



INTERSECTIONS 2024

The International Conference of the Romanian Sociologists Society

Panel 1

Social networks: antecedents and consequences

Marian-Gabriel Hâncean

University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania

Description

We invite researchers from diverse countries, backgrounds, and disciplines who are interested in theoretical, empirical, and methodological work revolving around the quantitative or qualitative study of social networks. We welcome presentations based on studies at various stages of progress, including early stage, ongoing, or completed. This panel focuses on both the origins (antecedents) and the impacts (consequences) of social networks. Specifically, we are interested in the factors or generative conditions that lead to the formation of network structures (e.g., cultural factors, economic conditions, individual characteristics, historical context, etc.). Simultaneously, we are also interested in the effects or outcomes that result from the existence and dynamics of network structures (e.g., behavior change, information diffusion, contagion, economic impact, political mobilization, health outcomes). In the context of this panel, we give particular attention to oral presentations that highlight statistical models disentangling social selection, social influence, and social context. Studying both the antecedents and consequences of social networks helps us understand not only why and how social networks form but also their potential effects on society and individuals.



Panel 2

A new austerity redux? The EU's social and economic governance beyond the Covid-19 pandemic

Ionuț Marian Anghel¹, Sebastian Țoc^{2,1}

¹Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania.

²National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania

Description

Since the beginning of 2020, compounded and overlapping crises (the Covid-19 pandemic, spiking prices for energy, fuels and food) have plagued much of the world's nation-states. These "fast-burning crises" (Seabrooke & Tsingou 2019) have led to an unprecedented mobilization from inter-governmental organizations (WB, IMF, UN) and national governments to mitigate the social, economic, and public health consequences that resulted from these crises. The policy solutions adopted since early 2020 have far exceeded the neoliberal template in managing economic crises and recessions (as the Great Recession) through more direct government intervention in subsidizing wages and saving jobs, cushion the effects of rising energy prices. Some authors have argued that the political decisions and policies adopted during these last years reflected a return to a form of Keynesianism 2.0. (Ban 2020), a "Hamiltonian moment" (Calhoun 2020) through a pan-EU debt "mutualization" or a move away from austerity-conditionality towards an investment-led growth strategy (Corti and Vesan 2023). But with the general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact deactivated at the end of 2023, fiscal contractions are expected to take place in the public budgets of EU member states. The panel welcomes presentations (but not limited to) on the changing tools and forms in governing EU (and national) social policies, potential divides across EU's North-South, East-West in social policy investments, inequality and uneven development, social policies and welfare regimes in Europe's periphery, the social cost of austerity programs, declining trust in the EU.



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Panel 3

Unequal Realities: Exploring Enduring and Changing Forms of Social Stratification

Cosima Rughiniș

University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania

Description

This panel explores the persistence and change of social inequalities in contemporary society. We aim to examine how traditional forms of inequality endure while also adapting to new social contexts and technologies. We invite contributions that investigate various aspects of social inequality, from the reproduction of gender status inequalities to the reciprocal shaping of digital technologies and social stratification. The panel seeks to address education's dual role in both mitigating and reproducing social class disparities, as well as racial and ethnic inequalities in areas such as health outcomes and healthcare access. We're interested in research that applies an intersectional lens to understand the compounding effects of multiple forms of disadvantage.

The discussion will also include economic inequalities and their impact on social mobility, environmental justice issues, and the unequal distribution of environmental risks. We also welcome studies on spatial inequalities in urban and rural contexts, age-based inequalities and intergenerational dynamics, and the relationship between global inequalities and their local manifestations.

The panel encourages research employing diverse theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches to capture the complexity of inequality in today's world. We're particularly interested in studies that reveal both the persistence of long-standing inequalities and the emergence of new forms of social stratification. By examining these intersecting forms of inequality, we hope to develop a deeper understanding of how societal structures and social flows interact to shape patterns of advantage and disadvantage in our rapidly changing world.



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Panel 4

Intersecting Structures and Flows in Health: Exploring Multiplexity in Medical Sociology

Darie Cristea, Simona-Nicoleta Vulpe

Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania

Description

This panel aims to explore the concept of multiplexity within medical sociology. We seek to examine how various social structures and dynamic processes interact to shape health outcomes, healthcare systems, and societal responses to medical challenges. The panel will investigate the complex interplay between institutional frameworks, social networks, and individual experiences in the realm of health and illness. We'll consider how the organization of medical institutions intersects with patient experiences, exploring the ways in which structural factors influence personal health journeys. This approach allows us to examine both the enduring social structures that shape health outcomes and the fluid, often unpredictable flows of information, resources, and social support that impact health behaviors and decisions.

Drawing on diverse theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, we aim to demonstrate how a multiplex sociological lens can provide nuanced insights into contemporary health issues. Potential topics may include the social dynamics of health behaviors, the evolving nature of medical knowledge and authority, and the impact of global health crises on local communities. By connecting micro-level analyses of individual health experiences with macro-level examinations of healthcare systems and societal norms, we hope to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of health and illness in today's interconnected world.

This panel invites papers that embrace the spirit of multiplexity, offering innovative approaches to studying the intersections of health, society, and institutions. We encourage submissions that bridge different sociological traditions and methodologies, reflecting the conference's call for integrated and multifaceted approaches to social research.



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Panel 5

Various forms of precarious work and risks associated

Ana Maria Preoteasa

Research Institute for Quality of Life, Bucharest, Romania

Description

The way precarious employment is experienced has changed as a result of recent labor market changes and the subsequent crises caused by the war, the pandemic, or the economy. Precarious occupations are typically associated with those with lower levels of education and qualification (Vosko 2006, Vallas 2015). Nonetheless, many studies demonstrate that poor income levels, insecurity, and insecurity can all be signs of job instability (Walker, & Marti, 2010). Certain occupational groups—agricultural laborers, independent contractors, and unskilled individuals—are more insecure than others. Recent research, however, indicates that poor income and a high level of insecurity can affect even highly qualified individuals. For example, postdoctoral fellows, PhD candidates, and members of the academic community all fit this description as well. On the other hand, the platform work, highly appreciated for flexibility, could be a source of insecurity and uncertainty.

This section receives presentations regarding precarious work in different circumstances and the associated risks. Interdisciplinary papers based on qualitative or quantitative research are welcome.



Panel 6

Studying children's and youths' digital lives: from theory to policy through data

Anca Velicu¹, Gyöngyvér Erika Tokes², Ileana Rotaru³

¹Institute of Sociology, Bucharest, Romania.

²Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

³Faculty of Political Science, Philosophy and Communication, West University, Timișoara, Romania

Description

One of the main challenges faced by society as a whole, and each of us as individuals, since the widespread development of digital technologies (DTs) is determining how to situate children and youth in the new digital landscape. Is there, as is sometimes claimed, a need to restrain or even ban children's access to some DTs (e.g., social media platforms or AI-based technologies) to protect children from DTs' potential negative effects? Or is there an urgency to provide children and youth with access to DTs and improve their digital competences to help them benefit from the potential opportunities of DTs? Adding to this dilemma, the right to participate should also be considered in relation to DTs from a children's rights perspective.

Both at the societal level – for informed policies and regulations – and at an individual level – for parents, educators, and youths themselves to make the best decisions in their lives – there is a quest for reliable and accurate data (i.e., rooted in strong and appropriate theoretical and methodological frameworks) that describes and explains children's and youth's digital lives.

We invite presentations for this panel that factually describe various aspects of children's and youths' digital lives. This could refer to digital practices (from social media to educational use), skills, online risks, digital well-being, social mediation (parents, educators, peers), and other possible issues. Additionally, we seek presentations that discuss theoretical, ethical, and methodological aspects of researching children's and youths' digital lives as well as how research output translates into policy regulations.



Panel 7

Social Policy Responses to Inequity and Exclusion: Bridging Gaps for Inclusive Development

Alexandra Hosszu

University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania

Description

Disparities between social groups are widening, and minority groups continue to face exclusion in various aspects of their social lives, including access to healthcare, education, employment, and housing, while digital divides are growing deeper (FRA, 2024). Additionally, hate speech and intolerance towards minorities persist at both national and European levels (European Commission, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic added new layers of exclusion (UNESCO, 2020) and it has increased the inequities between social groups (ERGO Network, 2020). Governments face challenges in adapting to new realities and creating inclusive public policies that promote social welfare. Meanwhile, some segments of the general population advocate for fewer social policies for minority groups and increased social protection for advantaged groups.

The widening gap in social disparities calls for urgent and innovative solutions. There is a pressing need to understand the structural factors contributing to these inequalities and to develop comprehensive strategies that address both immediate and long-term challenges. This involves reassessing the roles of various societal actors, including governments, civil society, and the private sector, in fostering an inclusive environment

This panel aims to address key questions, including: What are the most effective ways to design and implement policies that are both inclusive and equitable? How can civil society better contribute to inclusive development, ensuring that the voices of marginalized groups are heard? What strategies can be implemented to reduce social inequalities? What role can technology play in promoting social inclusion, and how can digital divides be effectively addressed?



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Panel 8

Intersectionalities between refuge and additional sources of vulnerability

Alexandra Deliu, Bogdan Voicu

Research Institute for Quality of Life, Bucharest, Romania

Description

Refuge is harmful, induces uncertainty, and puts the refugees in a risky situation. All the asylum and reception procedures are meant at least partly to ease such harm, despite being not always the best one (references). Disability, domestic violence, gender, for example, also puts individuals in risky situations, that contemporary societies aim to ease (reference). Interaction between the two, that is being both refugee and belonging to other vulnerable social categories is likely to bring a multiple uncertainty into one's life. This panel searches to fill a gap of knowledge in the field, addressing the situation of refugees in multiple contexts of vulnerability/marginality. Multiple perspectives are invited to be present into the panel: the issue can be approached from the institutional or policy point of view, seen through the lenses of refugees themselves, from the perspective of service provider, viewed as the carers views it. The story that the panel tells is placed in contemporaneity, and all flows of refugees are welcome to be illustrated by the selected papers.



Panel 9

AI ideologies and their socio-ethical implications: A critical examination of post-ChatGPT developments and their impact on youth

Marina Defta

University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania

Description

The rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) technology, particularly following the release of ChatGPT by OpenAI, have catalysed a competitive race among startups and established corporations, fundamentally reshaping the AI landscape. This presentation aims to critically examine the ideological underpinnings of these developments and their social implications, with a specific focus on ethical dilemmas for youth arising from the unregulated use of AI. The research will employ case studies and content analysis as primary methodologies to investigate these phenomena.

Drawing on established theories regarding the ethical debates on digital technologies, such as Winner's theory of technological politics and Castells' concept of the network society, we analyse how differing AI ideologies — with business models ranging from open-source to proprietary, profit-driven frameworks and individuals adhering to Techno-optimism, AI minimalism, Digital Dystopia or Pragmatic Utilitarianism — align to broader cultural, economic, political, and geopolitical dynamics. We argue that the competitive race in AI innovation is not an isolated phenomenon but is deeply interconnected with global power structures and economic strategies, reflecting tensions between technological democratization and corporate control.

A significant aspect of the analysis will focus on the impact of AI on youth, who are particularly susceptible to the ingestion of unchecked and potentially harmful content facilitated by these technologies. The presentation will explore if and how AI technologies exacerbate the propensity of young individuals to challenge traditional belief systems, thereby contributing to shifts in cultural and social norms.



Panel 10

Methodological Paradigms in Education and their Design Models

Rodica Ciopasiu

University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania

Description

The rapid and concise changes of the new era in Education, through digitalisation and globalization, challenge the way we live, learn, work in many aspects of the society and require immediate addressability.

When we are looking at the amount of the research it has been done in the last decade and the solutions to the social problems, at first we realize how hard it is to let go of the inactual effective paradigms and to adopt or construct new ones. As the approach in modern days falls on individuals and communities rather than producing fundamental changes, it is expected that versatility and flexibility are at rank.

In modernity theories the research lenses are focused on factors and relationships in the analyzing models structures.

In Education therefore we are ought to reduce the existential disadvantages and discrepancies that the pupils and students face and for this we need to look at a glance in the historical changes and the problems that arose, in a practical manner, more pragmatic even in the regard of the PISA tests and the difunctional literacy effectiveness. This interdisciplinary study in a specific theoretical field requires a model or a perspective. Social, emotional, psychological and physical elements in relation to the learning process are addressed in this complex process of education of which quality is essential to thrive.

Panel for proposals and research oriented on the quality and wellbeing of the students, the class structures and functionality relations in Education as for individuals and communities.



Panel 11

Materializing temporality: Understanding the past, present, and future

Marian Preda, Stefania Matei

Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania

Description

Various concepts of past, present and future are made tangible and concrete in the physical world. This process involves translating the abstract, intangible nature of time into structures that can be perceived and experienced.

In general, the past, present, and future are socially constructed as separated temporal structures. The temporality of the past is shaped through commemorative events and national holidays that reinforce collective memory. The temporality of the present is materialized through clocks and calendars that provide a constant, visual representation of time passage, creating a sense of continuous, always-available time. The temporality of the future is structured through governmental policies that aim to shape, enable, and modify issues of responsibility and sustainability.

However, there are many social settings that challenge the notions of past, present, and future as separated realms, suggesting a more interconnected reality of time. For example, buildings, urban spaces and various infrastructural elements are not only designed to materialize cultural memory and historical time, but also to accommodate the temporal flow of daily life in relation to imagined future scenarios. Moreover, multiple temporalities are represented and manipulated within literary and artistic works, thus becoming vehicles through which temporal concepts are deconstructed, and reimagined.

This panel invites researchers from various scientific fields to reflect on how notions of past, present and future can be used to understand social practices, cultural meanings and institutional developments. Contributions could offer alternative perspectives to dominant discourses by discussing time-bound tactics of resistance, subversion and creative appropriation.



Panel 12

The multistability of digital technologies and artificial intelligence

Stefania Matei

Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania

Description

This panel examines the impact of digital technologies on social organization by starting from the assumption that digital technologies are inherently multistable: digital technologies have the capacity to be used and interpreted in multiple, often divergent ways depending on how they are designed, implemented, and interacted with by users. Moreover, the impact of a particular digital technology is not static; it evolves and transforms over time. The same digital technology can have vastly different effects at various points in history, shaped by the socio-economic, cultural, and political contexts in which it is embedded.

In a process of rapid change and constantly evolving technological systems, this panel places a core emphasis on artificial intelligence and consider contributions that delve into its transformative potential. Accordingly, the panel also aims to explore the role of artificial intelligence in reshaping industries, influencing public policy, and changing cultural practices, while addressing concerns such as privacy, cognitive bias, and informational overload. As artificial intelligence becomes more autonomous and capable of performing tasks traditionally associated with human intelligence, it prompts ontological reflections on the nature of human identity and existence, which makes us reconsider what it means to be human in an age of intelligent machines.

The panel encourages contributions that examine both the opportunities and challenges presented by contemporary technological shifts. As digital technologies and artificial intelligence continue to evolve, recognizing and embracing their multistable nature will be key to harnessing their full potential while addressing the complexities they introduce into society.



Panel 13

Embracing Multiplexity in the Future of Work and Organizations

Horia Moașă, Carmen Buzea

Transilvania University of Brașov, Brașov, Romania

Description

The future of work is characterized by increasing multiplexity - where multiple, interconnected factors shape organizational dynamics and employee experiences. We invite scholars and practitioners to contribute to the exploration of this concept of multiplexity within organization studies. This panel aims to address the complex interplay of global, technological, and socio-economic forces redefining work and organizational structures.

Key Themes could include but are not limited to:

1. **Globalization and Production Cycles:** How have faster product cycles and the globalization of production reshaped organizational strategies and structures?
2. **Technological Advancements and Employment:** With the rise of automation and data management, what are the impacts on job tasks, employment levels, and job creation?
3. **Service Sector Expansion:** The continuous growth of the service sector demands new organizational frameworks.
4. **Diverse and Aging Workforce:** The diversity of the labor force and the aging population present unique challenges and opportunities.
5. **Worker Power and Income Inequality:** The weakening of worker power and rising income inequality pose significant questions for organizational ethics and sustainability.
6. **Work-Life Interdependencies:** Greater flexibility and control over work schedules are reshaping the traditional boundaries between work and family life.
7. **Non-Standard Work Arrangements:** The increase in gig work, freelance contracts, and other non-standard work arrangements challenges conventional organizational practices.
8. **Educational Attainment and Skills:** As the workforce becomes more educated and skilled, how are organizations adapting to leverage this potential?

We welcome empirical, theoretical, and case study contributions that provide innovative insights into the multiplexity of the future of work and organizations.

Join us in this critical discussion to shape the future of organizational studies and contribute to the understanding of how multiplexity—through interconnected global, technological, and socio-economic factors—is transforming the world of work.