper insights into the social foundations of democratic resilience and processes leading to social change.

To explore and critically interrogate these timely conference themes, we invite you to submit your abstract to one of our 15 regular sessions (including one open session) or one of the 10 joint sessions. Detailed descriptions of both regular and joint sessions are provided below.

Additional sessions may be created a posteriori based on abstracts submitted to the Open Session. We especially encourage submissions from PhD students. ESA RN16 looks forward to receiving your contributions!

Joint sessions

JS_RN16_RN10: Crossroads of Health and Education in Democratic Societies: Challenges and Transformations (Joint session RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN10 Sociology of Education)

JS_RN16_RN12: Creating More Sustainable and Healthy Futures for All (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN 12 Environment & Society)

JS_RN16_RN19: Healthcare Encounters in Transition: Rethinking Professional-Patient Interactions (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN19 Sociology of Professions)

JS_RN16_RN23: Inclusive Health Practices and Sexualities: Knowledge, Care, and Rights in Times of Crisis (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN23 Sexuality)

JS_RN16_RN24_I: AI, Digital Health, and the Transformation of Medical Practice (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN 24 Science and Technology)

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JS_RN16_RN24_II: From Health Activism to Influencer Culture: Digital Platforms and the Reconfiguration of Patient Participation (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN 24 Science and Technology)

JS_RN16_RN28: Sport, fitness, physical activity and health in times of crisis (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Illness and RN28 Society and Sports)

JS_RN16_RN33: Gender, Medicine, and Care: Challenging Bias, Breaking Silences, Reshaping Health (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine & RN33 Women's and Gender Studies)

JS_RN16_RN37: Beyond Commodification: Urban Health and the Politics of Space and Care (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine RN37 Urban Sociology)

JS_RN03_RN16: Collective and Participatory Approaches to Evolving and Embodied Lives (Joint session with RN03 Biographical perspectives on European Societies and RN16 Sociology of health and medicine)

RN17 - Work, Employment and Industrial Relations

Coordinators: Valeria Pulignano, KU Leuven, Belgium, valeria.pulignano[at]kuleuven.be

Guglielmo Meardi, Scuola Normale Superiore, Italy, Guglielmo.meardi[at]sns.it

Democracy At Work in an Age of Multiple and Intersecting Crises: Solidarity, Voice and Conflicts in Changing Labour Markets

At a time of multiple and intersecting crises, from ecological breakdown and geopolitical instability to technological disruption and new inequalities, the world of work remains a key site where the future of democracy is contested and reimagined. Work is not only a source of income and social identity but also an arena in which power relations, solidarities, and democratic voice are continuously reshaped.

Research Network 17 Work, Employment and Industrial Relations aims at fostering discussion on how transformations in work and employment are entangled with broader democratic futures. The erosion of collective institutions, the spread of precarious work, and the unequal impacts of climate transition, digitalization and demographic changes open new tensions within national employment and welfare systems and global labour regimes. At the same time, new forms of worker organizing, transnational alliances, and institutional experimentation point to the potential for renewed solidarities and democratic innovation.

We invite papers that, through research on the social, economic and political aspects of work, contribute to understanding how industrial democracy is challenged, reinvented, or undermined, and the possible implications for the quality of working and living conditions. We particularly welcome contributions that:

- Explore how digitalization, platforms, and ecological transitions reshape democratic participation at work;
- Analyse the erosion and reinvention of labour institutions and worker representation;
- Address the links between rise of political disaffection, social fragmentation and changing work and employment conditions;
- Examine new forms of transnational solidarity, grassroots organizing, and resistance;
- Contribute to theoretical and methodological innovations in the study of democracy at work

RN18 - Sociology of Communications and Media Research

Coordinators: Paško Bilić, Institute for Development and International Relations, Croatia, pasko[at]irmo.hr

Tatiana Mazali, Polytechnic University of Turin, Italy, tatiana.mazali[at]polito.it

Eran Fisher, The Open University of Israel, eranfisher[at]gmail.com

Reclaiming the Political: Toward a Critical Sociology of Mediated Democracy

In times marked by crises and turbulence, communications and media stand at the heart of democratic possibility and peril. As liberal institutional configurations are confronted with intersecting challenges of authoritarianism, socioeconomic inequality, and ecological breakdown, the sociology of communications and media must play a pivotal role in analysing how capitalism mediates communication and how solidarities are either fragmented or forged. RN18 invites papers that critically examine how communication shapes and is shaped by struggles for democracy, equity, and sustainability. We seek contributions that interrogate the structural entanglements of media and communication with capitalism, labour, ideology, and political discourse; that explore the role of journalism, digital platforms, and media in sustaining or undermining democratic imaginaries; and that assess how communicative practices enable or hinder collective action and public engagement across diverse social groups. In light of mounting disillusionment with liberal political orders and market-driven media infrastructures, contributors are encouraged to reflect on the prospects of post-capitalist and post-liberal democratic horizons, imaginaries that foreground decommodification, radical egalitarianism, participatory governance, epistemic justice, and ecological care. What forms of democracy might emerge when communication is disentangled from profit logics, when solidarity transcends national borders, and when media systems and advanced technologies are reoriented toward common goods? We are particularly interested in submissions that reflect on the contradictory implications of digital technology and AI, from their deployment in reinforcing techno-economic ordering, surveillance and post-truth regimes, to the potential in enabling civic empowerment and new forms of counter-power. We welcome all scholars committed to advancing theoretical and empirical, critical sociological insight into the conditions, crises, and prospects of mediated democracy today.

RN19 - Sociology of Professions

Coordinators: Christiane Schnell, Institute of Social Research at the Goethe-University of Frankfurt, Germany, christiane.schnell[at]tu-dortmund.de

Nina Weimann-Sandig, Evangelische Hochschule Dresden, Germany, nina.weimann-sandig[at]ehs-dresden.de

Professions, Democracy, and Social Transformation: The Role of Professional Groups in Strengthening Democratic Futures

The sociology of professions has long explored the ways in which professional groups mediate between the state, the market, and civil society, shaping not only individual life chances but also broader societal structures. In times of democratic uncertainty and social turbulence, professions and professionals are both challenged and called upon to act as agents of stability, inclusion, and innovation.

This session invites contributions that critically examine the evolving roles, responsibilities, and agency of professions and professionals in the context of contemporary democratic challenges. How do professions respond to rising social inequalities, the erosion of trust in institutions, and the spread of misinformation in a digitalized society? What roles do professional ethics, autonomy, and expertise play in safeguarding democratic values, public health, social justice, and human rights—especially in the face of growing populism, far-right movements, and attacks on minority rights.

Of particular importance is the role of professions in education, spanning early childhood education and care, schools, and higher education. Educators and academic professionals are entrusted with the vital task of imparting democratic values, fostering critical thinking, and supporting the development of civic competencies. However, these responsibilities are often fraught with challenges: competing curricula, political demands, limited resources, and societal polarization may restrict the space for democratic education or lead to tensions regarding the neutrality and autonomy of educational professionals. Additionally, there are ongoing debates about the extent to which educational institutions and their professionals should actively promote democratic engagement versus maintaining a stance of political neutrality. Furthermore, the rapid advancement of digital technologies, especially Artificial Intelligence, is transforming professional work and reshaping lines of expertise, accountability, and solidarity. How do professions adapt to these changes, and how do they deploy their knowledge and legitimacy to foster social inclusion, support marginalized populations, and promote evidence-based public discourse?

We especially welcome theoretical, empirical, and comparative contributions that address (but are not limited to) the following questions:

- How do professions contribute to strengthening or, conversely, undermining democratic institutions and practices?
- In what ways are professional identities, ethics, and forms of organization evolving in response to contemporary crises (health, environmental, economic, digital)?
- How do professions promote or hinder social cohesion, solidarity, and transformative social action?
- What are the implications of digitalization and AI for professional autonomy, accountability, and public trust?

- How can the sociology of professions contribute to the development of more just, inclusive, and sustainable futures?

We encourage papers that draw on diverse methodological approaches and national contexts, including studies from Central and Eastern Europe, Global South perspectives, and interdisciplinary work.

By critically engaging with these questions, the sociology of professions can offer vital perspectives on the renewal and strengthening of democracy, social action, and solidarity in turbulent times.

Joint sessions

JS_RN16_RN19: Healthcare Encounters in Transition: Rethinking Professional-Patient Interactions (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN19 Sociology of Professions)

RN20 - Qualitative Methods

Coordinators: Tea Torbenfeldt Bengtsson, VIVE, The Danish Center for Social Science Research, Denmark,
ttb[at]vive.dk

Silvia Cataldi, La Sapienza University Rome, Italy, silvia.cataldi[at]uniroma1.it

Qualitative Sociology and the Challenges of Democracy

Qualitative research has long provided sociology with rich insights into lived experiences, everyday practices, and the meaning-making processes that underpin social life. At a time when democracies across the globe face pressures from political polarization, ecological crises, technological disruptions, and shifting solidarities, qualitative approaches offer crucial knowledge for understanding and strengthening the social fabric. Qualitative sociology helps us grasp how democratic practices are enacted in everyday life, how solidarity is fostered or undermined, and how imaginaries of sustainable futures are formed and contested.

For ESA 2026 in Warsaw, RN20 “Qualitative Methods” invites papers that address the role of qualitative methods in studying democratic life, solidarity in action, and visions of sustainability. We particularly welcome contributions that advance qualitative methodologies in relation to contemporary challenges, including new digital environments, global interdependencies, social problems, transformations of social inequality and diverse migration societies.

Contributions may also engage with questions of positionality, reflexivity, situated knowledges and performative social science in the research process. Papers may focus on epistemological and methodological challenges, collaborative research designs and the possibilities and limitations of multimodal forms of knowledge communication. We welcome contributions in various traditions, including Performative Social Science (PSS), which has developed into an innovative approach within qualitative research, opening up collaborative spaces between sociology and the arts. By working with artistic forms such as film, photography, theater, and music, PSS fosters knowledge practices that reach audiences both inside and outside academia. We encourage submissions that engage with the potentials for fostering solidarity, supporting social action, and imagining sustainable futures.

RN20 also welcomes both empirical and theoretical papers addressing all aspects of qualitative sociology and its methodology: from classic approaches such as ethnography, narrative analysis, and conversation analysis to more recent developments in sensory ethnography, digital qualitative methods, and participatory research. We encourage reflections on ethics, epistemology, and the politics of qualitative inquiry, as well as discussions of methodological quality and innovation. Focusing on how qualitative methodologies can contribute to strengthening democratic participation, solidarity, and inclusive futures in contested social contexts, the sessions organized by RN20 may be complemented by performative formats and artistic outputs.

Joint sessions

JS_RN20_RN21_RN29: Reconnecting Theory and Methods in Contemporary Sociology (Joint session with RN20 Qualitative Methods, RN21 Quantitative methods and RN29 Social Theory)

JS_RN20_RN30: Capturing political meaning among younger generations: qualitative methodological puzzles and possibilities (Joint session with RN20 Qualitative methods and RN30 Youth and Generation)

RN21 - Quantitative Methods

Coordinators: Kathrin Komp-Leukkunen, LUT University, Finland, kathrin.komp-leukkunen[at]lut.fi

Fabrizio Martire, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, fabrizio.martire[at]uniroma1.it

Quantitative methods play a pivotal role in the prediction and explanation of social phenomena, making substantive contributions to the analysis of a broad array of topics that hold profound sociological and sociopolitical implications. Amongst others, quantitative sociology contributes to investigating social problems associated with climate change, public opinion about wars (Ukraine, Palestine, etc.), social and political trust, social inequalities, xenophobia, misinformation, and “fake news”. In line with the conference theme “Strengthening Democracies: Social Action, Solidarity, and Sustainable Futures”, we encourage presentations to reflect methodological challenges, problems, methodological as well as statistical advances, and the use of new methods of the big data and artificial intelligence era for predicting and explaining our changing societies within Europe. In addition, we welcome papers on various substantial topics in the fields of quantitative methods. The following list of topics is by no means exhaustive:

- Advances in statistical and data collection methods
- Statistical advances in prediction and causal explanation
- Experimental methods in sociology
- Application of simulation and analytical modelling techniques
- Quantitative methods and applications for studying democracies in Europe
- Quantitative studies in different substantial fields, e.g., migration and refugees, climate change, xenophobia, social inequality, and fake news

Joint Sessions

JS_RN21_RN12: Methodological Landscapes of Quantitative Environmental Sociology (Joint session with RN21 Quantitative Methods and RN12 Environment and Society)

JS_RN21_RN24: Digital methods, Big Data and AI: Challenges and opportunities for societal analysis (Joint session with RN21 Quantitative Methods and RN24 Science and Technology)

JS_RN01_RN21: Quantitative Methods in Ageing Research: Novel Insights and Future Directions (Joint session with RN01 Ageing in Europe and RN21 Quantitative Methods)

JS_RN20_RN21_RN29: Reconnecting Theory and Methods in Contemporary Sociology (Joint session with RN20 Qualitative Methods, RN21 Quantitative methods and RN29 Social Theory)

RN22 - Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty

Coordinators: Bert de Graaff, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands, degraaff[at]eshpm.eur.nl

Veronica Moretti, University of Bologna, Italy, veronica.moretti4[at]unibo.it

The Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty Research Network (RN22) is committed to promoting theoretical and empirical research into risk and uncertainty through sociological and interdisciplinary approaches.

The 17th ESA Conference highlights the persistent polycrisis, institutional mistrust and technological acceleration facing our democracies today. Sociological research on risk and uncertainty, to which RN22 has been committed for over two decades, appears more relevant today than ever before. In Warsaw we aim to provide a forum for debating studies on how risks are perceived, constructed, managed, communicated and/or neglected in relation to recent interacting crises and ongoing transformations. The sociology of risk, in its different approaches, will also help us to understand how actual or anticipated uncertainties, crises and catastrophes may activate new practices of trust and solidarity, distrust and anomie, or may stimulate new forms of engagement and collective action.

We welcome both theoretical and empirical contributions that engage with the conference theme as well as with broader issues within the sociology of risk and uncertainty. Abstracts may be submitted either to the general sessions or to one of the specific thematic sessions outlined below:

- Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty (General Sessions)
- Theoretical Advancements in Risk Studies
- Methods in Risk Research
- Art and Risk
- Risk and Social Change
- Risk Perceptions and Understandings
- Public Discourses and Media Representations of Risk
- Risk and Inequalities from an Intersectional Perspective
- Risks in Health and Social Care
- Risk and Environmental Issues
- Individual and Institutional Risk-Taking
- Crisis and Disaster Preparedness and Risk
- Risk Work and Organizing Risk
- Risks, AI and Digital Technologies
- Trust, Hope, Faith and Magic amid Everyday Uncertainties

Joint sessions

JS_RN22_RN02: Risks and Uncertainties: The Arts as Social Response (Joint Session with RN22 Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty & RN02 Sociology of the Arts)

JS_RN22_RN12: From Floods to Heatwaves: Environmental Risk Perception Across Europe (Joint session with RN22 Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty and RN12 Environment and Society)

RN23 - Sexuality

Coordinators: Christian Klesse, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, c.klesse[at]mmu.ac.uk

Tanja Vuckovic Juros, University of Zagreb, Croatia, tvuckovi[at]ffzg.unizg.hr

Gender and Sexuality, and the Crisis of Democracy: Erasure, Oppression and Acts of Resistance

We are witnessing attacks on sexual and gender rights on a global scale, targeting multiple marginalised groups. For example, political mobilizations and state actions against LGBTQIA+ populations undermine their livelihoods, communities, cultural moorings and political organisations. Heteroactivism and anti-gender mobilizations engage in populist onslaughts on practices of recognition, citizenship rights and families of gender and sexual minorities. Human rights violations have escalated in the face of political instability, economic crises, armed conflicts, and genocides. The RN23 Committee welcomes papers that critically analyse the challenges faced by those stigmatised on the grounds of gender, sexuality, style of intimacy or kinship. We encourage submissions that document practices of oppression, as well as strategies of resistance. We welcome contributions that explore the ways of life and (coalitional) practices of solidarity linked up with LGBTQIA+ lives, consensual non-monogamies, kinky and other often hidden or stigmatized communities. Contributions may include but are not limited to:

- Politics of erasure and the significance of secrecy in sexual culture(s)
- Couple-defiant intimacies and queer kinships (e.g., around consensual non-monogamies, friendships, etc.)
- Othering, biopolitics, necropolitics, state terror and genocides
- Politics of recognition, struggles around rights, and within citizenship regimes
- Agency and social justice related to minority sexual practices and communities
- Anti-gender mobilizations and heteroactivisms
- Social movements actions and practices of solidarity (ranging from everyday actions over modalities of protest to Pride movements)
- Gender identities (masculinities, femininities, queer, trans and non-binary genders, etc.) and their implications in modalities of power and resistance
- Health and reproductive politics
- Professional practices and fields (such as education, social work, therapy, etc.)

Joint sessions

JS_RN23_RN25: Not so easy bedfellows? Varieties of alliances and convergences within anti-gender mobilizations (Joint session with RN23 Sexuality and RN25 Social Movements)

JS_RN23_RN29_I: Queer-Feminist Work on Counter-publics and Theories of Social Change (Joint session with RN23 Sexuality and RN25 Social Movements)

JS_RN23_RN29: Pushing boundaries - digital intimacies and the quest for new social theory? (Joint session with RN23 Sexuality and RN29 Social Theory)

JS_RN16_RN23: Inclusive Health Practices and Sexualities: Knowledge, Care, and Rights in Times of Crisis (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN23 Sexuality)

RN24 - Science and Technology

Coordinators: Melissa Sessa, National Research Center (CNR - IRPI), Italy, melissa.sessa[at]irpi.cnr.it

Luís Junqueira, ISCTE-IUL, Portugal, Luis_Orlando_Junqueira[at]iscte-iul.pt

Stefania Capogna, Link University, Rome, Italy, s.capogna[at]unilink.it

Democracy in the Data-Driven Age: Solidarity, Global Challenges, and the Sociotechnical Reimagination of Research

The expansion of digital infrastructures—encompassing artificial intelligence (AI), big data, the Internet of Things (IoT), and smart solutions (M. Sessa, 2019; G. Barbosa, 2025) is radically reshaping not only the organization of research but also the broader social conditions in which knowledge is produced, disseminated, and legitimized. These processes are profoundly ambivalent: while they hold the potential to foster more open, participatory, and solidaristic forms of knowledge production, they also risk deepening inequalities, reinforcing opaque governance systems, and creating new dependencies across geopolitical, economic, and cultural contexts.

This panel argues that sociology, particularly through the lens of science and technology studies, is uniquely positioned to interrogate the problematic interdependence between technological innovation, societal structures, and democratic futures. Building on calls for “data literacy” or alphabetization of data, we emphasize the need to critically question the very ontology, ownership, and ethical implications of data and digital infrastructures (Capogna, 2022; 2024). A non-Western-centric perspective is essential, since technological adoption and innovation trajectories unfold differently across the Global South and Global North, raising questions of asymmetry, dependency, and diverse cultural negotiations of technology.

We invite contributions that explore, theoretically and empirically, how sociotechnical transformations affect democracy and solidarity, including but not limited to:

- The impact of IoT and smart solutions on social research practices, everyday life, and governance structures.
- The opportunities and risks of big data and algorithmic infrastructures for democratic accountability, inclusiveness, and collective decision-making.
- The ethical and methodological dilemmas of conducting research in an interconnected, digitally mediated global society.
- How AI and digital platforms can both foster creativity and constrain reflexivity in research and social innovation.
- Comparative and cross-cultural analyses of how digital transformation is shaping democratic practices and solidaristic futures in different regions of the world.

By addressing these themes, the panel contributes to the conference’s broader agenda of strengthening democracies, stressing that the governance of digital transformation is not only a technological matter but a deeply social and political challenge with implications for global solidarity and sustainable futures.

Joint sessions

JS_RN12_RN24: Enacted and Contested Futures of the Ocean: Sea Societies, Marine Technologies, and Maritime Spaces (Joint session with RN12 Environment and Society and RN24 Science and Technology)

JS_RN16_RN24_I: AI, Digital Health, and the Transformation of Medical Practice (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN 24 Science and Technology)

JS_RN16_RN24_II: From Health Activism to Influencer Culture: Digital Platforms and the Reconfiguration of Patient Participation (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN 24 Science and Technology)

JS_RN21_RN24: Digital methods, Big Data and AI: Challenges and opportunities for societal analysis
(Joint session with RN21 Quantitative Methods and RN24 Science and Technology)

RN25 - Social Movements

Coordinators: Elena Pavan, University of Trento, Italy, elena.pavan[at]unitn.it

Daniel Platek, Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland,
daniel_platek[at]wp.pl

Another Democracy is Possible: Social Movements, Coalitions, and Collective Struggles for Just Societies

This session of the 17th European Sociological Association Conference explores how social movements, political coalitions, and broader collective struggles can revitalize democratic values and practices, which are systematically dismantled in a global context marked by polycrisis, genocides, wars, and the resurgence of right-wing forces and ideologies within and beyond institutions. It seeks to promote a space for critical academic debate in the field of social movement and collective action starting from rigorous theoretical and empirical contributions that look at collective endeavours struggling for genuine social justice by tackling, amongst others, the following aspects:

- collective action dynamics in and across contentious fields – e.g., gender and sexuality, work and labour, environmental sustainability and justice, migration and racial justice, indigenous rights, education, etc.
- spatial and temporal dynamics of collective action and the revamping of global mobilization endeavours;
- symbolic, cognitive, discursive, and organizational processes in social movements;
- activists' biographies and life-course trajectories;
- hybrid and digital forms of activism;
- the interplay between movements and their political/discursive/legal context;
- the development of cross-movement alliances and solidarities;
- the links between contentious and electoral politics;
- populist and radical right movements;
- political repression in authoritarian and non-authoritarian states;
- the outcomes of collective action.

Comparative works that connect theory and empirical analysis, as well as innovative conceptual and methodological approaches are particularly encouraged. Similarly, this session warmly welcomes submissions coming from different disciplinary fields and focusing on different areas of the world.

Joint session

JS_RN23_RN25: Not so easy bedfellows? Varieties of alliances and convergences within anti-gender mobilizations (Joint session with RN23 Sexuality and RN25 Social Movements)

RN26 - Sociology of Social Policy and Social Welfare

Coordinators: Volkan Yilmaz, Ulster University, Northern Ireland, v.yilmaz[at]ulster.ac.uk

Ingrid Fylling, Nord University, Norway, ingrid.fylling[at]nord.no

The Sociology of Social Welfare and Inclusion in Hard Times: Examining Social Policy Pathways Toward Democratic and Sustainable Futures

What does it mean to build a democratic and inclusive society today? What barriers stand in the way of achieving this vision? How can social policy initiatives at national, local and global levels advance social welfare while also promoting social inclusion? In what ways do social policies foster, or constrain, solidarity? How can solidarity emerging from social action be institutionalized within social policy? And how might social policy contribute to sustainable futures? These are some of the sociological questions we invite scholars to explore for this year's conference.

We welcome papers addressing all aspects of social policy and social welfare. Submissions may examine national, global, and local policy responses to demographic, economic, political, or social turbulence, as well as shifts in welfare systems.

We particularly encourage contributions on sustainable and eco-social policies, and other forms of crisis-related policy responses. Papers highlighting how social inclusion criteria (especially in relation to gender equality and diversity) are addressed or undermined by such responses are especially valuable, as are studies of exclusionary mechanisms embedded within policy initiatives.

We also welcome work examining how social policy initiatives give voice to marginalized groups, create opportunities for inclusion and democratic participation, or conversely restrict these. Papers addressing the potential and challenges of mobilizing collective social action in times of crisis, or the capacity of policy responses to strengthen solidarity across society and with marginalized populations, are likewise encouraged.

We invite theoretical and empirical contributions on social policy and social welfare broadly conceived, with particular emphasis on 1) The social policy experiences of diverse social groups, including different age cohorts, women, LGBTQ+ persons, disabled people, racialized and ethnicized communities, and immigrants as well as asylum seekers and refugees. 2) Developments across key policy domains, such as health care, housing, labor markets, pensions, social care, and social assistance, within varying temporal and spatial contexts, and their social welfare implications. This includes work on new social risks, emerging challenges, and dynamics of change over time and across regions.

We also encourage researchers to submit work reflecting their own agendas and interests, as long as it fits within the sociology of social policy and social welfare.

RN27 - Regional Network on Southern European Societies

Coordinators: Inês Vieira, Lusófona University, Portugal, ines.vieira@ulusofona.pt

Olga Salido, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain, olga.salido@cps.usm.es

RN27 (Southern European Societies) contributes to the ESA 2026 Conference theme by exploring how democratic resistance, collective action, and solidarity are shaped within the specific historical, political, and socio-economic contexts of Southern Europe. This research network provides a platform to critically examine how the region navigates democratic backsliding, social fragmentation, and ecological challenges, while also highlighting grassroots responses and institutional innovations that foster sustainable and inclusive futures.

We invite contributions that address these dynamics at local, national, or transnational levels, including comparative perspectives within and beyond Southern Europe. We especially welcome empirical and theoretical work that sheds light on the evolving role of civil society, trust in institutions, intergenerational solidarity, and the interplay between socio-political mobilization and environmental transitions.

Authors can send their proposals to one of the main thematic tracks of RN27:

- Territories, communities and social spaces
- Nature, environments and ecologies
- Education, research and innovation
- Gender
- Social stratification
- Cultures and lifestyles
- Social policy
- Migration and mobility
- Work, firms and markets
- Theoretical and conceptual development on Southern European societies
- Societies and polycrisis

Joint sessions

JS_RN27_RN10: Citizenship education in Southern Europe (Join session with RN27 Regional Network on Southern European Societies & RN10 Sociology of Education)

JS_RN27_RN33: Migration and Gender in Southern European Societies (Joint session with RN27 Regional Network Southern European Societies and RN33 Women's and Gender Studies)

JS_RN27_RN37: Between Residential Patterns and Vulnerable Neighborhoods: Trends of Care Practices in Southern European Cities (Joint session with RN27 Regional Network Southern European Societies and RN37 Urban Sociology)

RN28 - Society and Sports

Coordinators: Enrico Michelini, HU Berlin, Germany, enrico.michelini[at]hu-berlin.de

Klara Kovacs, University of Debrecen, Hungary, kovacs.klara[at]arts.unideb.hu

Alessandro Porrovecchio, University of the Littoral Opal Coast, France,
alessandro.porrovecchio[at]univ-littoral.fr

Sport represents a significant social field in contemporary societies. In times marked by polycrises—climate change, public health threats, wars, migration, and digital transformation—sport offers both opportunities and risks. It can foster participation, solidarity, and inclusion, while also mirroring broader societal conflicts such as racism, gender inequality, economic exclusion, or the rise of extremist ideologies. As both a site of empowerment and a potential arena of division, sport exemplifies how democratic values are strengthened, contested, or transformed in everyday social life. Exploring these dynamics provides crucial insights into how civil society actors contribute to democracy in practice.

Sociology plays a relevant role in shedding light on the democratic challenges of our time in the context of sport. Through theory- and data-guided analysis, it can reveal and critically examine how sport reflects and shapes social inequalities, solidarity and exclusion. This perspective deepens our understanding of crises, agency and resistance, providing vital insights for building more inclusive and democratic futures.

Starting from this premise, we invite to submit presentation proposals on the topics:

- sport democracy and extremism
- sport and national identity
- gender and sport participation
- race, ethnicity and sport participation
- (forced) migration and sport
- physical activities and inequalities
- sport and social capital
- sport as a spectacle and fan cultures
- sports events
- physical cultures and health
- sport, body and identity
- quantitative and qualitative research in sport and physical activities

Joint sessions

JS_RN15_RN28: Boundaries, Barriers, and (Multiple) Belongings through Sport (Joint session with RN15 Global, transnational and cosmopolitan sociology and RN28 Society & Sports)

JS_RN16_RN28: Sport, fitness, physical activity and health in times of crisis (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Illness and RN28 Society and Sports)

RN29 - Social Theory

Coordinators: Kornelia Hahn, University of Salzburg, Austria, kornelia.hahn[at]plus.ac.at

Arthur Oliveira Bueno, University of Passau, Germany, arthur.bueno[at]uni-passau.de

Engaging with Polycrisis Research

We invite contributions that help to better understand the pressing problems arising from a time of polycrisis. These contributions may revisit, interpret or expand upon classical theory debates, or present and/or theorise innovative empirical studies. In reference to the conference theme, we focus on three issues that can be explored individually or in relation to each other or related issues of the polycrisis:

- Influential concepts have linked democratic legitimacy to deliberate communicative action. For example, critical theory analyses democracy as an arena of social struggle and ongoing redefinition, emphasising its inherently conflictual nature. Drawing on the dynamic and contested nature of democracy, contributions will explore social action frameworks, agency, and signifying practices in relation to the risks and resilience of democracy.
- Democratic societies are considered guardians of pluralism and participation, yet they are finding it increasingly difficult to generate the social cohesion and collective bonds necessary for deliberation. Drawing on concepts of solidarity, contributions will explore how solidarity operates at different levels—from intimate relationships to transnational communities—and whether these forms of solidarity support or undermine democracy.
- Sustainable and unsustainable futures are usually conceptualised as socio-ecological consequences of power structures and inequality. As proposed solutions have not yet achieved significant impact, we need more comprehensive, detailed and critical alternative or innovative theories that address sustainable futures. This could involve examining why seemingly 'good' solutions to the ecological crisis have failed thus far and/or critically evaluating measures that have already been implemented.

Joint sessions

JS_RN07_RN29: From Liminalities: New Reflections on the 'In-Between' (Joint session with RN07 Sociology of Culture and RN29 Social Theory)

JS_RN23_RN29_I: Queer-Feminist Work on Counter-publics and Theories of Social Change (Joint session with RN23 Sexuality and RN29 Social Theory)

JS_RN23_RN29_II: Pushing boundaries - digital intimacies and the quest for new social theory? (Joint session with RN23 Sexuality and RN29 Social Theory)

JS_RN20_RN21_RN29: Reconnecting Theory and Methods in Contemporary Sociology (Joint session with RN20 Qualitative Methods, RN21 Quantitative methods and RN29 Social Theory)

RN30 - Youth and Generation

Coordinators: Annalisa Dordoni, Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy, annalisa.dordoni[at]unimib.it

Dragan Stanojevic, Department of Sociology, University of Belgrade, Institute for Sociological Research, Serbia, dstanoje[at]f.bg.ac.rs

Youth, Democratic Backsliding and New Solidarities

The upcoming 17th European Sociological Conference — *Strengthening Democracies: Social Action, Solidarity, and Sustainable Futures* — will take place in Warsaw, Poland, on August 25–28, 2026. As part of this conference, the ESA Research Network 30 “Youth and Generation” warmly invites you to submit abstracts for our sessions.

Just when it seemed that the global COVID-19 crisis had come to an end, new events have shaken the international scene, turning crisis into a seemingly permanent condition. Shifts in global power relations have posed two major challenges to European societies: the prioritisation of security, which has moved many pressing social issues out of focus, and the rise of authoritarianism, populism, and democratic backsliding in numerous countries. Classic concerns, such as civil, minority, women's, and other human rights, as well as environmental struggles, and the possibilities for political organising and free expression, are becoming less salient or even increasingly restricted. At the same time, rapid technological development, particularly in the field of artificial intelligence, has made the future even less predictable, with the potential both to help address social challenges and heighten risks to civil liberties.

Yet, reactions have not disappeared. Young people, in particular, continue to address urgent social and political issues, demanding more freedom, equality, and solidarity. Across Europe, we witness movements, initiatives, and informal organising aimed at tackling the acute challenges that European societies face.

We aim to explore how these social and political transformations affect the lives of young people: their social biographies, the structures of opportunities, as well as the barriers and risks they encounter. We also wish to examine the diverse responses that young people provide, whether individually or collectively. We welcome both theoretical contributions and empirical studies using any social science methodology (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods).

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Conventional and unconventional forms of youth participation, including new forms of activism and engagement
- Youth and populism: the rise of the new right among young people
- Divisions, antagonisms, and polarisation among young people
- Young people, citizenship, civil rights, and social security
- Transition to adulthood in times of polycrisis: labour market precarity, housing instability, mobility challenges, deportations
- New solidarities: youth alliances with other social actors (trade unions, CSOs, academia)
- Intergenerational cooperation and intergenerational conflicts

- Generational experience during the polycrisis, shared identities and novel responses to crisis
- Youth perspectives on narratives and real security risks stemming from wars and internal conflicts
- Individual and collective youth responses to ecological and environmental crises
- Young people's use of new technologies — creating new spaces for identity, connectivity, and solidarity, but also risks of manipulation and authoritarianism
- Cultural responses of young people to social and political challenges: old and new subcultures and countercultures
- Migration, depopulation, and mobility, both as opportunity and as emerging risk

We invite scholars working on youth to submit an abstract of up to 250 words addressing one or more of the above topics. Papers may be theoretical, methodological, epistemological, or empirical (presenting research findings). We especially encourage contributions that draw on longitudinal or comparative data, as well as case studies from European countries (though other contexts are welcome). Given the interdisciplinary nature of youth sociology, we hope the sessions will foster a vivid debate that identifies micro, meso, and macro-level impacts on young people's lives, as well as their strategies of adaptation and response.

We look forward to your submissions and to engaging in a timely sociological debate, one that not only sheds light on the position of young people but also helps search for solutions crucial for defending democratic values and institutions.

Joint sessions

JS_RN20_RN30: Capturing political meaning among younger generations: qualitative methodological puzzles and possibilities (Joint session with RN20 Qualitative methods and RN30 Youth and Generation)

RN31 - Ethnic Relations, Racism and Antisemitism

Coordinators: Kim Robin Stoller, International Institute for Education and Research on Antisemitism, Berlin, Germany, [kim.stoller\[at\]iibsa.org](mailto:kim.stoller[at]iibsa.org)

Elke Rajal, Chair of Sociology, Passau University, Passau, Germany, [elke.rajal\[at\]uni-passau.de](mailto:elke.rajal[at]uni-passau.de)

The network seeks to bridge the often siloed treatment of antisemitism and racism by examining their correspondences and affinities as well as their differences. Our overarching aim is to identify the material, social, political, and historical factors and conditions that shape variations in antisemitism and racism over time and across different European and global contexts. In our RN panels, we will focus on how antisemitism and racism pose contemporary threats both to affected communities and to democracy and democratic values in Europe and beyond. We ask about the role of antisemitism and racism in authoritarian and populist democracies, in the undermining of democratic institutions, and in state actors' hybrid warfare against democracy. This inquiry is especially urgent in the aftermath of the 7 October massacre and the subsequent wars, alongside the rise of the far right and various influence campaigns, foreign and domestic.

In line with the ESA conference theme, "Strengthening Democracies," we are particularly interested in how antisemitism and racism can be confronted through social action and solidarity, and how they are incorporated into—or challenge—visions of a future society.

We particularly encourage work that:

- analyses historical and contemporary forms of racism and antisemitism (including left-wing, right-wing, and Islamic antisemitism) and compares antisemitism and racism (convergences, specificities);
- researches democratic backsliding, polarisation, and the mainstreaming of the far right—and their entanglements with antisemitism and racism;
- investigates conspiracy ideologies and crisis discourses and their antisemitic/racist components, including victim–perpetrator reversals;
- studies antisemitism and racism across policy fields (security, education, media, digital governance) and in civil society/activist spheres;
- examines the tensions and intersections between anti-racist and anti-antisemitic activism, particularly in the context of contested political narratives and shifting loyalties surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- focuses the role of Islamist ideologies in shaping contemporary antisemitism in Muslim-majority countries and in Europe;
- addresses neglected forms of racism (e.g., anti-Roma racism/“antigypsyism”), anti-Muslim resentment, and intersectional dynamics (gender, sexuality, class, etc.);
- explores historical lineages (e.g., Holocaust memory politics) and contemporary Israel-related antisemitism;
- examines technology, platforms, and AI in relation to antisemitism and racism: algorithmic bias and content moderation; generative AI and deepfakes in hate speech/propaganda; platform governance and accountability;

- challenges the current methodological approaches to racism and antisemitism in the face of new social phenomena and current political events;
- offers innovative methods, cross-regional comparisons, or theoretically grounded, practice-oriented insights for democratic resilience against antisemitism and racism.

RN32 - Political Sociology

Coordinators: Michele Grigolo, Nottingham Trent University, UK michele.grigolo[at]ntu.ac.uk

Louisa Parks, University of Trento, Italy, louisa.parks[at]unitn.it

Political Sociology and democracy under threat

Democracy is in crisis. A succession of global challenges —war, economic instability, environmental degradation, rising authoritarianism, and social fragmentation —has exposed the fragility of democratic institutions and practices. These pressures have intensified debates around redistribution and recognition, while fuelling populist movements and widespread disinformation.

Political sociology offers crucial tools to understand and respond to these dynamics. We invite proposals that explore how democracy and its institutions are being contested, reshaped, and potentially renewed across different contexts and scales. What forms of political participation and resistance are emerging? How do struggles for justice—social, environmental, and data-related—intersect with democratic renewal and decline? What role do science, knowledge, and information play in shaping public discourses of democracy, especially in the context of culture wars and misinformation?

We welcome contributions that address these questions and related themes by examining the multiple threats to democracy, reactions to these, and the interventions that seek to rejuvenate democratic life and solidarity. We also encourage contributions that address the political dimensions of environmental and social justice, gender justice, human rights, and the rise of populism as both a symptom and a challenge to democratic futures.

This stream seeks to place democracy—both as a system of governance and as a lived, contested, and evolving social project—at the centre of sociological inquiry. Join us in rethinking how political sociology can contribute to strengthening democracies through critical analysis, engaged scholarship, and collaborative action.

Joint session

JS_RN11_RN32: Emotional Dynamics of Grievance Politics (Joint session with RN11 Sociology of Emotions and RN32 Political Sociology)

RN33 - Women's and Gender Studies

Coordinators: Esther Oliver, University of Barcelona, Spain, estheroliver[at]ub.edu

Stellamarina Donato, Lumsa University, Italy, s.donato3[at]lumsa.it

Alicja Zawistowska, University of Bialystok, Poland, a.zawistowska[at]uwb.edu.pl

Sara Merlini, University of Lisbon, Portugal, saramerlini[at]iscsp.ulisboa.pt

Reimagining democracy through gender equality, solidarity and social transformation

Building on the momentum and insights from the ESA-RN33, Women's and Gender Studies, Midterm Conference taking place in Barcelona (2025), we invite submissions for the 17th European Sociological Association Conference in Warsaw that will allow us to further discuss and reimagine democracy from a gender perspective.

Relying on the vision and framework of C. W. Mill's Sociological Imagination (1959) is critical to build scientific tools that expose social injustices and inspire social change, offering essential pathways to strengthen inclusive, equitable democracies. Addressing the challenges confronting European democracies, such as polycrisis, conflicts, threats, economic and social instability, erosion of trust, etc. demands a critical gendered analysis that is part of the extensive theoretical and empirical insights developed within women's, gender, and feminist studies.

Gender challenges, such as discrimination, inequality, or violence, are experienced personally, yet are deeply intertwined with historical processes and institutional power dynamics that shape European democratic societies. Connecting individual experiences with broader social structures enables us to unpack systemic inequalities, illuminating the gendered dimensions of democratic processes, and advancing inclusive frameworks for democratic consolidation and social justice. Applying the sociological imagination frame encourages us to move beyond viewing these issues as isolated personal troubles and instead further emphasize their recognition as systemic social problems that require collective action and structural change. In doing so, we can raise awareness, foster deeper solidarity across diverse societal groups and stimulate transformative approaches to democratic participation, ensuring that equality and justice for all become central to sustainable democratic futures.

Submissions are open for papers focusing on the following topics:

- Gender, Democracy and Social Action
- Solidarity and Intersectionality
- Sustainable Futures and Gender Justice
- Challenges to Inclusion: Backlash, Populism, and Rights
- Transformations in Work, Family, and Care
- Actions and Prevention against Gender Based Violence
- Research Innovations and Future Directions

- Transformation of Sexual and Reproductive Rights
- New Frontiers of Inequality: Digital Access and Artificial Intelligence

Join us in Warsaw to continue and expand the critical work initiated in Barcelona, and to demonstrate how gender research is fundamental to the future of democracy, solidarity, and sustainability.

Joint session

JS_RN16_RN33: Gender, Medicine, and Care: Challenging Bias, Breaking Silences, Reshaping Health

(Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN33 Women's and Gender Studies)

JS_RN27_RN33: Migration and Gender in Southern European Societies

(Joint session with RN27 Regional Network Southern European Societies and RN33 Women's and Gender Studies)

RN34 - Sociology of Religion

Coordinators: Marta Kolodziejska, University of Warsaw, Poland, kolodziejskam[at]is.uw.edu.pl

Kees de Groot, Tilburg University, C.N.deGroot[at]tilburguniversity.edu

Religion, Democracy, and Social Transformation

The place of religion in democratic societies undergoes profound transformations. Despite the ongoing decline of the organized dominant Christian religion in Europe, religion's role in politics, civil society, and social media seems to become more prominent. Mistrust in institutions and political disillusionment is accompanied by the successful mobilization of religious identities and discourses in nationalistic political movements. In various countries, the relation between religion and politics is contested or undergoes profound changes, ranging from the political use of religion as heritage to political aspirations of religious movements. Digital transformation, particularly AI, is also reshaping religious practice, authority, and community formation, offering tools to address some societal inequalities while potentially amplifying others, and fuelling post-truth narratives and conspiracy theories. All these democratic and technological crossroads in a landscape that is threatened by ecological disasters require researchers to help understand how religious values, institutions, and movements relate to democratic participation and social transformation, and how they can contribute to the creation of sustainable futures.

We invite papers on, but not limited to, the following topics:

- Intersecting religious and political identities
- Religion in populist and far-right movements
- Religious responses to human rights threats
- Religion and spirituality in conspiracy theories
- Mediatization of religion and religious values
- Technological developments (incl. AI) and religious communities
- Faith-based activism and social justice
- Religious responses to migration, armed conflicts, and displacement
- Apocalyptic discourses in (anti-)environmental movements
- Religion and welfare states in crisis
- Religion and narratives of sustainability
- Methodological approaches to studying religion's role in social transformation

RN35 - Sociology of Migration

Coordinators: Ilenya Camozzi, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy, ilenya.camozi[at]unimib.it

Linda Haapajarvi, Tampere University, Finland, linda.haapajarvi[at]ehess.fr

Rosa Gatti, Federico II University Naples, Italy, rosa.gatti[at]unina.it

Maxime Maréchal, Université Paris Cité, France, maxime.marechal1[at]etu.u-paris.fr

Laura Odasso, Université Paris 8, France, laura.odasso[at]univ-paris8.fr

Ildikó Zakariás, HUN-REN Centre for Social Sciences, Hungary, zakarias.ildiko[at]tk.hun-ren.hu

Contemporary democracies appear to be struggling in the face of mounting political, economic and environmental pressures, which are increasingly undermining the political vision and socio-cultural horizon of social justice that has characterised modernity. Poverty, precarious access to vital resources and widening social inequalities — exacerbated by environmental, economic and political crises, as well as erupting wars — go hand in hand with decreasing trust in institutions, growing disaffection with politics and democratic disillusionment among citizens. In this fragile and unstable socio-political climate, migration has become a central battleground where the most pertinent paradoxes and ambivalences of this 'polycrisis' era play out. Although migration is a core element of the new global economic order and the new international division of labour, it has also become a major arena in which populist authoritarian political actors can develop and enact exclusionary and dehumanising policies that severely undermine democratic values, social justice, and inclusion.

The dominant reaction to this challenge at national and supranational levels is securitisation, exercising and performing selective control, 'migrantising' and, by doing so, marginalising and excluding various groups and population categories through legal, economic and political means. Conversely, it is also activating solidarity and support practices and discourses, often, but not exclusively, 'from below', through social movements, civic and humanitarian aid initiatives, or local governments, within the framework of a just and sustainable society.

The 17th ESA Conference is an important opportunity to discuss these issues and related challenges.

Research Network 35, 'Sociology of Migration', invites abstracts analysing, discussing and reflecting on migration in relation to current social transformations, sustainable futures and democracies.

Possible topics include the following:

- refugees, asylum, and forced migration
- migration and social inequalities
- migration and education
- migration and labour market
- migrant vulnerability and victimization
- seasonal work and temporary migrant worker programmes
- political participation, new solidarities, and migration-related social movements

- anti-migrant politics and their implications
- the reordering of borders and mobilities
- migration and citizenship
- sexualities, gender and migration
- migration and digital technologies (e.g., surveillance, digital identities)
- migration and climate/ecological crises
- migration and wellbeing (access to care, mental health, public health policies)
- reflexivity in migration research

Priority will be given to abstracts that clearly state their theoretical anchoring; empirical papers additionally need to indicate their methodological underpinning in a concise manner. RN35 encourages a reflective, non-essentialist use of categories. Papers with a European relevance, in the broadest sense of the term, are particularly welcome.

Joint sessions

JS_RN35_RN10: Educating for Belonging: Experiential and Art-Based Pathways in Migration and Inclusion
(Joint session with RN35: Sociology of Migration and RN10: Sociology of Education)

JS_RN03_RN35: Crossing Borders, Telling Lives: Biographical Research in Migration Studies (Joint session with RN03 Biographical Perspectives on European Societies and RN35 Sociology of Migration)

RN36 - Sociology of Social Transformations: East and West

Coordinators: Matej Makarovič, School of Advanced Social Studies, Slovenia, matej.makarovic[at]fuds.si

Agnieszka Kolasa-Nowak, Institute of Sociology Marie Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland,
agnieszka.kolasa-nowak[at]mail.umcs.pl

Sociology of Social Transformations: Developing new perspectives on current trends and future scenarios

ESA Research Network RN36 – Sociology of Transformations: East and West has been initially inspired by the research of social transformations in Central and Eastern Europe but has – from its very beginnings – also included a broader European and global scope. Many of the prevalent trends right after the fall of the Berlin Wall seemed to have slowed down or reversed. Democratisation has often given way to autocratisation. Individualisation and globalisation have been challenged by stronger collectivist, nativist and tribalist attitudes. Paradoxically, these forms of collectivism have often not encouraged but undermined solidarity due to their narrow orientation. Universalism of human rights and freedoms have been challenged by new forms of particularism and exclusion of “the other”. Rationalisation has been undermined by post-truth, anti-scientific, conspiratorial thinking. Political and legal institutions and the established media are increasingly – often with clear reasons – distrusted with their legitimacy undermined – opening more opportunities to populist authoritarians. Rule-based international order has been undermined by several powerful actors that do not hesitate to threaten or even use military force in arbitrary manners and with minimal consideration for the human consequences. Military threats and hybrid warfare have increased the emphasis on security concerns. Commitments to sustainability are often given lower priority or even getting utterly opposed.

Despite such trends, the future is not necessary bleak. New technological potentials and new encouragements for individual and collective human agency can produce either a more oppressive future and a collapse of the European civilisation or new sustainable and democratic visions and practices of all-inclusive connectedness and solidarity.

We are welcoming all types of scholarly contributions that provide scientifically rigorous diagnosis of the current and long-term trends of social transformations, their deep causes and consequences, as well as realistic scenarios of future social transformations. In particular, we welcome novel theoretical conceptualisations, comparative studies and case studies that could illustrate good practices.

RN37 - Urban Sociology

Coordinators: Gabriele Manella, University of Bologna, Italy, gabriele.manella[at]unibo.it

Katarzyna Kajdanek, University of Wroclaw, Poland, katarzyna.kajdanek[at]uwr.edu.pl

Strengthening Democracy in a Fragmented City: a Necessary Challenge

The title of the 17th ESA conference clearly points out the further accumulation of crises over the last years, due also to the increase of international conflicts, ongoing wars, as well the escalation of climate change effects. After the long Covid-19 emergency, several forms of solidarity and self-help have decreased while further problems have remained or even increased (Manella, Corte-Real, 2024): the accessibility and availability of housing throughout Europe, the diffusion of poverty in many urban and rural areas, the increase gender violence, urbicide and vast war-related displacement of urban populations in Europe and in its proximity, just to mention a few ones. We completely agree with the ESA conference statement that “these times of uncertainty have generated scepticism, the devaluation of facts, and a disregard for truth. Called into question are the institutions of democracy itself, the European project, and the prospect of future prosperity”.

Scholars engaged into these critical urban transformations as academics but also as urbanites can address their negative consequences as well as find opportunities for academic reflection and empirical innovation. In other words, amidst of the polycrisis, they can find ways to study conflict, crisis, and celebration (Carvalho, Kajdanek, Bednarczyk, 2025).

The RN37 Board intends to explore the challenges of contemporary urban condition as well as new opportunities for academic reflections appearing with these new empirics. In doing so, we support a cross-disciplinary and inter-generational debate on urban life, urban spaces, urban populations, and urban policies.

We will consider proposals on the following topics as well as alternative ones disclosing the general theme:

- New urban centralities and peripheries
- Segregation and spatial forms of inequality
- Urban movements and political trends
- Consequences of digitalization in cities and urban life
- Housing deprivation and dwelling trends
- Gender, age, ethnicity in urban space
- Urban ecosystems and environmental urban policies
- Urban tourism and overtourism trends
- Urbicide and urban resilience

Joint sessions

JS_RN07_RN37: Cultural Commoning in the City (Joint Session with RN07 Sociology of Culture and RN37 Urban Sociology)

JS_RN13_RN37: Families & Housing: policies, strategies and practices in European cities (Joint session with RN13 Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives and RN37 Urban Sociology)

JS_RN16_RN37: Beyond Commodification: Urban Health and the Politics of Space and Care (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine RN37 Urban Sociology)

JS_RN27_RN37: Between Residential Patterns and Vulnerable Neighborhoods: Trends of Care Practices in Southern European Cities (Joint session with RN27 Regional Network Southern European Societies and RN37 Urban Sociology)

RN38 - Space, Society and Rurality

Coordinators: Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, Harokopio University, Greece, apospapa[at]hua.gr

Maria Jesus Rivera, Public University of Navarra, Spain, mariajesus.rivera[at]unavarra.es

Rural areas and regions in Europe are continually undergoing a reshaping of socio-spatial relations. Recently, attention has focused on the politics of resentment and the sense of injustice expressed by places and regions often considered 'left behind' compared to more privileged regions and cities. Many issues place rural areas at risk or on the defensive: depopulation, limited economic activity, irresponsible agri-food production, environmental degradation, the climate crisis, closure of local services, socio-spatial inequalities, digital transition, the rise of populism, cosmopolitanism, and more. At this conference, RN38 aims to address a range of topics that expose the risks challenging the future of rural areas, highlight the capacity of democratic institutions, and promote alternative, sustainable, and equitable solutions. Social action, solidarity, and sustainability are central concerns in striving for fair, enduring, and social development of rural areas and in enabling greater wellbeing for rural populations. Enhancing and diversifying social and political participation in rural areas and across the urban-rural axis enables stronger and more inclusive democracies, further empowering remote, peripheral, intermediate, peri-urban, and suburban communities.

The main objective of this RN is to examine the various ways in which different areas, both rural and urban, are connected and engaged in transformative socio-spatial relations. Examples of transformative connections in which the "rural" is constantly reconstituted can be found, for example, in the interaction between local populations and new residents (such as rural migration, leisure migration, commuters, transnational migrants, nomads), in the development of rural areas in relation to the consumption patterns of urban populations (such as rural tourism, recreational landscapes, production of 'natural and artisanal' products), and in the increasing presence of 'nature' in urban spaces (such as urban allotments and community gardens).

Contributions from sociologists and other social scientists are welcome, as are papers based on interdisciplinary approaches relevant to the topics discussed at this conference. Both theoretical and empirical research addressing key issues are welcome, along with methodological contributions and reflections on various aspects of rural, regional, and rural versus urban realities. Interdisciplinary, intersectional, critical, and comparative approaches are particularly encouraged, representing different schools of thought and theorisation of transformations in rural and regional areas and across urban-rural relations.

Some indicative topics are the following: polycrises and resilience in rural places/regions; rural wellbeing and subjectivity; social infrastructure(s) in rural areas/regions; the rural impact of technological transformations; rural poverty and social inequalities; vulnerable and minority populations at local and regional levels; xenophobia and transphobia in rural/remote places; depopulation and population renewal; left behindness and resentment; migrations (internal/international), refugees, and new residents; digital transition and labour migration; (im)mobilities in rural places; risks and resilience strategies; local and alternative food systems; sustainable agriculture and wellbeing; digitalisation in rural areas; farming and non-farming activities; touristification, gentrification, and rural livelihoods; rural housing and energy poverty; participation and rural belonging; rural populism/far right in rural places; new rural-based social movements; production, consumption and territoriality; climate crisis and rural areas; impact of public policies on rural places; place-based policies; food and rural commons; social rights and socio-spatial justice.

Joint Sessions between Research Network Sessions

JS_RN01_RN21: Quantitative Methods in Ageing Research: Novel Insights and Future Directions (Joint session with RN01 Ageing in Europe and RN21 Quantitative Methods)

Coordinators: Jolanta Perek-Białas, Jagiellonian University, Poland, jolanta.perek-bialas@uj.edu.pl

Maria Johanna Aartsen, OsloMet, Norway, maraar@oslomet.no

Starting in 2017 (Greece), RN01 and RN21 have established a collaborative tradition of hosting joint sessions during the ESA Conference, aiming to foster integration and the exchange of cutting-edge developments in quantitative approaches to ageing research. These efforts have been fuelled by the growing accessibility of robust quantitative data sources and methods, including expansive international cross-sectional and as well panel surveys and also register data.

Already, our joint sessions opens for showing techniques such as machine learning, computer simulations, network analysis, and artificial intelligence but still there are new methodological avenues. These Joint Sessions provide a platform to explore these advancements, discuss interesting research applications, and critically evaluate their potential in enhancing our understanding of the processes of individual and population ageing.

To facilitate further discussions, we welcome theoretical, methodological and empirical papers related to topics such as:

- Collecting quantitative data on ageing-related issues
- Measuring age and ageing, ageism, active ageing: dimensions and approaches
- A life-course view on late-life events and transitions: sequence analysis, event history models and other approaches
- Multilevel and longitudinal methods
- Comparative analysis of cross-national surveys
- Register data, big data
- Network Analysis
- Age, period, cohort methods
- Computational simulations and agent-based models in ageing research
- Methodological aspects of social indicators in ageing research
- Measuring transitions (e.g. retirement), stratification and inequalities in older age
- Biomarkers
- AI-tools at various stages of research
- Issues related to missing data, retrospective data or attrition, especially in surveys with older persons Other topics linked to the session topic are also welcome.

JS_RN02_RN07: Art, Artificial Intelligence and Other Discontents (Joint Session with RN02 Sociology of the Arts and RN07 Sociology of Culture)

Coordinators: Otto Segersven, University of Helsinki, Finland, otto.segersven@helsinki.fi

Dafne Muntanyola Saura, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain,
dafne.muntanyola@uab.cat

Paula Guerra, University of Porto, mariadeguerra[at]gmail.com

With the rise of Artificial Intelligent (AI) technologies, it is not manual labor but the work of ideas, culture, and art that now faces the prospect of transformation and automatization. The broader public's first encounter with current AI technologies was through recommender systems. For the past 10 years, recommender systems have been curating what we — the audience — see and hear, each individual with their own personalized content. Designed to maximize the time we spend glued to our screens, these non-human distributors, mediators, and gatekeepers amplify content that is familiar, brief, and triggers our fears and desires, while marginalizing others. More recently, generative AI models have gobbled up human culture, past and present, building neural networks that contain patterns in our use of words, sounds, and images, and are now flooding the internet with new cultural artefacts — which, in turn, are regurgitated by the next-generation models. Importantly, AI technologies have no motives or desires of their own. They are not autonomous agents but rather counterparts in human–AI collaborations, blurring the boundary between human and non-human creativity and output. Writing, composing, sketching, editing, design, critique — skills and dispositions, cultural capital, taste, and habitus, once hard-won resources acquired only through social access and socialization, are now being “democratized”: they can be approximated by anyone through relatively simple prompting. This session explores how AI is influencing the worlds of art and culture. It considers both recommender systems as cultural curators, and generative models as cultural producers/collaborators, asking how these technologies affect the production, distribution, and valuation of art and culture, and what this means for the future of cultural work.

JS_RN03_RN16: Collective and Participatory Approaches to Evolving and Embodied Lives (Joint session with RN03 Biographical perspectives on European Societies and RN16 Sociology of health and medicine)

Coordinators: Micol Pizzolati, University of Bergamo, Italy, micol.pizzolati[at]unibg.it

Ana Patrícia Hilário, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal, patriciahilario[at]gmail.com

This session invites contributions on applied social research grounded in collective and participatory approaches for exploring evolving, lived and embodied experiences. We welcome discussions of social inquiry that engage participants collaboratively, combining biographical, creative, and embodied techniques — for instance body mapping, narrative and art-based exercises, participatory theatre, visual storytelling, object elicitation, and walking interviews — to co-create knowledge about bodily and lived transformations. Contributions may address ageing, illness, disability, gendered and embodied transitions, as well as the shifting perceptions shaped by the gaze of others. The session particularly welcomes reflexive accounts that unpack the ethical, epistemological, and practical dimensions of participatory research. We are especially interested in how collaborative approaches can challenge hierarchies between researchers and participants, foster inclusivity, and democratise the production of knowledge. By bringing together perspectives from the sociology of health and medicine and interdisciplinary biographical methods, this joint session seeks to foster dialogue across disciplines and research traditions. Our aim is to highlight methodological innovation while also addressing broader questions of agency, power, and representation. In doing so, we intend to explore how collective and participatory methods enrich academic understanding of embodied experiences and life trajectories while contributing to more responsive, socially engaged, and transformative research practices.

JS_RN03_RN35: Crossing Borders, Telling Lives: Biographical Research in Migration Studies (Joint session with RN03 Biographical Perspectives on European Societies and RN35 Sociology of Migration)

Coordinators: Baiba Bela, University of Latvia, Latvia, baiba.bela[at]lu.lv

Laura Odasso, Université Paris 8, France, laura.odasso[at]univ-paris8.fr

This session explores how biographical research engages with the challenges and contributions of migration, while advancing methodological innovation and ethical reflection. Biographical research methods have gained prominence in migration studies, offering tools such as life stories, narrative interviews, autobiographies, performative methods, walking biographical interviews and devices like Calendar Interviewing Device to capture the intricate trajectories of migrants and refugees. These methods have illuminated how individuals on the move navigate structural constraints, negotiate situations of intermediations and how they develop agency across diverse social-administrative contexts. By foregrounding migrants' voices, biographical research investigates identity construction, intersectional experiences, informal learnings, transnational practices, and struggles for rights and citizenship. At the same time, critical debates highlight ethical concerns, including risks of reproducing dominant narrative and their frames. In response, participatory and art-based approaches have enabled creative and reflexive engagement with migrant everyday lives and subjectivities. These multimodal approaches reveal silenced or hidden dimensions of migration, while also raising new questions about representation and appropriation.

To explore the potential and limits of this qualitative field, the session welcomes contributions addressing, but not limited to:

- Individual and societal transformative aspects of migration over life trajectories.
- Intersections of structure and agency in migrant narratives shaped by class, gender, age, race-ethnicity, and legal status.
- Comparative biographical perspectives on intra-EU mobility and migration from third countries, including high-skilled migration, diaspora and transnational engagement.
- Biographical dimension of helping activities – the experience of volunteers and professionals engaged in actions supporting people on the move
- Methodological innovations in biographical migration research at the intersections of asylum-migration and community.
- Ethical challenges in collecting and interpreting migrant experiences.
- The role of biography in countering misinformation, stereotypes, and exclusionary discourses.

JS_RN04_RN13: Work, education and life balance of families: Children and adults active in the world (Joint session with RN04 RN04 Sociology of Children and Childhood and RN13 Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives)

Coordinators: Maria Lerizia Bosoni, MariaLetizia.Bosoni[at]unicatt.it

Aleksandra Zalewska-Królak, University of Warsaw, aleksandra.zalewska[at]uw.edu.pl

Focusing on care and education as core dimensions of family life, this session addresses the challenges and opportunities of balancing these with contemporary employment structures and cultural transformations. This session examines how parents reconcile child education with professional commitments, highlighting structural inequalities and emerging strategies of adaptation, by offering a sociological lens on shifting expectations, roles, institutional arrangements and how children find themselves in this situation.

JS_RN07_RN02_I: On Fashions in Sociology: Enemies or Friends of Good Practice? (Joint session with RN07 Sociology of Culture and RN02 Sociology of the Arts)

Coordinators: Anna-Mari Almila, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, anna-mari.almila[at]uniroma1.it

Dominik Zelinsky, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia, dominik.zelinsky[at]savba.sk

A common complaint about sociology is that it is not cumulative. Over time it does not build up accumulated bodies of knowledge, as a 'proper' science would. Instead, as time passes, Sociology merely shifts its attention from one thing to another. Critics say that it is particularly prone to changing fashions, whether that be in empirical subject matters, or methodologies, or theoretical frameworks. Such complaints assume a particular philosophy of science, which assumes that sciences must operate in certain ways to be scientific. But what if it is the case that fashions are actually creative and productive things for and within sociology? What are sociological fashions and how might we conceptualise them? How may sociological fashions be different from, and related to, both shorter-term fads and longer-term trends? Which sorts of factors drive trends in Sociology, whether in more negative or more positive ways? How are sociological fashions related both to more apparently positive phenomena, such as creativity and innovation, and putatively more negative matters, such as opportunism and an inability to distance oneself from the onrush of current events? Are sociological fashions necessarily antithetical to, or can they be made to assist, autonomous scientific production and to careful, considered thought? This session poses these questions and invites sociologists to think about their involvement in and creation of sociological fashions in deeply reflexive and self-aware terms, with a view to assessing what good sociological practice might look like in ever more fast-changing intellectual and political contexts.

JS_RN07_RN02_II: Cultures of Anti-Populism (Joint session with RN07 Sociology of Culture and RN02 Sociology of the Arts)

Coordinators: Dominik Zelinsky, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia, dominik.zelinsky[at]savba.sk

As illiberal populism continues to gain ground, so too are efforts to resist it. While research often focuses on institutional safeguards, elite strategies, or international pressure, the cultural dimensions of anti-populism remain less systematically examined. This session highlights the cultural practices, repertoires, and performances through which actors challenge populist leaders and contest their claims to represent "the people." We invite papers that explore how resistance takes shape not only through policy and law, but also through cultural processes. How do intellectuals, movements, parties, and civic groups construct alternative moral vocabularies, symbols, and narratives that counter illiberal populist projects? What role do rituals, demonstrations, and media performances play in mobilizing publics against populist leaders? How are emotions (anger, hope, fear, outrage) activated to sustain collective action and project visions of democratic renewal? We also welcome contributions that investigate the relational character of resistance, examining how anti-populist actors engage not only populist adversaries, but also sympathetic audiences abroad, sceptical publics at home, and internal critics who dispute their legitimacy. The aim of this session is to foreground cultural processes as central to anti-populist politics. By analysing the symbols, performances, and emotions that animate resistance, the session hopes to enrich sociological understandings of leadership, legitimacy, and democratic conflict, and to illuminate the cultural struggles through which alternatives to populism are imagined and enacted.

JS_RN07_RN02_III: 'Dangerous' Books: Reading, Censorship, and Resistance (Joint Session with RN07 The Sociology of Culture and RN02 The Sociology of the Arts)

Coordinators: María Angélica Thumala Olave, University of Edinburgh, angelica.thumala[at]ed.ac.uk

Renewed concerns about censorship across the world foreground the importance of books and reading as part of cultural heritage and political life. This session brings together papers examining the actions for and against censorship in any country or time period. Papers are welcome that investigate the activity and impact of individual actors and structures (including but not limited to states, legal frameworks, publishers, authors, readers, civil society organisations, activists) seeking to interfere with the publication, circulation or consumption of books in any genre, as well as the actions of those resisting book censorship. Especially welcome are papers that approach the topic from an interdisciplinary perspective, engaging for example one or more of the following: the sociology of literature, the sociology of reading, literary studies, publishing studies, social and political history, and social movements.

JS_RN07_RN02_IV: Fragile Democracies: The Western as European Genre and the Reflection on the Basics of Democratic Societies (Joint Session with RN07 The Sociology of Culture and RN02 The Sociology of the Arts)

Coordinators: Anja Peltzer, University of Mannheim, Germany, anja.peltzer[at]uni-mannheim.de

Jörn Ahrens, Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany, joern.ahrens[at]sowi.uni-giessen.de

André Bazin once called the Western the American genre par excellence. In this panel, we invite participants to discuss the Western as 'the democratic genre par excellence'. Usually, the Western is located in an emerging society that strives to establish a democratic order and to overcome the supremacy of the strongest. On the surface, the Western might be about cattle, horses, fences, duels, and brothels. On the meta-level, it negotiates the premises of democratic societies, like the transformation of social order, legitimization of political order, relations between law and violence, and how democracy might be narrated. Likewise, the Western focuses on the ambivalences of modern democracies, such as exploitation, racism, colonialism, segregation, or misogyny. The Western is sociological in that it involves constant meditation on the prerequisites and conditions of society building, and its basic question is the definition of 'society'. In recent years, many European productions have taken advantage of the Western as a paradigmatic genre to reflect on the problems and challenges of the current political condition. As imaginary space and well-established mythology, the Western offers manifold possibilities to negotiate any problem societies are dealing with. It offers itself as an unlimited realm for thought experiments when it translates the present condition into historicizing fictions. Thus, it contributes various issues that are key within the so-called 'post-truth' era. Who tells which stories and why? Which stories do we want to believe? By reflecting on recent European (and possibly non-European) Westerns, the session seeks to accentuates the Western's potential substantially to contribute to current sociological debates, discourses, and solutions to societal problems in and about 'fragile' societies today.

JS_RN07_RN02_V: Sociology Under Attack, Sociologists in Danger: Cultures of Threat and How to Deal with Them (Joint Session with RN07 The Sociology of Culture and RN02 The Sociology of the Arts)

Coordinators: Dominik Zelinsky, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia, dominik.zelinsky[at]savba.sk

David Inglis, University of Helsinki, Finland, david.inglis[at]helsinki.fi

Predrag Cvetičanin, University of Niš, Serbia, pcveticanin[at]gmail.com

Since its inception, in many parts of the world the discipline of Sociology has not enjoyed secure positions in the societies it seeks to study. Authoritarian and totalitarian regimes throughout the 20th century were often highly suspicious of Sociology and its practitioners, or sought to censor, ban or do away with the discipline altogether. Conversely, they sometimes sought to put Sociology to work for their own tendentious political purposes, seeking to channel it in certain directions and not others that were more critical of the regimes and the societies they sought to remake and control. Sometimes sociologists have been persecuted, imprisoned, banished, or killed, while emigré scholars have been forced to move to other countries, sometimes changing the nature of Sociology in the countries to which they fled. Today, Sociology and its practitioners are again attacked and threatened, faced with multiple sorts of sanctions by hostile political actors, whether State representatives or extremist political groupings outside the State apparatus, who are engaged in the waging of Culture Wars and other modes of action against perceived enemies, including leftists and liberals, scientists, and universities. For example, sociology teaching and books have been banned in Florida's state universities, and Sociology curricula have been censored in Pakistan. When sociologists and sociology students are involved in anti-regime political activity, action taken against activists negatively affects the discipline. These political issues are deeply culturally modulated in various profound ways, including how Sociology and sociologists are constructed as enemies, corruptors, subversives, and deviants by their political antagonists. This session explores how these various processes have played out in different national and regional contexts, both historically and today, and the extents to which what is happening today is like and unlike what has transpired in earlier periods of persecution of Sociology and its practitioners. The session also examines how sociologists may resist and seek to overcome cultural complexes of political threat in dangerous times.

JS_RN07_RN02_VI: The Third Culture of Sociology, Revisited: Sociology Between Science and Literature
(Joint Session with RN07 The Sociology of Culture and RN02 The Sociology of the Arts)

Coordinators: Pedro Martins de Menezes, University of Minho, Portugal, pedromenezes89[at]gmail.com

David Inglis, University of Helsinki, Finland, david.inglis[at]helsinki.fi

One way of understanding the historical emergence of Sociology is like this. In a general European intellectual field dominated by natural sciences and literature, each with their own distinctive 'cultures', Sociology emerged as a 'Third Culture'. In order to establish itself between these two areas, Sociology borrowed elements from each of them. On the one hand, Sociology aimed for the methodological rigour of the natural sciences. On the other hand, the product of this scientifically-aspiring Sociology was similar to that of fiction writers: texts. Faced with this ambiguity, what is Sociology, this hybrid Third Culture? Is it the most literary of the sciences, or the most scientific of literatures? These are the questions analysed in *The Three Cultures*, a book by Wolf Lepenies published in 1985. Forty years after the release of this work, what is the state of this debate today? Have the questions raised by Lepenies been answered, or have new inquiries been added to the ones that already existed? How does the sociological Third Culture stand today, in a present in which the two 'Cultures' that preceded it face their own challenges, for example with waves of scientific denialism and texts generated by Artificial Intelligence? Which paths should Sociology follow: embrace scientific rigour, accept its discursive nature, or combine both?

JS_RN07_RN29: From Liminalities: New Reflections on the 'In-Between' (Joint session with RN07 Sociology of Culture and RN29 Social Theory)

Coordinators: Louis Volont, HafenCity University Hamburg, Germany, louis-henri.volont[at]hcu-hamburg.de

Kornelia Hahn, University of Salzburg, Austria, Kornelia.Hahn[at]plus.ac.at

Arthur Oliveira Bueno, University of Passau, Germany, arthur.bueno[at]uni-passau.de

First introduced by the cultural anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in his study of rites de passage (1909) and subsequently expanded upon by Victor Turner (1969), the concept of liminality has become fundamental to sociology and cultural theory. Rooted in the Latin *limen*, meaning ‘threshold,’ liminality marks the in-between of spaces, status, groups or bodies, focusing on thresholds, transitions, borders and uncertainty — that is, when social structures are suspended. This session seeks to reconceptualise spatial, temporal and social liminalities through critical theoretical reflections, and to revisit, for example, contemporary transformation of political borders, digital identities, gender transitions and ecological crises from the perspective of liminality. In doing so, it seeks to illuminate not only potential power imbalances, but also the ways in which new futures can be imagined and materialized within conditions of liminality. Against this backdrop, the session welcomes fresh theory contributions on the concept of liminality, as well as reflections on empirical studies from the viewpoint of liminal dynamics (ambiguity, negotiation, potentiality, etc.) across micro-, meso-, and macro-levels.

JS_RN07_RN37: Cultural Commoning in the City (Joint Session with RN07 Sociology of Culture and RN37 Urban Sociology

Coordinators: Louis Volont, University of Antwerp, the Netherlands, louis-henri.volont[at]hcu-hamburg.de

Tom Hawxwell, Lund University, Sweden, tom.hawxwell[at]soc.lu.se

Gabriele Manella, University of Bologna, Italy, gabriele.manella[at]unibo.it

This session invites papers exploring the intersection of cultural commons and urban lifeworlds. Cultural commons are shared resources through which communities create meaning in the worlds they inhabit: traditions, customs, knowledge, ideas, recipes, art, architecture, heritage, and festivals – among many others. In contemporary cities, cultural commons occupy a dual position. On the one hand, they are increasingly under threat. Neoliberal urban development and accelerating digitalization – perhaps most visible in the rise of the ‘creative city’ and the ‘smart city’ – tend to transform commons into commodities, to be bought and sold under market logics. On the other hand, the city remains a fertile locus where activists, artists, ravers, and cultural institutions experiment with ways of keeping the commons genuinely ‘in common’. In this vein, practices of play, public art, festivity, grassroots experimentation, and alternative forms of life can resist the commodification and enclosure of cultural commons. It is also fruitful to imagine the city itself as a cultural commons in its own right. Emerging commons-based policies in places such as Bologna, Naples, Ghent, and Barcelona highlight citizens’ collective and reciprocal use of urban infrastructures. As Henri Lefebvre (1974) argued: if sustainable futures are to take root, the city must be thought of as an ‘oeuvre’ rather than a ‘product’. Attention to cultural commons is even more important now in a time of international crisis and war in which many people are displaced from their home cities. At the same time, cultural commons can be a valuable resource for the regeneration of unused or vulnerable urban spaces. This session invites urban and cultural sociological case studies of cultural communing in its many forms and guises, across cities of both the Global North and the Global South. While the session particularly encourages qualitative methodologies, emancipatory and arts-based approaches are equally welcomed.

JS_RN11_RN12: Human-Environment Relations and Emotions in Times of Crisis (Joint Session with RN11 Sociology of Emotions and RN12 Environment and Society)

Coordinators: Cécile Vermot, Pôle des Biotechnologies en Société (PBS), France,
cecile.vermot[at]supbiotech.fr

Pia Laborgne, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany, pia.laborgne[at]kit.edu

Annika Fricke, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, annika.fricke[at]kit.edu

Humanity is facing interdependent global crises that demand a redefinition of its relationships—with ourselves, with each other, and with the more-than-human world. Indeed, as Rosa (2024) argues, the world is experiencing a crisis of relationships, which spans between the “world” and the “subject,” and between humans and non-humans alike (Tsing, 2021). This crisis shapes not only political and ecological systems but also affective dimensions of social life and multispecies relationships.

Emotions such as solastalgia, ecological grief, or eco-anxiety express a profound affective rupture. However, they are also mobilizing energies that underpin struggles for climate justice, solidarity movements, and democratic renewal (van Bronswijk, 2022). At the same time, emotions relating to the loss of security, familiar structures and behaviors, and material possessions or the prestige associated with them are a key element of societal conflicts and resistance to change. Global crises are therefore not only environmental or political facts: they are also deeply emotional realities that shape how societies imagine and enact change.

This session brings together insights from the sociology of emotions with environmental social sciences and sustainability science to explore dimensions of relationships, emotions and global change and their role regarding transformations towards more sustainable futures. Abstracts may cover both empirical and theoretical perspectives.

JS_RN11_RN13: Unspoken Emotions of (Non)Parenthood: Despair, Loneliness and Regret (Joint session with RN 11 Sociology of emotions and RN 13 Family and intimate lives)

Coordinators: Alessandra Minissale, Uppsala University, Sweden, alessandra.minissale[at]uu.se

Nadja Milewski, Federal Institute for Population Research, Germany,
Nadja.milewski[at]bib.bund.de

Having a child and parenthood are widely idealized as a natural pathway to fulfillment, yet many individuals cannot realize their desires to become a parent due to several reasons, including infertility or pregnancy loss. Others, who have become parents, may experience emotions that deviate from this cultural script. Such feelings of despair, loneliness and regret remain largely silenced due to social taboos and moral expectations surrounding gender roles, parental love and sacrifice. Presentations of this session examine how failed expectations, regret and loneliness emerge in the context of (non)parenthood, focusing on their entanglement with gendered divisions of care, social isolation, and the emotional labor of reproductive experiences and parenting. How does parental loneliness reflect the structural invisibility of their daily difficulties? What social and cultural norms prevent collective recognition of ambivalent parental emotions? How do the sociology of emotions and feminist critiques of reproduction and care allow us to reframe (non)parental regret and loneliness as socially mediated emotional states rather than individual failures?

JS_RN11_RN32: Emotional Dynamics of Grievance Politics (Joint session with RN11 Sociology of Emotions and RN32 Political Sociology)

Coordinators: Christian von Scheve, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, c.vs[at]fu-berlin.de

Gabriella Szabo, ELTE Centre for Social Sciences, Hungary, szabo.gabriella[at]tk.mta.hu

Mikko Salmela, University of Helsinki, Finland, mikko.salmela[at]helsinki.fi

The joint panel of the ESA RN 32 Political Sociology and the RN 11 Sociology of Emotions will deal with the topic of grievance politics. Grievance politics consist of specific emotional repertoires and strategies of managing and regulating political emotions that are notably different from those of established party-based, representative politics. These include, in particular, the incitement and exploitation of various negative emotions, such as anger, fear, and resentment, directed at various marginalized groups in society as well as at political, cultural, and media elites. They also include strategies of blaming and the crafting and dissemination of narratives of collective victimhood. The proposed panel will bring together contributions from political sociology and the sociology of emotions as well as political psychology and political communication studies that address various aspects and dimensions, as well as causes and consequences of grievance politics. The panel aims to illuminate how emotionalized grievances are articulated, circulated, and institutionalized in contemporary politics. It welcomes theoretical and empirical contributions and a broad range of methodological approaches with the common aim of understanding the collective emotional underpinnings of grievances and grievance politics, and their implications for a democratic polity. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the discursive construction of grievances; the role of framing in sustaining collective victimhood; and the interaction between political actors and audiences in producing emotionally charged narratives that challenge or reshape the political order.

JS_RN12_RN24: Enacted and Contested Futures of the Ocean: Sea Societies, Marine Technologies, and Maritime Spaces (Joint session with RN12 Environment and Society and RN24 Science and Technology)

Coordinators: Tadeusz Rudek, Jagiellonian University, Poland, Tadeusz.rudek[at]uj.edu.pl

Oliwia Mandrela, Jagiellonian University, Poland, oliwia.mandrela[at]uj.edu.pl

Melissa Sessa, National Research Center, CNR – IRPI, Italy, melissa.sessa[at]irpi.cnr.it

Stefania Capogna, Link University, Italy, s.capogna[at]unilink.it

The sea is at once a global commons, a national resource, and a local lifeworld. As technological developments—from offshore wind farms to floating cities, from undersea data cables to marine biotechnologies—reshape maritime spaces, they also activate competing imaginaries of the future. Whose futures are envisioned, advanced, or obstructed in these transformations? How do the entangled dynamics of climate change, energy transition, global trade, security, and coastal livelihoods collide and co-exist in the marine realm?

This Joint Session invites contributions at the intersection of Environmental Sociology and Science and Technology Studies. We ask: Who has the right to decide how seas and oceans will be governed, exploited, or protected? How are sociotechnical futures constructed and contested at the junction between global commons and national claims, between international conventions and local island or coastal communities?

The session aims to bring together scholars exploring diverse cases—from small fishing villages and indigenous coastal communities to global maritime governance and corporate strategies. By bridging RN12 and RN24, the session creates interdisciplinary space for critical dialogue on how environmental, social, and technological futures of the sea are co-produced, and how inclusivity, justice, and sustainability can be negotiated in across spaces in maritime contexts.

We particularly encourage contributions that combine theoretical innovation with empirical insights and that highlight the voices of dominant and marginalized groups in shaping marine futures.

This Joint Session emerges from collaboration between RN12 Environment and Society and RN24 Science and Technology. While both networks address related topics, neither alone provides a dedicated platform to interrogate the futures of the sea at the intersection of environment, technology, and society. The stream therefore goes beyond the scope of a single RN, offering a joint space to explore visions of maritime transformation.

The initiative is supported by colleagues from both networks, including researchers working on climate change, coastal transformations, offshore energy, and marine technologies. It has not been organized before and thus brings a fresh perspective to ESA. We anticipate high interest, drawing on growing scholarly debates about oceans, energy islands, blue economies, and global commons. By bridging environmental sociology and STS, this Joint Session provides a novel, interdisciplinary platform for understanding how the futures of the sea are imagined, contested, and governed.

JS_RN13_RN37: Families & Housing: policies, strategies and practices in European cities (Joint session with RN13 Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives and RN37 Urban Sociology)

Coordinators: Paula Pustulka, SWPS University, Poland, ppustulka@swps.edu.pl

Marta Smagacz-Poziemska, Jagiellonian University, Poland, marta.smagacz-poziemska@uj.edu.pl

This JS invites contributions tackling complex relationships between family life and urban housing. Housing challenges in European cities - including privatization, unaffordability, shortages and quality concerns - frame the experiences of many families (Ronald&Arundel 2024). Rooted in the political economy of late-stage capitalism, new city fabrics emerge from financialization and the rise of global corporate landlords in the urban landscape. These affect the lives of contemporary families.

Privatization, gentrification, and the touristification of entire districts, compounded by inefficiency of local governments, result in growing socio-spatial inequalities. In the micro-meso scale, residents feel uncertain about their own and their families' futures, facing de/re-composition of everyday life. As real estate is the largest source of household capital, it exposes advantages and challenges produced by familial access to capital.

This JS invites contributions on the following topics:

- housing policies & their implications for particular types of families
- experiences with privatization and familisation of housing, e.g., (inter)generational wealth, inequalities and uncertainty;
- the impact of housing market crises on everyday life and urban family practices;
- the intersections of housing and life-course, as well as housing and family transitions e.g., implications of real estate inheritance, housing autonomy, housing quality and satisfaction in transitions-to-parenting, divorce, retirement, etc.;
- alternative family forms and housing trajectories (e.g. solo parents' housing, shared custody and housing scenarios; housing strategies of LGBTQ+ families);
- intergenerational shifts in housing aspirations regarding urban city life .

JS_RN15_RN28: Boundaries, Barriers, and (Multiple) Belongings through Sport (Joint session with RN15 Global, transnational and cosmopolitan sociology and RN28 Society and Sports)

Coordinators: Marco Caselli, Università Cattolica, Italy, marco.caselli[at]unicatt.it

Giovanna Russo, Università di Bologna, Italy, giovanna.russo6[at]unibo.it

The aim of this joint session is of discussing the intersections of nationalism and cosmopolitanism through sport, by way of focusing on the distinct boundaries, barriers and (multiple) belongings that fans, athletes, clubs experience in their everyday life.

JS_RN16_RN10: Crossroads of Health and Education in Democratic Societies: Challenges and Transformations (Joint session RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN10 Sociology of Education)

Coordinators: Catarina Delaunay, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal, catarinadelaunay[at]fcsh.unl.pt

Eva Gonçalves, CIES-IUL, Portugal, eva_patricia_goncalves[at]iscte-iul.pt

Health and education are two of the most significant arenas in which democratic values are enacted, contested, and reproduced. As core social rights, they shape the conditions of citizenship, solidarity, and equality. At a time when democracies across Europe and beyond face mounting pressures—widening inequalities, disinformation, challenges to welfare states, and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic or climate change—the need to examine the intersections of health and education is particularly urgent.

This joint session seeks to explore how these domains interact in co-producing social action and citizenship, sustaining or undermining solidarity, and envisioning sustainable futures. By bringing health and education into dialogue, the session aims to foster interdisciplinary exchange and identify pathways to strengthen democratic resilience through inclusive policies, practices of care, and civic engagement.

We welcome theoretical, empirical, and comparative contributions addressing (but not limited to):

- The role of schools and universities in promoting students' wellbeing and health literacy, and in shaping health-related practices (e.g., sexual education, vaccination, climate health).
- Intersections between educational inequalities and health disparities.
- Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for democratic governance across health and education systems.
- The role of health and education institutions in shaping trust in expertise, critical deliberation, and civic participation.
- Youth, generational justice, and democratic belonging.
- Biopolitics and governmentality in health–education domains (e.g., institutional regulation of bodies, behaviours, and subjectivities; neoliberal logics of responsibilization).
- Digitalisation and AI in health and education: implications for solidarity, democratic values, and sustainability.
- Comparative or cross-national studies on integrated policy approaches.

JS_RN16_RN12: Creating More Sustainable and Healthy Futures for All (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN 12 Environment & Society)

Coordinators: Ana Patrícia Hilário, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal, patriciahilario[at]gmail.com

Aleksandra Wagner, Jagiellonian University, Poland, aleksandra.wagner[at]uj.edu.pl

There is a growing recognition that many health challenges manifest as syndemics—complex interactions of biological, social, and environmental factors that amplify vulnerability and inequality. In today's interconnected world, politics, economics, the environment, and health are deeply interwoven and cannot be understood in isolation. Recent epidemics and the accelerating climate crisis have underscored this interdependence and the urgent need for a shared approach to the health and well-being of both human and non-human beings.

However, prevailing strategies often neglect environmental perspectives and only partially engage with sociological insights. Notably, the sociology of health and medicine has rarely engaged in sustained dialogue with environmental sociology, despite their shared focus on issues such as inequality, social justice, and the relationship between society and nature.

This joint session aims to bridge these two fields. We invite contributions that examine how health and environmental challenges are socially structured, unequally distributed and shaped by power relations. We also welcome work that explores innovative theoretical, methodological and practical responses. Drawing on concepts such as syndemics, planetary health, socio-ecological systems, and environmental justice, the session will deepen the sociological understanding of the interconnections between health and the environment. In doing so, it will highlight pathways towards a more sustainable, equitable and healthy future for all.

JS_RN16_RN19: Healthcare Encounters in Transition: Rethinking Professional-Patient Interactions (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN19 Sociology of Professions)

Coordinators: Dino Numerato, Charles University, Czechia, dino.numerato[at]fsv.cuni.cz

Stefano Neri, University of Milan, Italy, stefano.neri[at]unimi.it

The interactions between healthcare professionals and patients/users represent one of the key cornerstones for understanding the evolving nature of healthcare. These encounters are increasingly shaped by shifts in professional education, the proliferation of expert knowledge, and the growing influence of digital technologies—including social media and artificial intelligence. This session invites critical reflection on how these forces are transforming the relational dynamics of care, the (in)visibility of patient voices, and the cultural and epistemic frameworks that underpin healthcare delivery. With the proposed session, we invite scholars to present their empirical or theoretical work focused on, but not limited to:

- the impact of professional education on the communicative and empathetic capacities of healthcare professions;
- the role of digital technologies and social media in reshaping authority, trust, and access to health information;
- the rise or evolution of patient voice as a legitimate source of knowledge and advocacy, and the social processes that either amplify or undermine its influence;
- cultural stereotypes and care practices that affect marginalized communities and shape perceptions of legitimacy and expertise;
- methodological reflections on studying healthcare interactions in increasingly hybrid (online/offline) environments;

- the implications of AI-enhanced user knowledge and the related challenges for traditional hierarchies of expertise and decision-making in clinical settings, and, more broadly, for professional dominance;
- or to the development of regulatory and accountability mechanisms at the local, national, and international levels in response to these transformations.

JS_RN16_RN23: Inclusive Health Practices and Sexualities: Knowledge, Care, and Rights in Times of Crisis
(Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN23 Sexuality)

Coordinators: Mara Pieri, University of Coimbra, Portugal, marapieri[at]ces.uc.pt

Valeria Quaglia, University of Bologna, Italy, valeria.quaglia[at]unibo.it

Alice Scavarda, University of Torino, Italy, alice.scavarda[at]unito.it

Contemporary society is witnessing renewed challenges to sexual and gender rights, intensified by democratic fragility, social inequalities, and a global backlash against diversity. At the same time, political conflicts increasingly attack medical knowledge and scrutinise health policies. Within this context, inclusive and accessible health practices have become both a public health imperative and a key site of political contestation. This joint session between RN16 and RN23 invites contributions addressing the intersections of health and sexualities with particular attention to how healthcare systems and medical knowledge and practice can support—or undermine—social inclusion.

Possible themes include but are not limited to:

- LGBTQ+ health, including disparities in access to care and practices of inclusion, and its intersection with disability, social class and ethnicity
- Sexual rights in contexts of backlash, including abortion, contraception, fertility care, and struggles over reproductive autonomy
- Diversity in healthcare knowledge and professional practices, from an intersectional point of view, and their implications for equity
- LGBTQ+ issues in curricula and training of healthcare professionals
- Practices for and against the implementation of safe, inclusive and accessible healthcare spaces (such as clinics, hospitals, rehabilitation centres)
- Impact of anti-gender politics on access to healthcare treatments for trans and non-binary people, particularly - but not only - those with disabilities and/or chronic illness
- The role of patient organizations and lay people associations in promoting access to healthcare for sexual and gender diverse people
- The impact of digital health technologies and AI on sexual and reproductive health
- Algorithmic bias in healthcare and its impact on LGBTQ+ health
- Intersectionality as a lens for developing best practices in LGBTQ+ care.

JS_RN16_RN24_I: AI, Digital Health, and the Transformation of Medical Practice (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN 24 Science and Technology)

Coordinators: Stefania Capogna, Link University, Italy, s.capogna[at]unilink.it

Catarina Delaunay, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal, catarinadelaunay[at]fcsh.unl.pt

The rapid diffusion of artificial intelligence and digital technologies is transforming healthcare practices and health professional practices. From AI-powered diagnostics to wearable devices and smart platforms, clinicians are increasingly required to integrate new socio-technical artefacts into their work. These tools promise faster, more accurate diagnosis, improved allocation of resources, and new modes of patient monitoring and support. They also create opportunities to tailor interventions to individual needs.

At the same time, digital health introduces profound challenges. Health professionals must navigate shifting boundaries of expertise as algorithms generate knowledge that can reinforce, complement, or contest clinical judgment. This dynamic raises issues of trust, interpretability, and accountability in decision-making. The professional–patient relationship is reconfigured as citizens engage more directly with biomedical information, while clinicians manage new forms of visibility, automation, and algorithmic mediation.

By situating these developments within sociological debates, this session examines how digital infrastructures reshape professional practices, the regulation of life, and responses to health-related risks and uncertainties. It addresses the ambivalences of innovation, between personalization and surveillance, empowerment and exclusion, and explores how professionals and institutions negotiate epistemic tensions between clinical expertise and machine reasoning.

This call for papers invites theoretical, empirical, and case-based contributions on how digital technology can foster more equitable, transparent, and inclusive futures.

JS_RN16_RN24_II: From Health Activism to Influencer Culture: Digital Platforms and the Reconfiguration of Patient Participation (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN 24 Science and Technology)

Coordinators: Barbara Morsello, University of Padova, Italy, barbara.morsello[at]unipd.it

Valeria Quaglia, University of Bologna, Italy, valeria.quaglia[at]unibo.it

Digital platforms and AI-driven technologies are reshaping how health, illness, disability and bodies are experienced and communicated. Beyond questions of efficiency and access, these sociotechnical changes transform subjectivity, embodiment, and the politics of participation. Sociological literature on health activism has shown how laypeople mobilised expertise to contest biomedical authority and democratise knowledge. Today, the rise of health influencers—ranging from “patient influencers” to healthcare professionals active on platforms—raises the question of whether these figures represent a continuation of activism or a qualitatively different phenomenon, indicating that the boundaries between the two are increasingly blurred. While activism often relied on collective action, solidarity, and confrontational repertoires, influencer practices are structured by individual branding, monetisation, and algorithmic visibility. Research highlights their ambivalent role: amplifying patient voices, enhancing access to peer knowledge, but also spreading commercialised, low-evidence or promotional content. Unlike traditional activists who challenged institutions, influencers often navigate partnerships with them, reshaping dynamics of authority, legitimacy, and accountability.

We invite contributions engaging with, but not restricted to, the following topics:

- From collective health activism to digital health influencers: shifting repertoires, solidarities, and forms of lay expertise;
- Authority, legitimacy, and accountability in the transition from health activism to influencer cultures;
- Algorithmic visibility, monetisation, and the ambivalent effects of influencer cultures on knowledge, inequality, and participation.

JS_RN16_RN28: Sport, fitness, physical activity and health in times of crisis (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Illness and RN28 Society and Sports)

Coordinators: Alessandro Porrovecchio, University of the Littoral Opal Coast,

alessandro.porrovecchio[at]univ-littoral.fr

Valeria Quaglia, University of Bologna, Italy, valeria.quaglia[at]unibo.it

Giovanna Russo, Università di Bologna, Italy, giovanna.russo6[at]unibo.it

Recent crises affecting contemporary societies have profoundly reshaped both individual and collective life. Sport and physical activity are indeed among the many domains impacted, and this is particularly significant given their impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals. The sociology of health and medicine and the sociology of sport converge in their interest in studying a series of topics in this regard. This joint session invites contributions from both subdisciplines to explore how these dynamics are articulated, contested, and reconfigured in a societal context of polycrisis.

JS_RN16_RN33: Gender, Medicine, and Care: Challenging Bias, Breaking Silences, Reshaping Health (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine and RN33 Women's and Gender Studies)

Coordinators: Maddalena Cannito, UNITO, Italy, maddalena.cannito[at]unito.it

Valeria Quaglia, University of Bologna, Italy, valeria.quaglia[at]unibo.it

Alice Scavarda, University of Torino, Italy, alice.scavarda[at]unito.it

Alicja Zawistowska, University of Białystok, Poland, a.zawistowska[at]uwb.edu.pl

In a society marked by economic instability, demographic shifts, armed conflicts, and migration, gender is a crucial dimension shaping structural health inequalities. Gender not only structures the lived experiences of bodies but also informs the (in)visible organization of care, including the undervalued emotional labor and health responsibilities disproportionately borne by women. Cultural stereotypes continue to marginalize reproductive health, reinforcing silences around abortion, miscarriage, and menopause, while the medicalization of childbirth and bias in digital health illustrate how health systems reproduce inequality. Global care chains and the precarity of migrant caregivers expose the transnational dimensions of these inequalities, intersecting with disability, aging, and queer and trans experiences of health. Attention to gendered health practices—including men's reproductive health, risky health behaviors, and forms of self-care—further highlights the complexity of gender inequalities across the life course. Situating these issues within the nexus of gender, medicine, and care opens possibilities for feminist, queer, and activist interventions to reshape health systems toward justice and equity for all.

This joint session between RN16 (Sociology of Health and Medicine) and RN33 (Women's and Gender Studies) invites contributions addressing:

- Care, Labor, and Inequalities – caregiving, emotional labor, masculinities and care, migration, and global care chains.
- Men and Women Reproduction, Life Course, and Health – menstruation, abortion, miscarriage, menopause, childbirth.
- Stigma, Bodies, and Lived Experiences – aging, disability, health lifestyles, self-care, risk, and body norms and regimes.
- Technology, Knowledge, and Bias – digital health, AI, professional relations, and medical authority.
- Politics, Activism, and Justice – feminist and queer interventions, policy innovations for gender equity.

JS_RN16_RN37: Beyond Commodification: Urban Health and the Politics of Space and Care (Joint session with RN16 Sociology of Health and Medicine RN37 Urban Sociology)

Coordinators: Catarina Delaunay, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal, catarinadelaunay[at]fcsh.unl.pt

Patrícia Pereira, Instituto Politécnico de Leiria, Portugal, ana.f.pereira[at]ipleiria.pt

Urban spaces are increasingly recognized as fundamental for understanding how health is shaped by the intersections of infrastructure, policy, and social life. Sociological research has shown how structural inequalities across housing, mobility, air quality, green space access, waste management, and public services distribute health risks and resources unevenly.

Additionally, the commodification of both urban space and healthcare operates through mutually reinforcing logics that deepen disparities across race, class, income, gender, and age in cities throughout the Global North and South. Capitalist urban development produces the spatial conditions for illness—through housing instability, pollution exposure, and food apartheid, for example—while market-driven healthcare limits access to treatment and care, exacerbating already unequal life chances.

Drawing on frameworks such as structural violence, environmental racism, and urban health, this session welcomes empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions that examine the multidimensional dynamics shaping lived experiences of health and illness.

Papers may address questions such as: How do speculative urban planning and healthcare privatization jointly reinforce social and health inequalities? In what ways do public health interventions contend with commodified access to both space and care? How do communities mobilize against these intertwined forms of exclusion? How can struggles for spatial justice and health justice be advanced as inseparable challenges of contemporary urban life?

We particularly encourage work on integrated forms of resistance revealing how struggles for spatial justice and health justice are inseparable challenges of contemporary urban life.

JS_RN20 _RN21_RN29: Reconnecting Theory and Methods in Contemporary Sociology (Joint session with RN20 Qualitative Methods, RN21 Quantitative methods and RN29 Social Theory)

Coordinators: Silvia Cataldi, La Sapienza University Rome, Italy, silvia.cataldi[at]uniroma1.it

Tea Torbenfeldt Bengtsson, The Danish Center for Social Science Research Denmark, ttb[at]vive.dk

Kathrin Komp-Leukkunen, LUT University, Finalnd, kathrin.komp-leukkunen[at]lut.fi

Fabrizio Martire, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, fabrizio.martire[at]uniroma1.it

Arthur Oliveira Bueno, University of Passau, Germany, arthur.bueno[at]uni-passau.de

Kornelia Hahn, University of Salzburg, Austria, Kornelia.Hahn[at]plus.ac.at

Sociology relies on a robust and continuous interplay between its theoretical frameworks and its empirical methodologies. This relationship is not merely a static application of one to the other but rather a vibrant, circular partnership that is essential for the discipline's vitality and ongoing development. It is crucial to move beyond a mere focus on the limitations of research that lacks a theoretical foundation or theory detached from empirical inquiry. Instead, recognizing the generative potential that arises when these two dimensions work in synergy is paramount. The session addresses the enduring imperative to strengthen the dynamic, circular partnership between sociological theory and methods. Sociology thrives when theoretical frameworks provide conceptual guidance and empirical research rigorously evaluates and refines these theories. The session aims to explore the generative potential arising from this synergy, fostering reflexivity and enhancing the critical, transformative capacity of sociological practice.

We invite contributions that critically examine the theory-methods nexus across qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches. Special attention will be given to contemporary challenges and opportunities, including the theoretical background of digital methods; artificial intelligence in its double role of subject of study and opportunity for new analytical possibilities; the transformative potential of decolonizing methodologies and theorizing. This session seeks papers that offer new conceptualizations, methodological innovations, or empirical studies demonstrating how a robust reconnection of theory and methods can advance sociological understanding and address pressing societal issues.

JS_RN20_RN30: Capturing political meaning among younger generations: qualitative methodological puzzles and possibilities (Joint session with RN20 Qualitative methods and RN30 Youth and Generation)

Coordinators: Evelyne Baillergeau, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, e.baillergeau[at]uva.nl

Gerben Moerman, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, g.Moerman[at]uva.nl

In current 'unsettled times', trust in institutional politics is largely challenged, but other forms of civic practices and collective engagement seem to emerge (or resurge), in particular among the younger generations. What kinds of meaning-making are involved in those practices? What is 'political' according to young people involved? In addition, alongside heightened distrust towards institutional politics come new forms of anger: what do these emotions tell us about how young people relate to political action? How can we grasp the sense-making at stake?

Researching new forms of solidarities and new forms of collective action among the younger generations is tricky for quantitative sociology. This session focuses on the advantages and limitations of qualitative methods of researching political meaning-making among the younger generations, including the 'classical' methods

such as interviewing and ethnography but also other methods, possibly in combination. We are both interested in empirically informed papers and conceptual papers.

JS_RN21_RN12: Methodological Landscapes of Quantitative Environmental Sociology (Joint session with RN21 Quantitative Methods and RN12 Environment and Society)

Coordinators: Jochen Mayerl, Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany, jochen.mayerl@soziologie.tu-chemnitz.de

Markus Hadler, University of Graz, Austria, markus.hadler@uni-graz.at

This joint session aims to discuss methodological solutions and developments relevant to empirical environmental social research. At this conference, we invite you to propose innovative solutions and engage in discussions on issues related to data collection, processing, analysis, and use. We do not limit our call to any specific quantitative methodology; rather, we encourage submissions on diverse approaches aligned with your current research. At the same time, we acknowledge the importance of emerging themes that are attracting increasing scholarly attention. Quantitative methodology has recently been characterized by significant innovations related to the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning. We welcome abstracts that address applications and implications of AI and machine learning in environmental social research. We also invite contributions that explore ethical issues, as well as the broader societal and scientific impact of environmental social research.

Furthermore, we are interested in research on open science practices, data sharing infrastructures, and citizen science. All these topics have recently received substantial attention from the European Commission and the academic community. We are particularly interested in examining what is being done in these areas within environmental social research—for example, which projects are being implemented, what lessons are being learned, what effects are observed, and which data are being made available to support the green transition. We also welcome analyses drawing on international surveys or media monitoring programs, such as the European Social Survey or the International Social Survey Program modules “Environment IV” and the compilation of all four modules (1993, 2000, 2010, and 2020). Our aim is to foster a comprehensive dialogue on the ontology and methodology of empirical environmental social science.

JS_RN21_RN24: Digital methods, Big Data and AI: Challenges and opportunities for societal analysis (Joint session with RN21 Quantitative Methods and RN24 Science and Technology)

Coordinators: Kathrin Komp-Leukkunen, LUT University, FinalInd, kathrin.komp-leukkunen@lut.fi

Stefania Capogna, Link University, Italy, s.capogna@unilink.it

Digitalization changes societies, bringing new challenges and opportunities for our lives and social interactions. It also creates new ways of strengthening democracies, as the conference topic points out. Thanks to advances in digital technologies and wider access to computational resources, we now have a growing repertoire of new methods. Digital methods, Big Data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) can open up new opportunities for social research by allowing the collection and analysis of rich and extensive information on our everyday lives. However, many of these methods developed within STEM research. Introducing them into social research creates challenges. Their use comes with a risk of importing techniques whose ethos is incompatible with social research, of adopting methodological “black boxes” whose internal workings are not

well understood (e.g., algorithmic bias), and for whom we lack clear validation procedures. At the same time, the new methods raise broader ethical and social concerns regarding privacy, data security, and data colonialism. This joint session aims to combine contributions from both quantitative methods and science and technology research on the use of Digital methods, Big Data and AI in sociology. Example topics are:

- Digital democracies
- Digital social sciences
- Analyses of Big Data
- Using AI for quantitative analyses
- The social life of digital methods
- Algorithmic bias and fairness in social research
- Ethical challenges of digital methods research

JS_RN22_RN02: Risks and Uncertainties: The Arts as Social Response (Joint Session with RN22 Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty and RN02 Sociology of the Arts)

Coordinators: Veronica Moretti, University of Bologna, Italy, veronica.moretti4[at]unibo.it

Bert de Graaff, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands, degraaff[at]eshp.m.eur.nl

Dafne Muntanyola Saura, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain,
dafne.muntanyola[at]uab.cat

Paula Guerra, University of Porto, Portugal, mariadeguerra[at]gmail.com

This proposal brings together Research Networks 22 (Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty) and 2 (Sociology of the Arts) for a joint session focusing on the intersections between artistic practices, risk, and uncertainty.

Artistic practices – whether professional or amateur, individual or collective – provide ways of expressing everyday insecurities, anxieties, and vulnerabilities, as well as projecting expectations of uncertain futures. At the same time, they offer symbolic resources and practical repertoires for resilience, critique, and imagination. The capacity of the arts to represent, anticipate, and transform risk connects with broader sociological debates on insecurity, precariousness, and the changing conditions of social life.

Moreover, within sociology, visual and arts-based methods – such as participatory photography, drawing, comics-based research, theatre workshops, and video-aided ethnography – expand the possibilities of research and knowledge production. By moving beyond the exclusivity of verbal or textual modalities, both artistic practices and visual methods engage with the pragmatics of communication, embodiment, and action. They open up spaces of awareness, creativity, and social imagination, and they enable researchers and participants to co-construct meaning and anticipate risks in ways that are affective as well as cognitive.

Therefore, through this JS, we want to emphasise that art is everywhere and with everyone. Despite the social transformations that weaken and reduce artistic practice to an act of consumption, there remains a power of subversion within social action and collective work through activism(s), social responsibility, and both professional and amateur art. The arts can help to minimise risks because – in diverse ways – they convey strong political positions that call for global and social responsibility in confronting injustice and inequality. In these times of democratic fragility across the world, the arts have much to say about society and the confrontation of risks.

We invite empirical and theoretical papers addressing (but not limited to) the following themes:

- Artistic representations of risk, insecurity, and uncertainty in everyday life.
- The role of arts and cultural practices in processes of resilience, care, and collective imagination.
- Visual and arts-based methods in sociological research on risk and uncertainty.
- Artistic activism and the politics of risk: contestation, resistance, and democratic engagement.
- Intersections between aesthetic experience, vulnerability, and global crises (climate change, migration, pandemics, war).
- Theoretical contributions to bridging sociology of the arts and sociology of risk and uncertainty.

JS_RN22_RN12: From Floods to Heatwaves: Environmental Risk Perception Across Europe (Joint session with RN22 Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty and RN12 Environment and Society)

Coordinators: Aiste Balzkiene, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania, aiste.balzkiene[at]ktu.lt

Jose Manuel Echavarren, Pablo de Olavide University, Spain, jmechavarren[at]upo.es

Perceptions of environmental risk are crucial in influencing policies, shaping behaviors, and guiding attitudes toward environmental challenges. As Europe navigates the complex landscape of environmental challenges—such as floods, heatwaves, and recent energy crises, often intensified by geo-political factors—perceptions of environmental risk play a crucial role in shaping policies, behaviours, and attitudes. This joint session seeks to examine the diverse ways individuals and societies perceive and respond to environmental risks, fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities for building sustainable futures. We invite both theoretical and empirical contributions at the intersection of environmental sociology and risk sociology on the following topics:

- Cultural and Regional Variations in Environmental Risk Perception
- Intersectionality, Cultural Norms, and Values in Shaping Risk Perceptions in Europe
- The Role of Media in Framing Environmental Issues and Influencing Public Perception
- Comparative Cross-National Studies on Environmental Risk Perception
- Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches to Studying Environmental Risks
- Public Engagement and Policy Design Informed by Risk Perception Research
- Perceptions of Emerging Environmental Risks: Floods, Heatwaves, and Energy Crises in Europe
- Linking Environmental Risk Perception to Policy and Governance for Sustainable Futures
- Uncertainty, Risk, and the Environment: Challenges for Public Understanding

JS_RN23_RN25: Not so easy bedfellows? Varieties of alliances and convergences within anti-gender mobilizations (Joint session with RN23 Sexuality and RN25 Social Movements)

Coordinators: Tanja Vuckovic Juros, University of Zagreb, Croatia, tvuckovi[at]ffzg.unizg.hr

Elena Pavan, University of Trento, Italy, elena.pavan[at]unitn.it

Over the past two decades, a long-lasting wave of anti-gender mobilization –and more broadly, opposition to gender and sexual rights– has unfolded and progressively consolidated across the globe, driven by the construction and continuous redefinition of coalitions that bring together a wide variety of actors of different natures and ideological orientations. In turn, these encompassing coalitional efforts have taken root and continue to do so primarily through the persistent resignification of the concept of gender.

Indeed, the different meanings tactically imbued into gender served since the beginning as symbolic glue (Pető 2015) to cement “opportunistic synergies” (Graff and Korolczuk, 2022) between religious-conservative and far-right actors in a obstinate defence of the traditional family, 'proper' gender roles and national identity. More recently, the “anti-gender crusade” (Garbagnoli and Prearo 2018) has reinvigorated through a relentless opposition to trans rights, unleashed in concert by traditional anti-gender actors and by TERFs or gender-critical feminists. Albeit quite prominent, this is just one among several other unexpected convergences that are currently fostered by the “gender-phantasm” (Butler 2024). Others include, for example, alliances between specific groups of gay and lesbian activists joining arguments and efforts with the anti-gender and far-right activists particularly, but not exclusively, in anti-trans mobilizations.

This joint session by RN23 Sexuality and RN25 Social Movements focuses on this diverse spectrum of anti-gender alliances, and especially on the unexpected convergences among actors with a history of direct antagonism and conflicting interests, who would not seem to be easy bedfellows.

We invite submissions that address, amongst other relevant aspects:

- Actors, targets, organization and tactics of anti-gender alliances and collaborations;
- Successes and failures in strategies and tactics in joint and parallel mobilizations;
- Epistemics, argumentation and shared and/or dissonant assumptions and claims;
- Strengths and weaknesses, internal and/or across anti-gender alliances.

JS_RN23_RN29_I: Queer-Feminist Work on Counter-publics and Theories of Social Change (Joint session with RN23 Sexuality and RN29 Social Theory)

Coordinators: Christian Klesse, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, c.klesse[at]mmu.ac.uk

Kornelia Hahn, Universität Salzburg, Austria, kornelia.hahn[at]plus.ac.at

Jürgen Habermas's work on the bourgeois public sphere has been paradigmatic for decades of theorising about democracy and political action within civil society. However, critical commentary on his work has pointed out its silences on the social divisions of gender (Nancy Fraser), race (The Black Public Sphere Collective), class (Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt) and sexuality (Michael Warner, Ken Plummer), all of which distort the political terrain within the public sphere. These studies have shown the significance and dynamics around affect and embodiment in constructing a legitimate political voice, as well as the exclusionary dynamics and normative effects of dominant interpretations of deliberative democracy. Especially queer and queer-feminist work has highlighted the fragmented and multiple dimensions of public sphere processes, carving out a space for counter discourses and alternative modalities of action. Widespread authoritarian tendencies, even within self-defined representative democracies, go hand in hand with reinforced censorship and the infringement of the rights to self-expression and political protest (Ewa Majewska). These challenges

make it extremely important to improve our theoretical understanding of (counter)public sphere processes supporting the creation democratic and egalitarian movements and political (trans)formations.

This session welcomes submission of work that

- theorises (queer and queer-feminist) counter-publicity to understand concrete social conflicts and struggle
- explores the nexus of gender/sexuality/race/ class in social movement action
- interprets political action by women, transgender people, and those minoritised on grounds of their sexuality with regards to civil society and the state

JS_RN23_RN29_II: Pushing boundaries - digital intimacies and the quest for new social theory? (Joint session with RN23 Sexuality and RN29 Social Theory)

Coordinators: Kornelia Hahn, University of Salzburg, Austria, kornelia.hahn[at]plus.ac.at

Christian Klesse, University of Manchester, UK, c.klesse[at]mmu.ac.uk

The concept of digital intimacy has become a key topic in discussions about how people form intimate connections. Over the past two decades, there has been a proliferation of research into intimacy as it unfolds in digital settings and technologically mediated interactions, such as on dating apps and social media platforms. However, while the term 'digital intimacy' has gained traction in describing these practices, the concept has remained lacking in theoretical specification. What is distinctive about the kinds of intimacies mediated by the usage of technology? What does the concept highlight and what – or whom – does it exclude? Rather than empirically examining 'intimacies' as they unfold in digital contexts, we invite contributions that elaborate upon the explanatory capacities of 'digital intimacies' as a concept. Is it really the most useful framework through which to understand contemporary dynamics, or do we need additional or alternative theoretical vocabularies? We intend to push boundaries in both directions: by confronting social theory with the experiences, negotiations and struggles around so-called 'digital intimacies', and by enhancing the conceptual repertoire for analysing the nexus of intimacy/body/technology.

Contributions may address, but are not limited to:

- Theorising intimacy and sexuality, the boundaries between body and technology, subjectivity media, and/or platform infrastructures
- Concepts of sexual relationships and emotions in digital economies
- Privacy, public spheres, and the politics of exposure
- Methodological challenges in researching intimacy in media contexts
- Conceptual elaborations or critiques of 'digital intimacies'

JS_RN27_RN10: Citizenship education in Southern Europe (Join session with RN27 Regional Network on Southern European Societies & RN10 Sociology of Education)

Coordinators: Inês Vieira, Lusófona University, Portugal, ines.vieira[at]ulusofona.pt

Ana Romão, Military Academy, Portugal, anaromao74[at]gmail.com

Antigoni-Alba Papakonstantinou, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, albapap@hotmail.com

This joint session between ESA RN27 (Southern European Societies) and RN10 (Sociology of Education) explores the current challenges facing citizenship education in Southern Europe, in the context of the ESA 2026 conference theme: Strengthening Democracies: Social Action, Solidarity, and Sustainable Futures. Across Southern Europe, the rise of far-right ideologies, the advance of neoliberal educational reforms, and increasing pressures to depoliticize school curricula are reshaping how citizenship is taught – and whether it is taught at all.

Citizenship education – encompassing democratic values, sexual and environmental education, human rights, and community engagement – is increasingly under threat. In Portugal, for example, recent proposals to remove citizenship education from the core curriculum have prompted strong reactions from academic and civil society actors, such as the [public statement by the Portuguese Sociological Association](#), which denounced these measures as undermining democratic learning.

We invite abstracts that critically examine how these tensions unfold in different Southern European contexts – through policy shifts, grassroots resistance, pedagogical innovation, or comparative research. By bridging educational sociology with regional analysis, this session seeks to illuminate how schools can either reinforce exclusionary politics or serve as spaces for democratic renewal, solidarity, and sustainability.

JS_RN27_RN33: Migration and Gender in Southern European Societies (Joint session with RN27 Regional Network Southern European Societies and RN33 Women's and Gender Studies)

Coordinators: Ines Vieira, Lusófona University, Portugal, ines.vieira@ulusofona.pt

Olga Salido Cortes, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain, olga.salido@cps.ucm.es

Stellamarina Donato, Lumsa University, Italy, s.donato3@lumsa.it

Umberto di Maggio, Lumsa University, Italy, u.dimaggio@lumsa.it

This joint session, co-organized by the Research Network on Women's and Gender Issues RN 33 and the Research Network on Southern European Societies RN27, seeks to advance comparative and interdisciplinary debate on the entanglements of gender and migration in Southern Europe. The region has been shaped for decades by diverse mobility processes reconfiguring social, economic, and cultural life.

Gender is central to these processes, influencing the experience, narration, and control of mobility.

The session invites papers that explore how gendered identities and relations are created, negotiated, and transformed through migration processes in Southern Europe. We are particularly interested in research that:

- Analyzes the intersections of class, ethnicity, sexuality, and generation with migration to generate inequalities and opportunities.
- Analyzes policy regimes, border control, and welfare states with a gender-sensitive eye.
- Analyzes gender roles within transnational families, care labor, and domestic economies.
- Explains how feminist movements, migrant organizations, and civil society respond to and reframe debates on migration and belonging.

- Analyzes the gendered dynamics of return mobilities, reintegration, and community transformation.

By connecting the gender scholarship to the Southern European society scholarship, this joint session will aim to facilitate inter-network dialogue and create new comparative analysis in different contexts. We invite paper proposals that integrate empirical research with theoretical examination, building insight into gender-migration co-constitution in the region.

JS_RN27_RN37: Between Residential Patterns and Vulnerable Neighbourhoods: Trends of Care Practices in Southern European Cities (Joint session with RN27 Regional Network Southern European Societies and RN37 Urban Sociology)

Coordinators: Olga Salido Cortés, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain, olga.salido[at]cps.ucm.es

Margarita Barañano Cid, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain, mbaranan[at]ccee.ucm.es

Gabriele Manella, University of Bologna, Italy, gabriele.manella[at]unibo.it

This joint session focuses on vulnerable neighborhoods in Southern European cities, with particular attention to their residential patterns and care practices. Our assumption is that these practices have mostly consisted of mutual aid that unfolds within households. These practices emerge and flourish among family members and acquaintances who, although not living together, have a relatively nearby residential location and are able to provide help, thanks also to other social ties including the ones created around major social infrastructures and local community initiatives.

The session is also inspired by insights from ongoing case studies in Spanish and Italian cities within the funded projects VIARVU ('Vivienda, arraigos y vulnerabilidad en ciudades españolas') and VIVULBIE ('Vivienda, vulnerabilidad, bienestar y cuidados de las personas mayores y adultas jóvenes').

We welcome proposals exploring current urban processes that may be transforming the daily deployment of care networks in these spaces. Relevant topics include: the trends of forced residential mobilities from the urban areas where people used to live and the proliferation of new residential patterns, such as forced shared housing to pay rent or even buy it, prolonged cohabitation between parents and the younger generation, or the family reunifications of various generations. Contributions that address gender, age and migrant status are critical dimensions especially encouraged. The session chairs are also open to other perspectives that deepen the understanding of how residential dynamics and care practices intersect in Southern European urban spaces.

JS_RN35_RN10: Educating for Belonging: Experiential and Art-Based Pathways in Migration and Inclusion (Joint session with RN35: Sociology of Migration and RN10: Sociology of Education)

Coordinators: Laura Odasso, Université Paris 8, France, laura.odasso[at]univ-paris8.fr

Ilenya Camozzi, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy, ilenya.camozi[at]unimib.it

Anna Odrowąż-Coates, Maria Grzegorzewska University, Poland, acoates[at]aps.edu.pl

This joint session explores how experiential and art-based learning can ease the challenges of migration and foster the inclusion of migrants and their descendants, while advancing solidarity, knowledge, and recognition of both spatial and emotional mobilities. Since the 1960s, scholars have debated the boundaries of formal, nonformal, and informal education, highlighting self-learning and alternative pedagogies. Today, these approaches are increasingly central in schools, community centers, NGOs, grassroot associations and para-institutional programs designed to support the educational and social success of migrants and those with migrant backgrounds. These initiatives are growing thanks to EU priorities and funds. Such programs – targeting both youth and adults – foreground migration experiences as valuable resources that shape educational pathways, labour market integration, and broader participation in society. Beyond these structured contexts, migrants and their families also learn informally by navigating complex social and administrative systems, gaining knowledge crucial for belonging.

Against this background, this session welcomes contributions addressing, but not limited to:

- Design, implementation and challenges of art-based learning in and outside schools.
- The role of language(s), body and emotions in shaping learning processes.
- Links between non-formal learnings and migrants' expectations, aspirations and future plans.
- A European comparison between types of institutional interventions in promoting art-based programmes in both formal and informal contexts.
- The link between art-based education and the creative industries
- Theoretical and methodological cross-fertilisation between education and migration research in relation to art based, participative and experiential methods.
- Contributions of artists, mediators, social workers, volunteers and peers in experiential learning and memory work

Call for Papers by Research Streams (RS)

RS01 - Animals and Society

Coordinators: Magdalena Żadkowska, University of Gdańsk, Poland magdalena.zadkowska@ug.edu.pl

Gaia Peruzzi, University of Sapienza, Italy, gaia.peruzzi@uniroma1.it

Since the late twentieth century, social sciences have undergone a profound shift marked by the “animal turn.” Increasingly, scholars recognize that animals should not only be studied as functional to humans but as subjects with identities, agency, emotions, and histories. Non-human animals thus emerge both as research participants and as objects of study, acquiring new theoretical and historical significance (Dardenne, 2022). Across Europe, this stream of research continues to develop. Studies explore the implications of the animal turn, the dynamics of pro-animal movements, and the role of animals in urban, medical, and environmental policies. Sociology in the United Kingdom, Germany, Scandinavia, France, and Italy increasingly emphasizes that animals are not passive objects of human action but co-constitutive of social relations.

In Poland, Krzysztof T. Konecki’s *Ludzie i ich zwierzęta* (2005) expanded interactionist sociology by integrating companion animals into analyses of family life, symbolic practices, and everyday interactions. His work reframed pets as meaningful actors embedded in relational worlds—incorporated through socialization, observation, and emotional exchange—thereby enriching sociological understanding of multispecies households and interdependencies of daily life.

The aim of this stream is to create a platform for exchange among researchers investigating animals in diverse contexts—ranging from everyday care and agriculture to ecology, ethics, and law. We particularly welcome empirical and theoretical contributions that help chart a contemporary sociology of animals in Europe and beyond. The stream seeks to demonstrate that research on animals is not marginal but essential to understanding societies in late modernity.

RS02 - Sociology of Celebration

Coordinators: Ismo Kantola, University of Turku, Department of Social Research/Sociology, Finland, ikantola[at]utu.fi

Ozana Cucu-Oancea, Institute of Sociology, Romanian Academy, Romania, ocucuoancea[at]yahoo.com

Sociology of Celebration, first introduced in 2007 as an RS of the ESA Glasgow Conference, aims to explore the role and place of celebration in social theory as well as in phenomena and events accessible by empirical observations. In efforts to strengthen democracies and identities, new and revitalizing forms of celebration emerge. The polycritical challenge of fostering solidarity within the current social landscapes opens up a vast opportunity for empirical observations on the multiple ways celebration may take place, form, and constitute as to who is eligible to participate. In the face of political disillusionment, extremism, and threats to social cohesion, this stream focuses on how various forms of celebration—from student parties and clubbing to raves, community festivals, solemn feasts and banquets, to parades and cultural events—may contribute to the mechanisms of exclusion, inclusion or social resilience.

In these turbulent times, celebration has the promise of transcending mere entertainment to become a form of collective action, a means to reaffirm marginalized identities, and a way to promote social inclusion. We invite sociological contributions that deal with the capacity of celebratory practices in strengthening belonging, opening up dialogue across diverse groups, and generating a horizon of hope. Furthermore, also proposals of presentations dealing with the obstacles to and discontent from events and forms of celebration are encouraged. Sociological presentations from other perspectives — empirical, theoretical, methodological, ethical — to celebration are welcome as well.

RS03 - Interpretative Interactionism: sociology of Interactions and Meaning

Coordinators: Don Weenink, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, d.weenink[at]fgga.leidenuniv.nl

Evelyne Baillergeau, EHESS and University of Amsterdam, Netherlands and France,
evelyne.baillergeau[at]ehess.fr/e.baillergeau[at]uva.nl

René Tuma, Technische Universität Berlin, Germany, rene.tuma[at]tu-berlin.de

With the 'Interpretative interactionism' research stream, we want to build a community of scholars who focus their analyses of social processes on what happens in interactions, using interpretative epistemologies. An overarching question we work on is why people do the things they do when they orient their actions towards others, given historically developed relationships, the future people share, and the wider interdependency networks (figurations) they are tied to.

We are particularly interested in understandings of people's conduct that are found after intensive engagement with data that allow to show how people make sense of their own and others' actions, and how their sensemaking can be contextualized (i.e. seen as part of a figuration). These features of interpretative interactionism align with qualitative work in the symbolic interactionist, figural, ethno-methodological, Goffmanian, pragmatist, phenomenological, social and communicative constructivist traditions. How do we engage with, integrate and advance these traditions? We are also interested in thinking of how macro social phenomena (i.e. enduring and widespread age, class, gender, ethnic and racial inequalities and intersectionalities) materialize and transform within interacting processes, without assuming the existence of a level of "structure" disconnected from acting individuals.

We welcome any sociological topic, data format and methodological orientation so long as the research fits within an interpretative interactionist framework. In addition to discursive aspects of interactions we are interested in data and methods that allow researchers to capture the sensuous and emotional dimensions of social interactions, as well as the temporal, spatial and bodily dimensions.

RS04 – Sociology of Fashion

Coordinators: Kalina Kukielko, University of Szczecin, Poland, kalina.kukielko@usz.edu.pl

Dorota Hrycak-Krzyzanowska, Polish University Abroad, UK, dorota.hrycak@puno.ac.uk

Human beings – uniquely characterized by their use of clothing – employ fashion to construct complex systems of communication, articulate identities, and express social belonging. Despite its ubiquity in everyday life, the sociology of fashion has remained at the periphery of mainstream sociological inquiry. This Research Stream seeks to challenge this marginalization by advancing fashion as a legitimate and theoretically robust field of sociological research. Our approach draws on key paradigms, including symbolic interactionism, structural functionalism, critical theory, Bourdieu's theory of distinction, and postmodern perspectives. We build on seminal contributions by Barthes (1967/1983), Crane (1999), Entwistle (2000), Kawamura (2005), and Lipovetsky (1994), whose works have laid the foundations for understanding fashion as a site where culture, power, and social differentiation intersect.

The Research Stream focuses on three interrelated areas: fashion as social communication, where dress conveys meanings of gender, status, cultural identity, and group affiliation; social processes in fashion, including co-creation, participatory design, social media-driven trend formation, and evolving designer-consumer relations; and contemporary challenges, such as sustainable and ethical production, adaptive and inclusive fashion, and the potential of artificial intelligence in design.

RS05 - Social Trauma in Times of Polycrisis

Coordinators: Monika Frąckowiak-Sochańska, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland, monikafs[at]amu.edu.pl

Outi Kähäri, University of Oulu, Finland, Outi.Kahari[at]oulu.fi

Mandy Lee, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, mslee[at]tcd.ie

Contemporary societies operate in the shadow of present and past collective traumas that transcend individual experiences of suffering. Wars, forced migration, climate and health crises, growing social inequalities, and the rise of populist movements leave long-lasting marks on the social fabric. Eyerman (2019: 23) points out that cultural trauma concerns “a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people who have achieved some degree of cohesion.” In clinical practice, social trauma describes groups targeted by organized societal violence or ethnic persecution, with high levels of posttraumatic stress (Hamburger, 2021). Therefore, social trauma becomes a key category for analyzing today’s challenges to democracy and social cohesion.

This session aims to bring together scholars studying various dimensions of social trauma: its origins, manifestations, coping strategies, and transformative potential. We will explore how historical and contemporary traumatic experiences shape social relations, trust in institutions, and political attitudes, as well as their impact on collective mobilization, solidarity, conflicts, and exclusion. We are also interested in the role of media and digital technologies—both in reinforcing traumatic narratives and in creating spaces for collective healing and maintaining the memory of communities meaningful for identities.

The session invites reflection on:

- sociopolitical origins and consequences of trauma from public and engaged sociology perspective;
- interrelations between social trauma and individual well-being;
- coping with trauma on individual and collective levels;
- trauma in social memory;
- theoretical approaches to social trauma;
- methods of empirical trauma-informed research.

RS06 - European intimate lives and reproductive choices in the face of planetary crises

Coordinators: Anna-Maija Castrén, University of Eastern Finland, Finland, anna-maija.castren[at]uef.fi

Lynn Jamieson, University of Edinburgh, UK, l.jamieson[at]ed.ac.uk

This research stream focusing on transformations of intimate life in the context of complex, uncertain, and unstable planetary futures was organised for the first time in ESA Conference 2024 and proved valuable. We ask, how do people understand the future, their relationships, and meanings around companionship, in the context of climate change, ecological extinctions, mass migration, pandemics, military conflicts, cycles of economic recession and other crises, and what does this mean for the patterning of family life? Previous research has established our understanding of the structural and socioeconomic contexts in which family compositions have changed over the decades, from an increasing diversity and size of family forms, to declining birth rates, and the influences of reproductive technology. Many of these studies focus on the national level and have been used by governments in planning nation state welfare, health, and migration policies. But recent quantitative and qualitative research is beginning to offer glimpses of the planetary concerns of young people that transcend the confines of national borders to inform their reproductive decision making. Simultaneously, the diversity of meaningful relationships outside the conventional family unit is gaining more attention. We suggest that, to contemplate how European reproductive futures might be better sketched, an international research agenda is required that seeks to understand how globalised, cross-border crises, and concomitant worsening economic, environmental, and social conditions are structuring social relationships and unsettling the building of intimate lives.

RS07 - Digital Lifeworlds: Childhood, Youth and Intergenerational Futures

Coordinators: Seran Demiral, Universidade do Porto, Portugal, serandemiral[at]gmail.com

Anna Witeska-Młynarczyk, Institute of Sociology, Marie Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland, anna.witeska-mlynarczyk[at]mail.umcs.pl

Maria Cecilia Zsögön, UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair at the Maria Grzegorzewska University, Poland; cecilia.zsogon[at]gmail.com

This Research Stream explores how digital transformations are reshaping childhood, youth, and generational experiences in the context of democratic fragility and social upheaval. In times marked by polycrisis—conflicts, displacement, environmental degradation, and rising inequalities—understanding the lived realities of younger generations becomes crucial for envisioning sustainable and inclusive futures.

Aligned with the general theme of the ESA Conference 2026, the stream opens a space for debates on how digital transformations reshape social and political life through generational perspectives. It aims to strengthen democracies through bottom-up strategies that foster intergenerational solidarity and collective action for sustainable futures.

Digital technologies, including AI, social media, and algorithmic governance, increasingly mediate children's and young people's social worlds—shaping civic engagement, identity formation, intergenerational communication, and access to rights. At the same time, these technologies can reinforce exclusion, surveillance, and post-truth narratives, posing new risks to democratic participation and intergenerational solidarity.

This stream invites contributions that critically examine how childhood and youth are being redefined in digitally saturated societies, and how generational perspectives can inform public sociology and social action. We particularly welcome research that engages with participatory, comparative, and cross-generational methodologies, and that reflects on the ethical and political dimensions of studying young people in turbulent times.

RS08 - Sociology of masculinities: power, conflict, change

Coordinators: Katarzyna Wojnicka, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, katarzyna.wojnicka[at]gu.se

Katarzyna Suwada, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland, k.suwada[at]umk.pl

In recent years, Europe has faced multiple crises with far-reaching social consequences. The ongoing war in Ukraine destabilizes not only political and economic orders but also reshapes social imaginaries of security, belonging, and citizenship. Closely connected is the so-called “migration crisis” at the Schengen borders, which exposes both the limited capacity of European states to manage mobility and the production of moral panics around migrant men. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed deep-seated inequalities, particularly in the gendered distribution of care work - a form of labor essential to social reproduction that has been persistently undervalued. Meanwhile, the growing influence of right-wing, populist, and nationalist movements has revitalized traditionalist discourses of gender and family, with renewed emphasis on hegemonic and protective masculinities.

This panel proposes to examine these challenges from a gender perspective, with a particular focus on men and masculinities. Masculinities are central to contemporary crises: they shape war and militarization, inform exclusionary narratives of “threatening” single male migrants, and underpin political projects that mobilize images of strong, protective men. At the same time, the pandemic demonstrated both shifts and limits in men’s engagement in reproductive labor, underscoring persistent asymmetries in gendered practices of care. Collectively, we ask how narratives and practices of masculinity are mobilized, contested, and transformed in response to Europe’s political, social, and cultural challenges.

RS09 - The Gifted Body: Technological Innovation, Social Ties and Solidarity in Biocapital

Coordinators: Daniela Bandelli, Department of Political and Social Studies, University of Salerno, Italy, dbandelli[at]unisa.it

Leah McLaughlin, School of Health Sciences, Bangor University, UK, l.mclaughlin[at]bangor.ac.uk

Francesca Greco, Department of Languages and Literatures, Communication, Education and Society, University of Udine, Italy, francesca.greco[at]uniud.it

Advancements in biotechnology have heightened the sociological relevance of the human body, not only as a whole but also when it is broken down and alienated from the person: organs, tissues, vital fluids such as blood and milk, reproductive cells, waste products and even microscopic components such as DNA sequences. These elements are extracted, transferred—largely in the form of gifts—and transformed into biomedical products, studied by scientific research, and re-implanted into other bodies. Their circulation saves lives, generates new ones, improves health, supports environmental sustainability and promises future applications.

Sociological and biocapital studies have extensively problematized Mauss classic concept of the “gift” in relation to reciprocity, exploitation, and altruism, highlighting its ongoing relevance despite pervasiveness economic logic shaping social relations, technological innovation and the reproduction of life itself. Furthermore, the concept intersects in compelling ways with that of biocommunity or biosociality, offering a lens to explore biological and/or social relationships formed through the donation of organic components.

Exploring values and beliefs (scientific and religious), the emotional dimensions of giving and receiving, subjective interpretations of the body and health, and the narrations through which these dimensions are articulated provides a rich field of inquiry at the crossroads of multiple sociological domains.

This Research Stream seeks contributes on the gift, the body, and biomarkets through empirical studies and theoretical reflections developed by scholars at all career stages, working in the fields of social theory, sociology of health, Science and Technology Studies (STS) and sociology of emotions, economic sociology.

RS10 - Socialization, Roles, and Identity in Organizations

Coordinators: Kathia E. Serrano Velarde, Heidelberg University, Germany, kathia.serrano[at]mwi.uni-heidelberg.de

Elina I. Mäkinen, Tampere University, Finland, elina.makinen[at]tuni.fi

We live in a society of “hyper-organization” (Bromley/Meyer 2015), where individuals are embedded in varied organizational settings. As such, organizations have proven to be of critical importance in the socialization of individuals. People spend a substantial amount of their time in organized settings, where they acquire skills, internalize values and norms, learn about behavioral routines and institutionalized modes of communication, adopt roles, and develop ways to combine different roles.

Yet, organizational socialization or “people processing” (van Maanen 1978) seems to play only a minor role in current debates in sociology and the neighboring disciplines interested in social phenomena. We contend that contemporary research on organizational identity, subjectivity, surveillance, professions, or organizational learning, among others, are intimately connected to matters of socialization. Aiming to ignite discussions between scholars who study these issues, we hope to uncover the many ways in which organizations shape identities, ascribe agency, design roles, and distribute competences, but also how people cope with these impositions. We welcome both theoretical and empirical papers that address questions such as:

- How do organizations shape people to fit organizational settings? How do organizations contribute to the manufacturing of ‘docile subjects’ or, conversely, ‘agentic actors’?
- How do organizations affect conceptions of the individual or the collective self?
- How does organizational socialization relate to social inequalities?
- What do people learn in organizations? What implications does this have for identities, careers, and lives more broadly?
- What is the role of (digital) technologies in (the affirmation of or resistance to) organizational socialization?

RS11 - Sociology of Spatial Mobilities

Coordinators: Knut Petzold, Zittau/Görlitz University of Applied Sciences, Germany, knut.petzold[at]hszg.de

Heiko Rüger, Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB), Germany,
heiko.rueger[at]bib.bund.de

Gil Viry, University of Edinburgh, UK, gil.viry[at]ed.ac.uk

Recent decades have seen the emergence of more complex forms of spatial mobility, such as long-distance commuting, circular migration, multi-residential living, studying abroad, intensive travelling and virtual mobility via the Internet. Major social changes, such as migration and refugee flows, the pluralisation of living arrangements, labour market deregulation and digitalisation have made the study of spatial mobilities increasingly important for a broader understanding of many sociological issues. Spatial mobility is linked in many ways to key sociological concepts. For example, it is often considered a prerequisite for upward social mobility and social participation. However, access to spatial (digital) mobility is unequally distributed, resulting in different barriers to movement among diverse social groups, in particular across gender, ethnic or class lines. This unequal propensity to benefit from (im)mobility is particularly visible in times of crises, such as wars, pandemics and climate change. The Research Stream will bring together researchers from different sociological fields and investigate how spatial (im)mobilities can be conceptualised from different perspectives and how these mobility-based concepts can be integrated into existing sociological traditions.

Possible session themes include:

- Theories, concepts and methods of studying spatial (im)mobilities
- Spatial (im)mobilities, residential choice and decision-making processes
- Practices of spatial (im)mobilities and organisation of everyday life
- Spatial (im)mobilities over the life course and interrelations with various life domains
- Spatial (im)mobilities, social mobility and social inequalities
- Meanings and ideologies connected with spatial (im)mobilities
- Virtual/digital spatial mobility and its relation to corporeal spatial mobility
- Work-related travel, working from home and housing
- Mobilities and inequalities during crises, including the war in Ukraine.

RS12 - Lived Precariousness, Structural Insecurity, and the Politics of Solidarity

Coordinators: Annalisa Murgia, Department of Social and Political Sciences, University of Milan, Italy,
annalisa.murgia[at]unimi.it

Mireia Bolíbar Planas, Department of Sociology, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain,
mireia.bolibar[at]uab.cat

Renato Miguel do Carmo, Department of Sociology, Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa,
Portugal, renato.carmo[at]iscte-iul.pt

Precariousness is a multidimensional condition shaped by structural transformations in labour markets, welfare systems, and institutions of collective representation. It is often associated with the expansion of non-standard and insecure work arrangements – such as platform labour, zero-hour contracts, temporary employment and various forms of disguised self-employment – which limit access to rights, social protection, and voice. Yet precariousness extends far beyond the employment sphere, intersecting with broader insecurities in housing, health, education, care, and the right to mobility. These dynamics raise urgent questions about the erosion of democratic participation, the fragmentation of social citizenship, and the sustainability of solidaristic arrangements. Precariousness undermines not only decent living conditions, but also rights related to autonomy, emotional well-being, and the capacity to form and maintain meaningful relationships of care and intimacy. In doing so, it challenges the foundations of democratic societies by marginalising individuals and weakening the mechanisms through which they can organise and be represented. In particular, the Research Stream advocate for approaches that critically examine how multiple systems of power – such as capitalism, racism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, ableism, and border regimes – interact to produce differentiated conditions and experiences of precariousness and inequality. We welcome contributions from across the Global North and South that explore structural inequalities, lived experiences, and collective agency, as well as their entanglements. We are particularly interested in work that investigates how new solidaristic practices and organising strategies can help reimagine rights, representation, and democratic futures under conditions of precarity.

RS13 - Humanitarianism Under Pressure: Social Action, Governance, and Global Norms

Coordinators: Talita Cetinoglu, University of Groningen, Netherlands, t.cetinoglu[at]rug.nl, dalitace[at]hotmail.com

Marjaana Rautalin, University of Helsinki, Finland, marjaana.rautalin[at]helsinki.fi

Alex Odlum, University of Lausanne, Switzerland, alex.odlum[at]unil.ch

This research stream examines the state of humanitarianism in Europe and beyond, situated within a broader political moment marked by the erosion of global norms and rights frameworks that have historically constituted humanitarian action as a distinct mode of social action. It invites sociological and interdisciplinary perspectives that historicize and critically engage with the securitization of aid and human mobility, the criminalization of humanitarian assistance and solidarity networks, the withdrawal or reduction of donor funding and commitments, humanitarian-development-peace relations; professionalization and technocratic aid governance; and discourses and policies that displace, outsource, or depoliticize questions of social justice, conflict and violations of human rights and humanitarian law. In particular, contributions that:

- Examine policies, processes, alliances and discursive practices at multiple levels, and the role of European governments and EU institutions in reproducing, contesting, or undermining humanitarian principles, protections and practices.
- Investigate governance mechanisms and digital technologies including protection risks, power and knowledge relations at the intersection of public policies (or their absence) and humanitarian responses; and the role, capacity and leverage of domestic and international civil society actors and international organizations within such governance structures.
- Analyse services across sectors such as health, education, labour and child protection, to illuminate how the entanglement of 'domestic' social policies and humanitarian practices shape lived experiences, social and gender inequalities, and the possibilities for protection and wellbeing.

This cross-cutting research stream seeks to foster critical debates on the intersection between humanitarian and social policies, and how European policy choices and global political shifts reshape humanitarianism.

RS14 - Maritime Sociology

Coordinators: Robert Bartłomiejski, University of Szczecin, Poland, robert.bartłomiejski[at]usz.edu.pl

Helena Martínez-Cabrera, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain,
helena.martinez.c[at]usc.es

Birgit Pauksztat, Nordland Research Institute, Norway, bpa[at]nforsk.no

Maritime sociology explores the sea as a social space, treating the ocean not merely as nature but as a distinct social arena shaped by cultural meanings, institutions, technologies, and economies. This Research Stream connects that community and offers an interdisciplinary home for studies of society–sea relations. Despite a long tradition, the field remains under-researched and dispersed across subfields.

We foreground social groups and societies connected to the sea: how they work, mobilise and govern across sea–land interfaces; how crews, families, groups and coastal communities organise everyday life; and how they respond to the sea's impacts and to environmental change.

We invite contributions, among others, on:

- Work and communities connected to the sea (seafaring, fishing, offshore, aquaculture): labour organisation, health and safety, solidarity, justice, and intergenerational heritage.
- Mobilities and bordering, (im)mobility, liveaboard and ocean-nomad communities.
- Port–city and seaside transformations, blue urbanism, socio-cultural life, port-city transitions (energy, digitalisation, hydrogen), conflicts, and the sea-related influences.
- Marine environment and governance: marine ecosystem protection, marine commons and rights, circular economies, blue economies, blue justice and equity.
- Theoretical and critical approaches (including posthuman and more-than-human perspectives); methods from across the social sciences.

We welcome theoretically and methodologically diverse and innovative work — from political economy and institutional analysis to cultural and ethnographic approaches — alongside contributions that explore more-than-human perspectives where appropriate. The aim is to provide a forum for a broad, inclusive conversation, connecting European cases to global debates while keeping the social-sea focus at the core.

RS15 - Sociology of Democratic Practices and Politics of Engagements

Coordinators: Gisle Andersen, Research Professor, NORCE Research Centre / Centre for Climate and Energy Transformation (CET), University of Bergen, Norway, gisle.andersen[at]norceresearch.no

Eeva Luhtakallio, Professor of Sociology, University of Helsinki, Finland,
eeva.luhtakallio[at]helsinki.fi

Veikko Eranti, Associate Professor of Urban Sociology, University of Helsinki, Finland
veikko.eranti[at]helsinki.fi

Navigating the complexity of contemporary societal challenges requires a robust sociological framework to comprehend and analyze the multi-faceted nature of democratic practices. In these turbulent times, human communities face disputes and conflicts across various arenas – political projects, environmental crises, material and immaterial localities, and everyday routines. This context invites critical inquiry into how societies can build common ground, foster mutual understanding, and embrace societal transformations without marginalizing diverse voices.

This research stream delves into the sociological exploration of democratic engagements, practices, and the coordination of communal life. It continues the project of pragmatic sociology in taking seriously the critical capacity of ordinary actors, and the importance of addressing conflict at multiple levels: not confined within specific settings, but in everyday situations, at all levels of society.

We welcome a wide range of research objectives and empirical fields, from macro-level analysis of political and cultural trends, including both democratic and anti-democratic movements, to micro-level studies of everyday interactions and co-ordinations that constitute living together.

We encourage contributions that employ pragmatist theories to explore commonalities, engagements, and valuations that underpin democratic processes. Our goal is to illuminate the pathways through which social action and solidarity can empower communities, guiding them towards social, economic, and environmental justice.

RS16 - Governance and Transformation in Times of Multiple Crises

Coordinators: René John, Institute for Social Innovation Berlin, Germany, rene.john[at]isinova.org

Renata Putkowska-Smoter, University of Warsaw, Poland, r.putkowska-smoter[at]uw.edu.pl

The performance capability of modern welfare states is repeatedly being pushed to its limits. While the crisis of the Keynesian model in the late 1970s was addressed by a 'neoliberal' restructuring, these solutions are reaching their limits under the impact of advanced globalisation and its consequences. Despite their differing experiences of transformation, most European governments today are facing a similar range of challenges in the form of multiple crises during a time of transformation: Climate change, migration, war, accelerating political polarisation, growing distrust in democracy, and the resurgence of authoritarian nationalism. Alongside the impacts of political narratives and debates, a crucial factor is how effectively public administrations demonstrate their ability to handle these conflicts and complex problems not at least in citizen's everyday lives, involving them in decision-making processes within the existing bureaucratic systems.

Will the new wave of 'de-bureaucratisation' solve the problem, or will it lead to new issues of incompetence and further erode trust in the state? Are the efforts of participatory governance at a local level successfully overcoming citizens' scepticism about representative democracy, or are the various participation formats causing more delays and complications in the decision-making process and endangering the common good? More importantly: What organisational conditions can enable innovative and sustainable change within the administrative system, ensuring stability and fostering openness to an uncertain future?

To encourage comparative discussion, we invite contributions on governance, participation, public administration, organisational change, and societal transformations, from a variety of perspectives. Empirical case studies from different countries are welcome.

RS17 - Sociology of Knowledge

Coordinators: Barbara Grüning, University of Milan-Bicocca, Italy, barbara.gruning[at]unimib.it

Ajit Singh, University Duisburg-Essen, Germany, ajit.singh[at]uni-due.de

Miloš Jovanović, University of Niš, Serbia, milos.jovanovic[at]filfak.ni.ac.rs

The Sociology of Knowledge Research Stream explores the dynamic interrelations among the production, circulation and reception of forms and contents of knowledge, the different socio-historical spaces and structures, and transnational cultural and political phenomena. In times marked by political crises, digital misinformation, and contested cultural narratives, knowledge functions simultaneously as a resource for social organization, a terrain of ideological struggle, and a medium of resistance. The stream provides a platform for investigating how knowledge is produced, legitimized, contested, and circulated across institutional, cultural, and political contexts. Crucial topics concern for instance: the crisis of expertise and intellectuals, epistemic injustice, marginalized knowledges, and the transformations of academic institutions and knowledge economies, knowledge and democracy, conspiracy theories and the politics of truth, memory and contested histories, and decolonial and indigenous epistemologies.

The Research Stream builds on a long-standing tradition within ESA conferences and mid-term meetings, offering a vibrant intellectual space for interdisciplinary dialogue. It welcomes both theoretical and empirical work, as well as methodological reflections, from sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, political science, media studies, philosophy, and related fields.

RS18 - Institutional Ethnography

Coordinators: Morena Tartari, Northumbria University, UK, morena.tartari[at]northumbria.ac.uk

Órla M Murray, Northumbria University, UK, orla.murray[at]northumbria.ac.uk

Sarah Murru, KU Leuven, Belgium, sarah.murru[at]kuleuven.be

This research stream is dedicated to Institutional Ethnography (IE), an approach first developed by the prominent Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith. The field of IE research arose from feminist activism and was influenced by ethnethodology and Marx's materialist method, but recent reformulations extend this approach.

IE is both a social ontology and a social scientific procedure for investigating discourses as social relations. It is a theoretical and empirical investigation of the linkages among local settings of everyday life, organizations, and translocal processes of administration and governance. The notion of 'institution' does not refer to a type of organization, but rather to clusters of text-mediated relations organized around particular ruling functions, for instance education or health care. IE is a sociology that starts out in people's experiences, and it is labelled a 'sociology for people' because its commitment is to identify and challenge the shaping effects that ruling relations have on everyday life.

The aim of this RS is to share, discuss, develop and advance the use of IE. We will provide a platform for Europe-based researchers, scholars, social activists and students who utilize IE in their research. This stream is also for networking and exchanging experiences with IE scholars outside Europe who will be interested in joining the sessions.

Formal networks of IE researchers exist internationally, including regional networks in North America, Australasia, the Nordic countries, and the UK & Ireland. This RS wants to continue building the network of European scholars, facilitating connections between formal networks, individual scholars, and the many informal networks of IE scholars across Europe.

RS19 - Vegan sociology for nonhuman animals

Coordinators: Rūta Pelikšienė, Kaunas University of Techology, Lithuania, ruta.peliksiene[at]ktu.lt

Marlies Bockstal, University of Canterbury, New Zealand,
marlies.bockstal[at]pg.canterbury.ac.nz

In the context of the deepening climate crisis, veganism has emerged both as a potential solution and a complex social phenomenon. Its complexity arises from the ways it connects environmental concerns, ethical debates about human and nonhuman animals, public health, and shifting cultural norms. These overlapping dimensions make veganism an important subject for sociologists.

Vegan sociology centers human – nonhuman animal relations within the sociological imagination. It is morally and ethically driven, and committed to exploring the intertwined oppressions of speciesism, racism, sexism, and other forms of domination. It examines how veganism as a social movement engages with the goal of total liberation. This perspective encourages critical engagement with activism, ideology, and lived practices, as well as with the structural forces that sustain exploitation.

This research stream welcomes empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions that include nonhuman animals and challenge their oppression, and explore veganism as a social phenomenon, in relation to activism, policy, consumption, identity, intersectionality, and other aspects. We encourage dialogue across critical theory, social movement studies, environmental sociology and human–animal studies.

We invite contributions that explore:

- How veganism is represented, contested, or normalized
- Social, cultural, and economic factors shaping vegan practices and/or nonhuman animal domination
- How intersections of race, class, gender, and/or species influence vegan identity and/or human-nonhuman animal relations
- Interplay between critical sociology and veganism
- Human and non-human animal relations within vegan sociology
- The role of veganism in broader transitions toward sustainable and just future(s)

RS20 - Environmental Issues, climate change and Far Right Politics

Coordinators: Manuela Caiani, Scuola Normale Superiore, Italy, manuela.caiani[at]sns.it

Anna Durnova, University of Vienna, Austria, anna.durnova[at]univie.ac.at

In recent years, environmental issues have moved to the forefront of public and political debates. Once largely the domain of progressive and green movements, these concerns are increasingly addressed—and contested—by far-right actors. While early research focused on explicit climate denial, newer studies examine opposition to specific policies. Turbulence linked to the European Green Deal and Sustainable Development Goals has grown: farmers protest across the EU, right-wing populists exploit unrest, climate activists face criminalisation, and youth grow frustrated with slow action.

This shift raises critical questions for democracy and sustainability. This research stream investigates how far-right parties, social movements, and other reactionary actors engage with, reinterpret, or reject environmental narratives. Contemporary far-right environmentalism is shaped by dynamics such as “green nationalism,” eco-border rhetoric, climate change denial, and anti-environmental populism. These positions intertwine ideology, identity, and geopolitics, often reframing ecological challenges through nativist, authoritarian, or exclusionary lenses.

Such reframing influences public opinion, policy agendas, and the ability of democratic institutions to respond to environmental crises. Understanding these processes is vital for strengthening democratic resilience and advancing sustainable futures. By critically analysing how far-right actors mobilise or contest ecological concerns, we can assess their impact on solidarity, collective action, and the legitimacy of environmental policymaking.

This stream invites empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions from diverse disciplines and national contexts. It aims to foster a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between environmental issues and far-right politics, and its implications for democracy, sustainability, and the sociological imagination.

European Sociological Association PhD Summer School 2026

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Where and when: Warsaw, Poland, 22nd -24th August 2026.

Focus: Within the intensive Summer School program, participants will present aspects of their ongoing doctoral research projects, primarily in relation to the key topics of the conference: democracy, social action, solidarity, and sustainable future. Instructors' and fellow peer feedback will be provided, focusing on the theoretical basis, epistemological approach, methodological features, as well as scientific and practical implications of the research presented. In the concluding plenary session, an open debate will deal with the widest scope of queries and challenges that early career scholars encounter in their PhD journeys. This event represents an outstanding opportunity for networking with peers all across Europe and beyond and thus enhancing academic career prospects.

Number of places: We will select 25 PhD students for the school. An additional set of 5 candidates will be included in a waiting list.

Format of event: on-site

Language: English

Funding: Funds will be provided for 3 nights' accommodation (22-24 August 2026) and meals in Warsaw (booked by ESA). Up to 350,00 Euro will be available to each student towards their travel costs (reimbursement after the event). Please, bear in mind that ESA promotes and encourages the use of more sustainable and environmentally friendly types of transport whenever convenient for reaching an event's venue.

Eligibility: Students registered for a PhD in Sociology or in an allied discipline in a European University. Students must be ESA members or become ESA member before the Summer School: <https://www.europeansociology.org/membership>

Guidelines for applying: Please submit an abstract of your paper (max. 350 words) and a short CV (max. 3 pages) via the ESA ConTool 2026 by the ESA Conference 2026 deadline. When submitting via ConTool, you will be asked to choose the ESA Research Network in which you would like to present at the main ESA 2026 conference, in case your paper is not selected for the Summer School.

Your CV should contain the following at the beginning:

- Full Name
- Academic affiliation (department, university)
- Country (where registered for PhD)
- Year of the PhD programme
- E-mail address
- Phone number
- Name, institutional affiliation, and e-mail address of your main supervisor

Your abstract should contain the following subheadings:

- Title of paper
- Keywords (up to 4)
- Research question

- Theoretical framework
- Methodology (if empirical paper)
- Preliminary findings or conclusions
- The novel contribution and significance of your research.

Selection: Participants will be selected through a peer-review process and on the basis of the scientific excellence of their proposed abstract and its scholarly contribution to sociological knowledge. In addition, a fair balance between different regions of Europe and areas of sociology as well as topics will be considered. Priority will be given to candidates who have not joined previous ESA Summer Schools and who are in the last stages of their PhD.

If you are selected you will be required **to submit a manuscript of a full paper (6000 words max., including footnotes and bibliography) by 15th May 2026** to communication[at]europeansociology.org . This is essential to ensure that participants get the most out of this program. Papers will be circulated in advance and allocated to peer discussants.

We kindly ask you to apply only if you accept these terms and conditions and are prepared to follow the guidelines and deadlines.

Summer School's instructors are members of the ESA Executive committee: Milica Antić Gaber (Slovenia), Nilay Kaya (Turkey), Marilena Macaluso (Italy), Maggie O'Neil (Ireland), Ana-Cristina Santos (Portugal), Ana Vidu (Spain), Krešimir Žažar (Croatia), and ESA's President Kaja Gadowska (Poland).

For further information:

Directors of the ESA Summer School 2026
Krešimir Žažar kzazar@ffzg.unizg.hr
Marilena Macaluso marilena.macaluso@unipa.it
Nilay Kaya cabuk@humanity.ankara.edu.tr

We are looking forward to receiving your application to the ESA's Summer School 2026!