Sociotechnics, Sociological Practice

Key Events

XX ISA World Congress of Sociology, *Melbourne, Australia*

Prof. Flaminia Saccà addresses the Congress

XX ISA World Congress of Sociology

Melbourne, Australia | June 25-July 1, 2023
Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

Resurgent Authoritarianism:
Sociology of New Entanglements of Religions, Politics, and Economies

RC26 at Melbourne, XX ISA World Congress of Sociology

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RABAT

V ISA Forum of Sociology
7 - 11 July 2025
#ISAforum25 #Morocco

V ISA Forum of Sociology

Introduction by the RC26 President

Dear RC26 Sociologists,

The year 2023 is almost over, and next year is just around the corner. Strengthened by the newly elected RC26 Board of Directors, we are returning to active events. The goal in front of us is very impressive. RC26 seeks to reimagine our efforts in a new global environment. Our world is changing before our eyes, and we are living in turbulent times. How will this situation affect the work of sociologists? What are the new theoretical and applied tools of our research? Finally, in the new configuration of our society, the Where do we stand question acquires additional pertinence. These are all questions we need to ask ourselves if we want to keep our profession and our "sociological imagination" to ourselves. Traditionally, our RC26 has addressed issues of small community sustainability, small group political preferences, and migration. We need to study and model how these problems play out in turbulence. We will add new topics to these subject areas. The important thing is to remain open to the torrent of history and recognize the nodes of systemic connections within it. This is sociology. Let us continue to love sociology and uphold its high standards.

In January 2024 we are planning a general meeting of our entire committee with a broad agenda and unlimited time to express opinions.

Nikita Pokrovsky,
RC26 President

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Luca MASSIDDA

Next event - The AIS International Conference «Democracy and Society. Challenges, Risks and Opportunities for Contemporary Democracies»

Bologna, Italy, October 10-12, 2024

CALL FOR PAPERS. The Political Sociology Section of the Italian Sociological Association (AIS), together with leading international associations of political sociology, is promoting an international conference to discuss the various challenges that social, cultural, economic, political, institutional, and geopolitical transformations pose to democracy.

More info: https://www.ais-sociologia.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Call-for-papers-International-Conference-Political-Sociology-2024-AIS.pdf

Past event – Conference «Local Democratic Challenges: Environment, Inequalities and Resilient Cultural Mediation in Fragile / Transitional Communities»

Chania (Crete), September 9-11, 2019

The conference was organized to estimate the challenges to participatory democracy and local governance. The organizers suggest that non-profit organizations and civil society groups have helped promote local development efforts. New technologies may help communities organize around issues like labor mobility and tourism. However, social reproduction and trust-building within partnerships are key to communal sustainability. During the conference the papers on how power dynamics enable inclusion and how effective mediation can support partnerships for local governance were presented.

Past event – Conference «Zenon of Kition, the Legacy of Stoicism in Turbulent Times: Addressing Issues of Sustainability, Globalization, Inclusion and Democracy»

Larnaca, (Cyprus), November 10-11, 2023

The aim of the conference was to promote solutions to social and economic crises faced currently by European and Global Communities, due to pandemics, climate change, regional

Dr.George Tsobanoglou, RC26 Vice-President

conflicts, digital economy, and inequalities, along with global challenges. Within this framework, stoic philosophy, social and applied sciences, provide a remedy for such dramatic problems, as they had already provided

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Calls & Events
The AIS International Conference **«Democracy and Society. Challenges, Risks and Opportunities for Contemporary Democracies»** Bologna (Italy), October 10-12, 2024, **p. 2**

V ISA Forum of Sociology Rabat, Morocco July 7-11, 2025 See **Forum updates, p. 14**

Conference **Local Democratic Challenges: Environment, Inequalities and Resilient Cultural Mediation in Fragile / Transitional Communities** Chania (Crete), September. 9-11, 2019, **p. 2**

International Conference **Zenon of Kition, the Legacy of Stoicism in Turbulent Times: Addressing Issues of Sustainability, Globalization, Inclusion and Democracy** Larnaca, (Cyprus), November 10-11, 2023, **p. 2**

Publications
G. Tsompanoglou, A. Kokkinou **Sustaining Communities: Prospects and Challenges, p. 3**

G. Tsompanoglou **Citizen's Participation and Empowerment: Emerging Policies Practices and Trends, p. 3**

during similar periods in the past. Autarchy and Ethics in governing sustainable communities (a key message of Zeno's Philosophy), seem to be a new application towards sustainable development goals, rendering this aspect innovative and culturally resourceful.

RC26 Publication Focus

G. Tsompanoglou, A. Kokkinou

Sustaining Communities: Prospects and Challenges
Nova Science Publishers, 2022

This book focuses on current sociological and socioeconomic issues, including recent developments, techniques, and strategies within the current socioeconomic development spectrum of the 21st century. More specifically, this book presents a discussion of the planning and designing of a modern sustainable socioeconomic system, adequate for modern societies and communities, analyzing both technical and socio-cultural aspects. Systems that are planned and designed without considering these aspects often limit their efficiency or even fail. On this matter, this book fills a gap in socioeconomic literature by exploring and studying main dimensions of the interaction between some of the most important socioeconomic aspects and related factors (both theoretically and empirically).

More info: https://novapublishers.com/shop/sustaining-communities-prospects-and-challenges/

See Also
G. Tsompanoglou

Citizen's Participation and Empowerment: Emerging Policies Practices and Trends
B.R. Publishing Corporation, 2021

More info: https://www.amazon.ca/George-Tsobanoglou/dp/9388789954?language=en_CA

Publications

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ISA RESEARCH COMMITTEE 26 AT THE XXth WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY IN MELBOURNE, 2023
General overview of presentations by RC26 members at the panels of the Congress

Photo by Alvin Balemesa, Unsplash

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL DIMENSION OF GENDER RELATIONS IN TIMES OF CRISIS AND OF RESURGENT AUTHORITARIANISM.
Session Organizer: Flaminia Saccà (Italy), **Chair:** Flaminia Saccà (Italy)

"Working for "Another" Representation of Gender-Based Violence: The Politics of Feminist Movements and Anti-Violence Centres in Contemporary Italy"
(Valentina Raffa, Italy)
Valentina Raffa argues that the feminist movements and anti-violence centers in Italy work to reshape the social understanding of gender-based violence. Traditionally, violence against women was considered socially acceptable because women were portrayed being weaker and having fewer rights than men. In the 1970s, feminist movements framed violence as a political issue, while in the 1980s, the feminist centers created a new culture highlighting the power imbalance between men and women. The author examines the methodology and innovative actions of these groups in deconstructing stereotypes around violence. Interviews and focus groups with activists and center workers are used to identify effective practices in fighting violence and transforming gender relations. By establishing violence as a social reality rather than normal, these groups have played a leading role in Italy in generating more equitable representations of this issue since the late 1980's.

RC26 members at the Congress

"The Journalistic Representation of Gender-Based Violence in Pandemic Times: An Analysis of the Italian Newspapers"
(**Rosalba Belmonte,** Italy)
Rosalba Belmonte analyzes how Italian newspapers portrayed gender-based crimes during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. A previous study found that newspaper coverage often centralizes women in stories of violence while diminishing the perpetrators' responsibility. In addition, such coverage re-victimizes women by implying co-responsibility for the violence suffered. During lockdowns in Italy, domestic violence increased significantly compared to the previous year. This paper examines whether Italian newspapers replicated the sexist stereotypes identified earlier that mitigate perpetrator accountability. In addition, this research reveals how the pandemic may have exacerbated existing issues in media representation of gender-based crimes.

"Marginalized & Stereotyped. The Political Representation of Gender-Based Violence in the 2022 Italian Election Campaign"
(**Luca Massidda,** Italy)
Luca Massidda analyzes how male violence against women (MVAW) was represented in the communication of major Italian candidates during the 2022 election campaign. The paper investigates this topic by analyzing social media posts from 34 campaign protagonists in the four weeks before the vote on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. It aims to understand how these candidates portrayed

MVAW. Of note, the data presented was collected as part of a national research project examining transformations in democracy through opposing populism in political, legal, and social spheres (principal investigator: prof. Carlo Ruzza; local unit coordinator: prof. Flaminia Saccà). In summary, the paper examines the political discussion of MVAW during a major election to provide insight into how this important issue was represented to voters.

"Smart Kids? Children As Protagonists of Smart Societies"
(**Emanuela Susca**, Italy)
Emanuela Susca discusses the role of children in the development of smart societies. While many studies focus on the dangers that new technologies pose to children, the author takes a different sociological approach that emphasizes children's agency. From this perspective, children are not simply passive subjects but may act as active agents of change when it comes to innovation. The article reflects on how cultural reception of new technologies necessarily involves the consideration of the role of childhood. It questions whether children should be viewed only as recipients of increasing smartness or whether they can also play a protagonistic role as well. While special attention is still needed for children, the author argues they have their own ways of influencing and advancing smart societies through their use of digital media and engagement with new technologies.

SOCIAL ECONOMY'S TRANSFRMATIVE POWER, CREATIVE SECTORS, AND THE ART OF LOCAL RESILIENT RECOVERY.
Session Organizer: Georgios Tsobanoglou (Greece)**, Chair:** Nikita Pokrovsky (Russia)

"Poverty and Social Exclusion as a Main Indicator of the EU 2030 Target: Current Situation and Perspectives in EU Member-States"
(**Nikos Sarris**, Greece)
Nikos Sarris examines poverty and social exclusion in EU member states based on the composite indicator AROPE, which is the main measure to track progress on the EU's 2030 target of reducing those at risk of poverty or social exclusion by 15

million. The target is consistent with UN Sustainable Development Goals and aims to establish a strong socially oriented Europe. In 2021, the AROPE indicator was modified to better account for deprivation and the social situation of the working age population. The author analyzes Eurostat data to compare the situation across member states and identify vulnerable groups. Unemployed people and immigrants are at high risk, but surprisingly children and young people are also disproportionately affected, signaling a need for new policies and strict enforcement to meet the 2030 goal. The analysis highlights how even core demographics can fail due to imperfections of European social systems if not properly supported.

"Social Capital Formation Among Third Sector Organizations"
(**Nectarios Oudeniotis**, Greece and **Georgios Tsobanoglou**, Greece)
 The authors discuss measuring social capital within organizations. Social capital involves dimensions like bonding, bridging, and linking relationships as well as trust, norms, and connections. However, defining and analyzing social capital has proved challenging as perspectives have evolved over different levels and contexts. This paper aims to examine evidence of social capital formation specifically among social enterprises and third sector organizations. It explores the relational and cognitive features that drive cooperation between social enterprises. The findings suggest that sharing common values, trust, reciprocity, and trustworthiness support engagement in joint activities among third sector groups. These central aspects of social capital facilitate cooperation among organizations in the sector. While defining social capital remains complex, this research provides a new insight into how it develops through relationships between social enterprises and nonprofitable organizations.

"Impact of Digitalization on Rural Empowerment"
(**Mukesh Ranga,** India and **Neelam Ranga**, India)
The authors discuss the impact of digitalization on rural empowerment in India. Two-thirds of India's population lives in rural areas with varied cultures and languages as well as low incomes and poor infrastructure. Digitalization has helped to reduce barriers between producers and customers, governments and citizens, and teachers and students. It allows rural people to make more informed decisions by providing access to government services, weather information, and agricultural techniques. Digitalization is also saving both time and money for rural populations. While urbanization is increasing, rural areas still account for a major share of consumption. The government is upgrading digital infrastructure in rural regions to better support and connect those living there.

"Dynamics of Cultural Economy in Digital Society: The Info-Communication Creative Industrial Content Sectors in the Era of Artificial Intelligence and Robot"
(**George Gantzias**, Greece)
The authors discuss the impact of cultural economy, digital transactions, artificial intelligence, and robots on info-communication creative industries. The paper notes that 62.1% of global recorded music revenues now come from streaming. While digitization benefits the cultural economy, it also risks exacerbating issues like platform concentration. The industries must consider cultural economy regulations in global cultural markets. The research outlines values related to cultural production, processes, transactions, and public interest/ethics. It introduces a new socio-economic model to manage cultural values in an era of technological change.

TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND WORLD SOCIAL FORUM.
Session Organizers: Erik Lindhult (Sweden), Azril Bacal Roij (Sweden)**, Chair:** Nikita Pokrovsky (Russia)

"Dialogue As a Social Research Orientation and Method within the Framework of Participatory Action-Research"
(**Azril Bacal Roij**, Sweden and **Erik Lindhult**, Sweden)
The authors discuss how a dialogic approach transforms the relationship between researchers and participants in participatory action-research (PAR).

It compares dialogic methods from both Southern traditions like Freire and Fals Borda and Northern traditions such as Lewin and Reason. A dialogic approach aims for equal participation and co-creation of knowledge through interaction. Reality is seen as co-constructed through collaborative learning and action. The authors draw on PAR project experiences to show both the challenges of transforming established paradigms and the potential for empowering the participants through more effective research practices. They offer a model of dialogic research in PAR that combines Southern and Northern approaches. While huge challenges remain in cultural struggles over inequality, PAR experience also demonstrates how dialogic relations may enhance scientific quality by mobilizing reflective learning across participants to enable transformative social change.

"Investigative Co-Production. A Look from the Dialogic Methodology"
(**Luz Montelongo**, Argentina, **Juan Bruno Ferenaz**, Argentina, **Jose Manuel Grima**, Argentina and **Alberto Leonard Bialakowsky**, Argentina)
The authors discuss the investigative co-production methodology. It proposes that knowledge production should involve both scientific paradigms and social/collective intellect through co-creation. Unlike other participatory methods, co-production aims to collectively co-construct knowledge toward social transformation. It also questions epistemological individualism in favor of knowledge as a common good. The goal is to establish reciprocity between experts and others in both the knowledge production and transfer processes. This methodology sees knowledge as linked to social change and validated as a shared human right and resource for creation.

"Is the World Social Forum Dead?"
(**Vera Vratusa,** Serbia)
Vera Vratusa discusses the perspectives of the World Social Forum and whether it should remain solely an open space for discussion or mobilize affiliated social movements for collective action. The author analyzes texts available online about the WSF's perspectives, especially those published after the 2023 WSF in Mexico. Many questions if the WSF is still relevant given it has not convened in person since 2016. However, others argue it continues to serve as a platform to debate strategies to reform global systems promoting inequality, exploitation, and environmental degradation. The author examines perspectives on the WSF's past, present, and future by reviewing internet available at The texts on the past, present, and future perspectives of the World Social Forum. It remains to be seen if the WSF can revitalize itself and play a role in coordinating real-world action among social movements.

INTEGRATIVE AND DISINTEGRATIVE PROCESSES IN EUROPE AND EURASIA: PUBLIC OPINION, STATE POLITICS, AND MEDIA DISCOURSE.
Session Organizers: Nataliya Velikaya (Russia), Flaminia Saccà (Italy)**, Chair:** Nataliya Velikaya (Russia)

"Management Using "Soft Power" on the Example of International Communications"
(**Valentina Shilova**, Russia)
Valentina Shilova discusses how different parties in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict used manipulative communication techniques to influence audiences. The report aims to classify these technologies and examine their impacts through various communication models. It considers different strategic options for manipulating situations from the perspective of achieving the manipulator's goal. The author analyzes the tools used by the conflicting sides to influence both their own audiences and each other using the concept of "information war". Specifically, the spreading of fakes and myths are explored in terms of their dissemination and integration into mass consciousness. Overall, the text provides insights into real-world examples of how soft power can be wielded in international relations through manipulative communications strategies.

Prof. Flaminia Saccà gives a speech at the Congress

"Decolonising Media Discourses during the Information Warfare: An East-Eurasian Perspective of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict from Google News"
(**Camilla Folena**, Italy and **Gea Ducci**, Italy)
The authors examine media discourses around the Russian-Ukrainian conflict from an East Eurasian perspective using Google News data from Italy, Poland, Serbia, Georgia, and Turkey. It applies a post-colonial lens to analyze how Eurocentrism shapes narratives and frames information warfare. Over 2,400 news stories were collected in the first two weeks of the conflict and their headlines and leads were clustered into frames and topics. Western media emerged as more predominant than local national outlets in covering the issue in post-socialist countries. The study also looked at which stories recirculated most on Facebook to get a glimpse of audience behaviors beyond deterministic approaches. Interestingly, the research aims to decolonize understandings of the conflict by presenting viewpoints from Eastern European and Eurasian nations that were once part of the Soviet Union.

"Economic, Diplomatic and Geopolitical Narratives of Russia Ukraine Crisis by Media: A Study of Select Digital Print Media of India and West"
(**Sarvesh Tripathi**, India)
Sarvesh Tripathi discusses how different media have set different narratives regarding the Russian-Ukrainian crisis based on their affiliations and

countries' strategic stances. The paper analyzes the coverage of economic impacts, diplomatic relations, and geopolitical factors by selected Indian and Western media. Major developments, for instance food shortages, NATO sanctions, and weapons procurement for Ukraine have been actively covered. The study aims to conduct a discourse analysis of how Indian and prominent NATO member states media have comparatively framed and positioned the conflict. It also seeks to understand the narratives disseminated by different outlets to inform and shape audience perceptions of the ongoing conflict. Significant events since the beginning of the conflict have been identified and the related reporting and opinions analyzed.

LEGAL AND EDUCATIONAL INSTRUMENTS TO CONTRAST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.
Session Organizers: Rosalba Belmonte (Italy), Michele Negri (Italy)**, Chair:** Rosalba Belmonte (Italy)

Tackling Stereotypes and Prejudices. Educating to Contrast Gender Based Violence
(**Flaminia Saccà**, Italy)
Flaminia Saccà discusses the ongoing problem of violence against women in Europe. One in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence, and 75% of professional women have faced sexual harassment. The Istanbul Convention recognizes violence against women as stemming from historically unequal power relations between the genders. The paper argues that these inequalities must be addressed at both structural and cultural levels to make real improvements. It notes that such imbalances allow violence to not only occur but be accepted as well. The author aims to analyze how the Italian press and courts reproduce stereotypes that put women's rights and access to fair justice at risk. Breaking down harmful stereotypes through cultural and educational means is seen as important for countering gender-based violence. Overall, this research focuses on how entrenched societal inequalities enable violence and the need to challenge normalization at its root.

"Trails & Bias. Stereotypes and Gender Discrimination in the Legal Representation of Male Violence Against Women"
(**Luca Massidda**, Italy)
Luca Massidda states that while Italian law has evolved over the past 10 years since the signing of the Istanbul Convention, social norms can change more slowly. A research project analyzed 283 criminal court sentences to identify recurring gender biases. These biases fell into two main categories, namely role prejudices that frame how victims are represented and frame prejudices that influence how violence is portrayed. The research project coordinated by Professor Flaminia Saccà at the University of Tuscia aimed to examine stereotypes and prejudices found in legal and social representations of gender-based violence. By identifying these biases, the paper seeks to analyze how gender biases are organized in the legal representation of cases dealing with violence against women.

"Italy's New Policies to Tackle Violence Against LGBT+ People: The Beginning of a New Era?"
(**Fabio Mostaccio,** Italy)
Fabio Mostaccio states that Italy's new policies aim to tackle violence against LGBT+ individuals, which could mark the beginning of a new era. Previously, Zan's bill, which would have addressed various forms of gender-based violence, was rejected by the parliament. However, through other means, funding was approved for 37 discrimination centers across Italy and two shelters for victims of violence. As part of the PRIN2021 project examining gender-based violence ten years after the signing of the Istanbul Convention, researchers conducted interviews and observations at a discrimination center in Reggio Calabria and a shelter in Rome. The goal is to analyze these organizations' actions and identify best practices that could inform local and national policies. Interestingly, the left-wing parties who promoted Zan's bill were able to salvage part of it and enable funding for assisting and preventing LGBT+ violence, despite the overall bill being rejected.

"Gender-Based Violence on Instagram between Stereotypes, Prejudices, and Social Innovation. A Visual Analysis of the Imaginary of #Violenzadigenere"
 (**Antonio Tramontana**, Italy)
Antonio Tramontana analyzes images on Instagram containing the hashtag #violenzadigenere, which refers to gender-based violence expressed in Italian. Over 1,200 posts were collected and categorized based on additional hashtags relating to issues like cyberbullying, femicide, revenge porn, and violence against women. Then, the author conducted a qualitative content analysis of the visual elements in the images to understand how symbolic gender roles and stereotypes are socially reproduced on social media. He also examined how social media images portray forms of social innovation in the visual representation of gender violence. Identifying connections between gender-based violence and other forms of violence through the hashtags used was of particular interest. The study aims to provide insight into societal attitudes through analyzing the imaginary, or representations of gender violence on Instagram.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP BETWEEN PANDEMIC AND POST-PANDEMIC TIMES.
Session Organizer: Luca Massidda (Italy)**, Chair:** Luca Massidda (Italy)

"Authoritarianism without Autocracy. Constituent Power in the Age of Covid-19"
(**Andrea Miconi**, Italy)
Andrea Miconi analyzes Italy's and Europe's Covid-19 regulations, focusing on states of emergency and rule of law derogations. The author argues that this represents a new form of authoritarian governance through multiplying decision powers and continuously changing rules, separating law from legal force. To explain emergencies institutionalized as new sovereignty, the paper draws on Schmitt's exception concept and Arendt's totalitarian definition. Interestingly, Western countries saw such new authoritarianism without autocratic leaders or populist discourse. Instead, anti-populist governments in Germany, Austria, France, and technocratic Italy imposed radical rule of law,

derogations, and discipline. This regression to authoritarian governance lacks features usually tied to democratic crises like populism or charismatic leaders, relying more on bureaucratic power. The paper aims to trace this democratic vulnerability's origin through references to Benjamin, Schmitt, Weber, and Arendt on constituent and constituted power dynamics.

"**Political Leaders in Pandemic and Post Pandemic Times: Inclusive Democrats and Resurgent Authoritarians**"
(**Flaminia Saccà,** Italy)
 Flaminia Saccà analyzes how different political leaders have dealt with the Covid-19 pandemic, from how they framed it to representations used. The paper explores how the crisis has polarized leadership models between inclusive democrats and new authoritarians. Polarization has continued in post-pandemic times, now questioning the principles of rule of law and democracy. Leadership styles are examined from framing the pandemic to governing responses. The crisis has highlighted and polarized different power models between those embracing inclusion and democracy, and resurgent authoritarians. The paper notes the pandemic caused a health, economic, and international relations crisis. Governance skills were put under stress and exposed during this time. The concept of authority itself was also challenged by the pandemic and subsequent recovery periods.

SOCIAL-TECHNICAL DYNAMICS, CULTURAL ISSUES AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCES IN SMART CITIES: INFO-COMMUNICATION POLICY AND SOCIETY.
Session Organizer: George Gantzias (Greece),
Chair: George Gantzias (Greece)

"**Worldwide AI Ethics: A Review of 200 Guidelines and Recommendations for AI Governance**"
(**James Santos**, Brazil and **Carolina Carvalho**, Brazil)
The authors review 200 guidelines for developing AI. The authors created a tool to better analyze and visualize the content and nature of these documents.

Their analysis found both commonalities and divergences in the recommended standards. Most stakeholders currently have little visibility into how AI systems that affect them are regulated. The authors argue more transparency is needed from the deregulated AI industry. Stronger government oversight alone will not create ethical AI, as an industry-wide culture change is required to develop AI that benefits humanity. Worldwide AI Ethics aims to facilitate both by surveying the AI governance landscape.

"**Sustainable Development: Looking at the Culture and Communication of the Past as a Way to the Future of Sustainability in Greece**"
(**Georgios Tsobanoglou**, Greece and **Charalambos Louca**, Cyprus)
The authors discuss how Greece can look to its past for guidance on sustainable development and self-sufficiency. A century after over 1.3 million Greek refugees were settled after being displaced from Anatolia, the socio-political system established under A. Papanastasiou successfully integrated the refugees and nearly tripled wheat production through agricultural cooperatives. However, Greece currently imports 90% of its cereal needs. The article argues Greece should rediscover the community-based knowledge and agro-ecological methods of the 1920s, when the cooperatives supported by the government applied novel farming techniques and saved the country from hunger. Of particular interest is how Papanastasiou's sociological management approach and the specialists he enlisted, such as agronomist Papadakis, established a unique system that boosted agricultural output during a difficult time in Greece's history.

"**The Effect of the Pandemic on European Narratives on Smart Cities and Surveillance**"
(**Mikolaj Biesaga**m Poland, **Anna Domaradzka**, Poland, **Magdalena Roszczynska-Kurasinska**, Poland, **Szymon Talaga**, Poland and **Andrzej Nowak**, Poland).
The authors analyze how European smart city narratives evolved during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors examined 184 articles from five journals between 2017-2021 discussing smart city solutions. They identified four dominant narratives: regulating AI and facial recognition, using technology to

address climate change and COVID, contact tracing apps, and the role of 5G. While the narratives increasingly highlighted technology's importance in public health and climate responses, privacy concerns featured prominently in two areas. The analysis found that competitiveness in global tech was a primary rationale for surveillance technologies, rather than increasing well-being or policy transparency. Overall, the pandemic impacted the narratives by increasing acceptance of surveillance for public benefit reasons.

"Right to the Smart City"
(**Anna Domaradzka**, Poland, **Anna Wnuk**, Poland, **Tomasz Oleksy**, Poland, **Mateusz Trochymiak,** Poland)

The authors analyze how new technologies can impact citizens' quality of life and ability to exercise their right to the city. It studies participation technologies and algorithms used in city management globally. The social analysis looks at individual reactions to technologies like VR and AI in urban planning and social relations. Based on this, the authors quantitatively defined factors representing different aspects of the right to the city. Residents' attitudes toward AI algorithms in governance were also studied. The goal is to link the smart city concept with the right of the city to create a framework for comprehensively studying modern urban areas. Notably, the paper aims to better understand unintended consequences of fast-paced tech implementation on democratic freedoms and life quality.

"Understanding Smart Societies: The Role of Sociological Theory"
(**Massimiliano Ruzzeddu**, Italy)

Massimiliano Ruzzeddu discusses the role of sociological theory in understanding smart societies. The paper argues that sociological analysis can help describe and manage the changes brought about by new technologies. This analysis occurs at three levels: examining the cultural models that influence innovation reception, identifying new social needs created by tech progress, and informing policymaking to effectively handle advantages and issues. The paper relies on Elias's work on multilevel analysis to show how ICTs impact various levels of social life regarding production, education, and

management strategies. It also discusses Etzkowitz's Triple Helix model of university-industry-government relationships as a framework for policymakers to manage tech's social impact through innovation. The article proposes that sociological perspectives provide useful tools for comprehending how new technologies reshape societies and determining policies to guide associated transformations.

LIFE AFTER AND BEYOND THE CITY: CHALLENGING ALTERNATIVES TO DISTURBING URBANIZATION. Session Organizer: Nikita Pokrovsky (Russia), Chair: Georgios Tsobanoglou (Greece)

"Counter-Urbanization and Centrifugal Migration in the Age of Social Turbulence"
(**Nikita Pokrovsky**, Russia and **Uliana Nikolaeva**, Russia)

The authors discuss counter-urbanization and centrifugal migration in times of social upheaval. The COVID-19 pandemic and the military conflict in Eastern Europe in 2022 have transformed how non-urban areas are used, with their ecological and sparsely populated nature now seen as safe havens for mental recovery. In recent years, the flow of people migrating outward from cities has increased. The ability to work remotely online allows the relocatees to maintain their careers while relocating. The paper examines the theoretical aspects of centrifugal migration and envisions the future role of megacities with more people choosing to live beyond cities. It also analyzes applied sociological research data on these trends. Interestingly, areas previously experiencing deep economic depression are now attracting city dwellers seeking safety and nature during times of crisis. In summary, the paper explores how periods of turmoil are reshaping migration patterns away from large urban centers.

"Disturbing Urbanization: Pro Et Contra of Technical Authoritarianism"
(**Tatiana Sidorina**, Russia)

Tatiana Sidorina discusses the dominance of technology in society throughout the 20th century. The author argues that unrestrained social and

economic growth as well as artificial control of some elements over others have led to social crises. The author refers to the total technologization of nature and society as an artificial model that has transformed natural and social processes. However, abandoning technology altogether is not a solution to the problems it created. Instead, the author advocates departing from cities not as rejecting humanity's achievements but as relinquishing the technical authoritarianism that has dominated civilization. In conclusion, Sidorina critiques excessive technical control while still valuing technology's benefits if implemented responsibly.

"**Human Capital and Lifestyle of the Rural Population of the Central Federal District of Russia: Projections of the Past, Present, and Future**"
(**Valentina Shilova**, Russia, **Kirill Bikov**, Russia)
The authors examine the dynamics of human capital for rural residents in the Yaroslavl region through interviews and surveys. The paper identifies major problems such as the lack of jobs, poor state of healthcare services, and issues with infrastructure, for instance roads. However, it also notes positives such as a clean environment, schools, and developing digital technologies. The authors analyze how lifestyle and quality of life are affected by the examined factors for rural people. While there are currently issues with low demographics, the report concludes that rural areas will continue to decline without government policies to develop and preserve human capital. . It highlights the need for state intervention to address challenges and promote development if rural communities are to be sustained in the future.

"**The Formation of Localities in the Practices of Deurbanization Mobility: Analysis of Sociocultural Transformations of Rural Areas Cases 2020 – 2022**"
(**Alena Makshanchikova**, Russia)
Alena Makshanchikova analyzes socio-cultural transformations in rural areas from 2020 to 2022 due to de-urbanization trends. The COVID-19 pandemic reduced the attractiveness of factors that draw people to megacities, and increased atypical migration patterns such as moving to out-of-town areas. Out-of-town residencies started combining recreational,

quarantine, and work functions, indicating future settlement clusters of urban relocatees (former urban dwellers). The paper aims to understand locality production as an alternative to conceptualizing deurbanization mobility, focusing on urban-to-rural moves, settlers' work, and their social interactions. It examines how the meanings of urban life are transferred to rural spaces and shape a new lifestyle. Socio-cultural changes impact the material environment and ideologically redefine life for immigrants and locals. The emergence of new rural communities shows how crises can reshape migration and settlement long-term.

Photo by John Torcasio, Unsplash

"**Reverse Migration in Pandemic Crisis: Russia's out-of-town Spaces as an Adaptation Resource**"
(**Egor Nikishin**, Russia, **Alena Makshanchikova,** Russia)
The authors state that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted migration patterns in Russia, reducing factors attracting people to large cities. This led to an increase in atypical migration as citizens fled to rural areas in large numbers in a process termed "crisis deurbanization." The paper examines this phenomenon occurring in Russia, where urbanization is incomplete and post-urbanization has already begun. With the help of the interviews, the authors found that Russians left cities like Moscow, Vladimir, Kostroma, Vologda, and Nizhny Novgorod during March-April 2020 for country houses for short, medium, and long periods. These second homes now fully combine recreational, quarantine, and work functions, allowing for long-term residence even after the crisis ended. This pattern indicates that such temporary settlement clusters of urban migrants may evolve into

permanent communities. The paper suggests Russia's rural areas took on an adaptive role during the pandemic, providing an escape for urban residents and workspace to allow for continued employment and productivity outside of cities.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES, POPULISM AND CRISIS IN THE GLOBAL WORLD.
Session Organizer: Lorenzo Viviani (Italy), **Chair:** Lorenzo Viviani (Italy)

"The Narrative Style in Politics or Linking Conservatism and Conspiracy Theory"
(**Felix Schilk**, Germany)
Felix Schilk examines the links between conservatism and conspiracy theories through the lens of crisis narratives. Both ideologies emerged in response to the French Revolution and view modern societies in terms of disintegration and decline. Rather than being based on values, their frameworks are typically narrative in nature. The author argues that crisis is a post-hoc political label rather than descriptive, and that such narratives serve to construct scapegoats and rally political support. The paper analyzes conspiracy theories like the "great replacement" and "great reset" using the sociology of knowledge approach to discourse. It identifies three common crisis narratives, i.e., diremption, decay, and apocalypticism. Finally, the author contends that perceiving conservatism and conspiracy theories as interrelated crisis narratives provides insights into how populism, cultural criticism, and identity politics shape most political ideologies.

"The Societal Production of Insecurity"
(**Gregor Bongaerts**, Germany)
Gregor Bongaerts discusses how conspiracy theories arise from feelings of widespread insecurity in complex modern societies. The author argues that insecurity is produced by the differing logics of autonomous social fields such as politics and science. During the COVID-19 pandemic and crisis, it was clear how the media spread the discrepancies between these fields, fueling public feelings of uncertainty. Mass and social media in particular feed and shape the public sphere. When people receive information selectively exaggerated by the media's logic, it creates a reception of insecurity. The author aims to illuminate the relationships between differentiated fields of production, the field of consumption, and the role of social media between them. This is done through a combination of theories about differentiated fields with a social constructivist sociology of knowledge.

"Environmentalism and Ecologism. Next New Ideologies?"
(**Andrea Millefiorini**, Italy)
Andrea Millefiorini discusses the potential for environmentalism and ecologism to become new ideologies. Younger generations seem more engaged in political and civic efforts to protect the planet compared to past decades. Emerging green movements bring not only a message of environmental respect, but also a philosophy of life. This contrasts earlier ecological activism of the 1980s-90s which focused narrowly on environmental issues. The paper aims to investigate whether values of these new environmentalists and ecologists can be structured into a real ideology. The paper seeks to answer if environmentalism and ecologism could become the next new ideologies owing to the growing interest in ideologies among researchers. Of particular note, the text suggests younger people may be most receptive to forming a strong, recognizable green ideology focused on saving the planet through various forms of participation distinct from past decades.

"Studying Populism as a Knowledge Phenomenon: Theory and Practice"
(**Michal Nawrocki**, Poland)
Michal Nawrocki proposes a theoretical framework for studying populism as an epistemic phenomenon. The author conceptualizes populism as a set of epistemic interventions, i.e., discursive, and non-discursive practices that position "the people" as a political subject and give rise to a populist epistemic community. This community is characterized by distinctive discursive styles, communication patterns, and socio-psychological processes that shape a particular worldview. The framework goes beyond existing approaches by emphasizing the construction of alternative knowledge systems. Additionally, the author discusses how this theory has been applied through interviews and focus

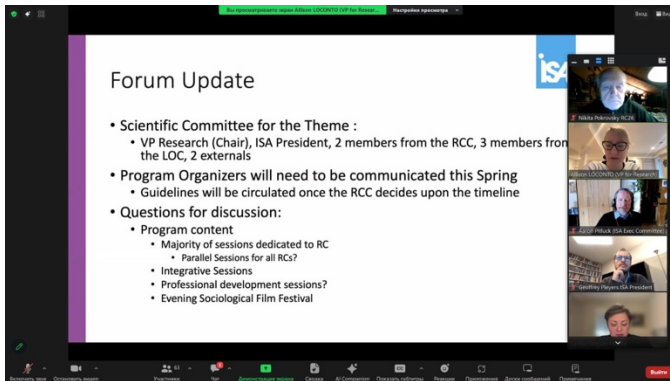groups in Poland to gain insights into populist epistemology in practice.

More info:
https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/wc2023/meetingapp.cgi/Symposium/749

LATEST NEWS FROM THE ISA:

V ISA FORUM OF SOCIOLOGY UPDATES (RABAT, MOROCCO JULY 7-11, 2025):
ISA clarifies the terms of the Rabat World Forum of Sociology
Materials from the ISA RCs meeting on January 15, 2024

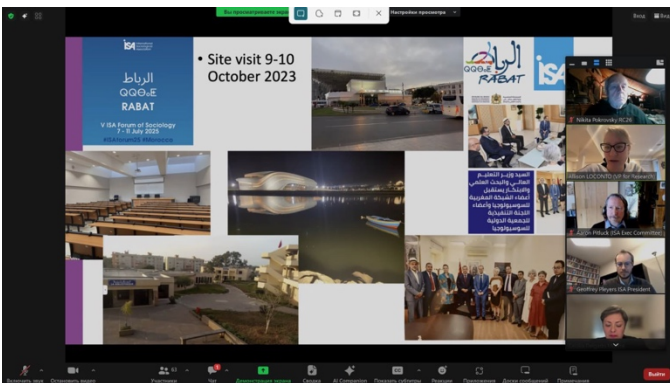**Scientific Committee for the Theme will include:**
- VP Research (Chair)
- ISA President
- 2 members from the RCC
- 3 members from the LOC
- 2 externals

Program Organizers will need to be communicated Spring 2024
Guidelines will be circulated once the RCC decides upon the timeline

Questions for discussion
• Majority of sessions dedicated to RC
• Parallel Sessions for all RCs (*work in progress*)
• Integrative Sessions
• Professional development sessions (*work in progress*)
• Evening Sociological Film Festival

CALL FOR COOPERATION:

The Newsletter Editorial Board invites all RC26 members to contribute to the Newsletter

WE ASK YOU TO SHARE WITH OUR READERS:

- News in the field of applied and theoretical sociology
- Upcoming public lectures and conferences
- New courses and university life events of interest
- Ideas about RC26 thematic and research plans

The next issue of **RC26 Newsletter** will be published in August 2024

RC26 members can send their newsletter proposals (news, publications, events, etc.) to the address
arsbuchatskiy@yandex.ru