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Post-pandemic public spending in the European Union' member states. A "Hamiltonian" moment or an austerity redux?

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Description

Since early 2020, the overlapping crises (Covid-19 pandemic, spiking energy prices and the Russian invasion in Ukraine) has ushered the world into an economic crisis for the second time in little more than a decade. There is burgeoning literature that sought to explain the differences between the government responses from the Great Recession (2008-2010) and those implemented since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. While both crises implied a pro-active state, the policy solutions adopted since 2020 have far exceeded the neoliberal template in managing economic crises and recessions (as was the case with the GR). Some authors argued that the political decisions and policies adopted in the EU during the last years reflected a return to a form of Keynesianism 2.0. (Ban 2020), a paradigm shift from the austerity economics of the 2010s to the emergence of demand-driven economics of the 2020s (Stavis-Gridneff 2022), a "Hamiltonian moment" (Calhoun2020; Issing 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 paper uses the World Economic Outlook Database and Country Specific Recommendations from the European Semester to interrogate the extent to which EU MS are on the verge towards a paradigm shift from austerity (budget cuts, commodification/privatization of public services), to a social investment-oriented policy.



Migration of Romanian Physicians to EU Countries - Regulations as Pull Factor

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Description

Despite graduating a significant number of doctors and nurses, Romania grapples with a shortage of healthcare professionals due to widespread outward migration. This article examines this paradox, drawing on the 2021 European Commission State of Health in the EU: Romania Country Profile. While the number of graduates increased in the past decade, the medical workforce remains below EU averages (3.2 doctors and 7.5 nurses per 1,000 inhabitants compared to 3.9 and 8.4, respectively). Romania ranked fifth in generating medical graduates (4,967) and third in nursing graduates (17,549) within the EU in 2019. However, migration significantly reduces the domestic healthcare workforce, influencing access to care and quality of life. This paradoxical situation underscores the challenge—while the education system contributes significantly to the healthcare workforce, migration diminishes the domestic pool, influencing healthcare accessibility and citizens' quality of life. This analysis explores the factors driving migration and potential solutions to retain medical professionals within Romania.

Key words: medical professional migration, brain drain, medical education, healthcare, Romania, European Union.



Significant Intersections on the Path to Become a Teacher: Role Models on the Anticipatory Socialisation Process

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Description

Becoming a teacher is a multifaceted process, deeply influenced by anticipatory socialisation. This study explores the experiences and perceptions of pre-service teachers as they navigate their journey towards professional identity development. Anticipatory socialisation, defined as the process through which individuals acquire the values, attitudes, and behaviours expected in their future roles, plays a crucial role in shaping the professional outlook of aspiring educators.

This research examines the factors contributing to the anticipatory socialisation of pre-service teachers through a qualitative design. It uses specific elements of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and follows the steps of grounded theory methodology to analyse 300 semistructured autobiographical essays of teacher candidates enrolled in the final year of the teacher training program at the West University of Timisoara, Romania. Key focus areas include the influence of prior educational experiences, teacher role models, and the value patterns of primary socialisation.

The study highlights the importance of family education in constructing a positive image of a teaching career and the significant influence of former teachers on shaping professional identity. Findings reveal that early exposure to teaching environments, positive role models, and supportive educational frameworks significantly impact the development of teaching competencies and professional identity.



Manifestations of inequality in Romania

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Description

This paper analyzes the inequality of opportunity and outcomes in Romania due to the development model configured at the end of the 1990s. Reducing social inequalities between and within countries is one of the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with national states being encouraged to adopt public policies that promote social cohesion. Among the targets are policies that should support issues such as raising the incomes of the poorest 40% of citizens above the national average; promoting economic, social, and political inclusion independent of individuals' socio-economic characteristics; ensuring equality of opportunity and reducing inequality of outcomes; adopting policies on taxation and social protection, as well as regulating global financial markets to reduce disparities. However, achieving these objectives has been difficult in the context of the mainstreamization of the neoliberal development model since the 1980s, which has pushed states toward privatization and deregulation. The result was a systematic deficit in social protection for disadvantaged groups, social spending on families and children, demographic imbalances, and the precariousness of public education, health, and care services.

The presentation will focus on critically discussing the inequalities in Romania and the low impact of redistributive policies on reducing them. I will also discuss the differences in opportunities between social groups and the cost of inequality: the impact on individuals—lower chances of social mobility; the impact on the economy—lower possibilities to sustain development; and the impact on democracy by generating distrust in institutions and social discontent.



Intersectional difficulties experienced by people over 50 years of age before and after pandemic in Romania

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Description

Introduction: For older people, having more difficulties to deal with at the same time represents an important burden and special assistance is needed. The intertwining of difficulties, if documented, means that a person needs a tailored attention that considers intersectionality as a framework, in relation to pervasive connected issues in terms of health, economic and, more recently, digital aspects.

Methods: Using available data on people over 50 years of age from Romania in the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe, waves 8 (2019/2020) and 9 (2021/2022), I am looking to how age and gender are relevant for different health, economic and digital outcomes.

Results: Three quarters of the people over 50 years of age are overweight or obese and 4 in 10 respondents reported depression and sleep issues both before and after pandemic. Women over 75 years of age are more likely to have two or more chronic diseases (65%) than men with a similar age (52%). 2 out of 3 respondents are not involved in physical or social activities, the percentage after pandemic being slightly higher. 58% of the men over 75 years declared to have economic difficulties, whereas for women at a similar age group the percentage is higher, 67%. Usage of internet varies across gender and age groups before and after pandemic but reaches to 1 in 10 older people over 75 years of age after pandemic.

Discussion: An intersectional perspective allows practitioners to have an inclusive perspective in which specific difficulties are intertwined simultaneously.



Book presentation: Mothers, Families or Children? Family Policy in Poland, Hungary and Romania, 1945-2020. By Tomasz Ingot, Dorottya Szikra, Cristina Rat (Pittsburgh University Press, October 2022, 470 pages)

Cristina Rat

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Description

Our book investigates continuities and changes in family policies in Poland, Hungary and Romania between 1945 and 2020, and explores the evolution of institutions, ideas, and policy actors. We identify three distinct “orientations” of family policies – mother-orientation in Poland, family-orientation in Hungary, and child-orientation in Romania. We define “orientation” as a historically embedded, yet contested ideational space that lays the focus of discussions and reforms on either mothers, families, or children. Consequently, “orientations” regard policy agendas, but not necessarily outcomes in terms of the well-being of those concerned. We argue that during the crucial period of family policy modernization (late 1960s and early 1970s), when the different benefits and services came together in a coherent assemblage, those that aligned to the historical orientation of national family policies, developed gradually on the long term, and were also supported by a strong constellation of actors - formed a “core” cluster of benefits and services. These “cores” have endured in time amidst tumultuous political and economic transformations in all three countries. In contrast, those programs that were disconnected from the main historical orientation of national family policies, that lacked institutional embeddedness and political support in the decisive years of modernization – remained in a „contingent” cluster prone to alteration and retrenchment. In the concluding sections we examine the influence of EU-led agendas of gender equality, work-life balance, and fighting child poverty, looking also at the diversification of policy actors.



Digital Disruption and Social Disparities: Unveiling Inequalities in the Wake of the CrowdStrike-Microsoft Outage

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Description

This presentation examines how the 2024 CrowdStrike-Microsoft outage exposed and amplified existing social inequalities, highlighting the relationship between global digital technologies and societal disparities. Through a thematic content analysis of reports from public-interest global journals, we investigate the uneven impact of this technological crisis across various sectors and social groups. Our findings reveal that the outage's effects were not uniformly distributed, with certain populations and organizations experiencing more severe disruptions than others. For instance, the study identifies disparities in the impact on healthcare services, transportation systems, and critical infrastructure, often correlating with pre-existing socioeconomic inequalities. Moreover, the research explores how the process of remediation itself reflected and potentially reinforced social inequalities. We discuss the varying capacities of different organizations to respond to the crisis, considering factors such as access to IT expertise, financial resources, and technological infrastructure. The study also examines the unequal distribution of labor in addressing the outage, with implications for workforce dynamics and organizational resilience. By framing this technological disruption as a lens through which to view evolving social inequalities, the presentation contributes to our understanding of how digital dependencies intersect with and potentially amplify societal disparities. It raises critical questions about the social implications of our increasing reliance on interconnected digital systems in an increasingly concentrated Big Tech industry, and the need for more equitable approaches to both crisis prevention and response in the digital age.



'After graduation, we'll work all our lives': Student's perspectives on the relation between social class and university pathway

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Description

This paper explores the relation between social class and university pathway as reflected in the discourses of twelve senior undergraduate students. In conducting a sociological survey based on semi-structured interviews, I aim to answer the following questions: (1) How do university students relate to the effects of class disparities on their university pathway? (2) How is socioeconomic status reflected in their discourses about the student experience? (3) What is the role of cultural capital in justifying student's professional aspirations? The key concepts used here are those of 'university pathway,' 'first-generation student,' and Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital.' The twelve respondents – six females and six males, aged between 21 and 23 – were categorized into two social types, while pseudonyms were used to ensure confidentiality. The results show that students construct their discourses according to the opportunities they experienced before university; additionally, older siblings may be perceived as influencing the transmission of forms of capital. In this sense, previously employed students have accumulated 'logistical' capital. Although there are differences in perspective between students, these are mitigated by the existence of common discursive elements. In conclusion, socioeconomic status influences discourses about student's living conditions, consumption behaviors and career aspirations, highlighting the role of parental experiences and extracurricular activities in shaping them.



Pests in Town- Cockroaches in the Urban Imaginary

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Description

In 2008, the United Nations declared that the world's population had become predominantly urban for the first time. Urban living and increased housing density have led to exposure to microbes, viruses, and animals attracted to human waste. Our ideal metropolis is orderly and sanitized, with nature subdued and compartmentalized. Jerolmack's (2008) concept of "imaginative geographies" suggests that in modern Western society, firm boundaries are constructed between "nature and culture," with cities controlling nature through green spaces that do not intrude on private areas.

Urban animals often transgress geographic, legal, and cultural systems of order, roaming the city in perceived uncontrolled ways. However, they are also objects of care, conservation practices, and biopolitical interventions. This raises questions about the "more-than-human" experiences of urban life and the implications of considering spatial formations and urban policies from the perspective of human/animal relationships.

Furthermore, creatures labeled as pests have accompanied us through a century where housing and health officials, environmentalists, and pesticide advocates have promoted "modern" healthy living environments. These pests have violated notions of modernity, challenging our understanding of urban politics and the niches created for them by social inequality (Biehlar, 2013). This abstract explores the tension between controlled urban nature and the realities of living alongside urban wildlife, questioning how much of what is considered undesirable is cultural perception versus a biological response to real threats.



Transnational plant lives, technologies and ecological debates in the socialist Danube Delta

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Description

In 1950s socialist Romania, a small city, modelled on the Soviet “science cities”, was erected in the marshes of Danube Delta, around the scientific research of reed. It is there that the new preparations for economic development, based on the exploitation of local reed (*Phragmites australis*) and acclimatization of “Italian reed” (*Arundo donax*), happened. In the Romanian cash-strapped economy, after WWII, almost no effort was spared for this project, as it stumbled on the multiple ontologies of reed. A florid scientific, technical and biological imagination developed around and through the reed growing wetlands. Radioisotopes were used to understand the growing of reed and the efficiency of chemical fertilizers. On experimental plots, various flooding regimes were tested, and the ways in which reeds develop alongside fish. Special harvesting machines were bought from Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union and Poland, but also, using very scarce hard currency, from Canada and Sweden. Helicopters and even a small plane were experimentally deployed. A transnational hub of plants, scientists, plans, machines, imaginaries and hopes developed in the middle of the Danube Delta.



Interactions Between Art and Sociopolitics: Artivism and Ideology in Romanian Contemporary Art

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Description

The research is a sociological interview investigation which included discussions with artists both from Bucharest and Cluj. The the of the study is to investigate how the artistic activity interacts with an individual's socio-political involvement, both in the process of making an artistic product and in related activities. The objective was to describe artists' views on the relationship between these two concepts. The dominant perspective was closely linked to leftist ideology, with the interviewed artists interested in themes such as anti-capitalism, feminism, social inclusion and environmental issues. They address these themes in the artistic products they design and hope that through art they can bring the discourse into the public space, giving a voice to disadvantaged social groups. They see these events as beneficial to the social space, taking a realistic and reflective perspective, believing that art is not the main factor bringing about social change and preferring to work more at the community level rather than focusing on the macro level. On the use of artificial intelligence in the artistic process, interviewees were open-minded, highlighting the benefits this technology can bring.



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How AI is reshaping the landscape of work and small enterprises? The role of social dialogue in supporting fair competition and decent work conditions in the era of automation and AI.

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Description

The digital transformation of small-medium businesses raises critical questions: *Could AI create more jobs than it displaces? Is reskilling an effective solution for low-skilled workers?*

Case Study: The automation of routine activities such as meter reading and bill collection for 1.2 million households, previously managed with 1,500 low-skilled workers, has led to widespread job displacement.

While automation has significantly impacted jobs in manufacturing, routine-based and low-skill occupations, the democratization of AI-based technologies puts all professions at risk, regardless of their hierarchical level. For instance, how many managers would still be needed in a factory full of robots?

The future, where robots take over the 4D's jobs (dangerous, dirty, dull and dare), raises critical questions about the role of humans in economy. If jobs are automated and incomes disappear, the virtuous circle of technological advancement could turn into a vicious cycle of poverty, discrimination, inequality between individuals, countries and companies.

Findings: Like low-skill occupations, small businesses risk losing competitiveness because AI-driven technologies enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and improve customer engagement. However, adopting these technologies requires significant investment and expertise, which many SMEs in Romania struggle to obtain due to financial constraints and limited access to cutting-edge technology. In this evolving landscape, associations of entrepreneurs and workers have a critical role in advocating for policies that protect workers and small business.

The intersection of AI with work, jobs and SMEs requires a complex sociological approach to better understand and address the sophisticated impacts of AI, maximizing societal benefits while mitigating adverse effects.



Gendered Inheritance: Exploring Social Inequalities in the Transmission of the Lăutari Profession

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Description

We examine the gendered dynamics of occupational inheritance within the Lăutari community, traditional Roma musicians in Romania, revealing how social inequalities are reproduced and sometimes challenged through the transmission of this profession. Drawing on autoethnographic data and thematic content analysis of interviews with Lăutari, our study explores the relationships between gender roles, cultural capital, and social networks in shaping professional trajectories. Our findings confirm the predominantly patrilineal nature of the Lăutari profession, with musical skills and cultural knowledge primarily passed from father to son. However, we uncover a more nuanced picture of women's roles in this process. While rarely becoming professional musicians themselves, women, particularly mothers and grandmothers, play crucial supportive roles in facilitating the musical education of male children and maintaining the cultural environment necessary for professional socialization. The study highlights how gender intersects with other forms of social inequality in the Lăutari community. Access to instruments, opportunities for performance, and integration into professional networks are often mediated by gender, with male children receiving preferential treatment. At the same time, we observe emerging tensions between traditional gender roles and modern aspirations, with some young women receiving family support for seeking alternative educational and professional paths. By examining the gendered nature of occupational inheritance among the Lăutari, this paper contributes to broader sociological discussions on the reproduction of social inequalities, the transmission of cultural capital, and the negotiation of traditional identities in modernizing societies.



Questioning vaccination, 1982-2022: rethinking the significance of anti-vaccination social movements

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Description

In the 1980s rates of paediatric vaccination began to decline in the United Kingdom and in The Netherlands, as in much of Western Europe. This was attributed to newly established vaccine-critical social organizations, spreading disinformation via the internet. Nothing similar occurred in Romania, where attitudes to vaccination did not immediately change as compulsion ended. Today, the situation in Europe is different. Whilst the vaccine-critical social movement organizations of the 1980s and 1990s have declined, vaccine-critical views are more widespread than ever across Europe. In this chapter we argue that vaccine-critical views have been assimilated into broader social critique, varying in detail from country to country, though generally critical of elites and expertise. In place of dedicated anti-vaccination social organizations, these messages are now disseminated in informal, overlapping social networks, in which vaccination is one target among others.



The “light side” of algorithmic awareness: ways of bridging knowledge and resistance against machine agency

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Description

Most studies focused mainly on the "dark side" of algorithmic activity, that is, on the ways in which these algorithms control, supervise or manipulate the activities of users on social media. Also, the conceptualizations in the field of machine agency prove to be rather bleak, overlooking the heterogeneous nature of the contents that are recommended to users. In this presentation, I argue first of all that a good part of the viral content recommended on social media platforms regularly presents an institutional character (usually political, educational, spiritual or medical), and this algorithmically mediated content proves to be in conceptual techno-affinity with the various Foucauldian forms of non-state power, such as pastoral power. Subsequently, through semi-structured interviews with active users on either Instagram or TikTok, I develop an action research to investigate the main strategies through which these users develop their epistemological capital in relation to recommendation algorithms, with the aim of putting into practice different resistance mechanisms to these algorithms. Thus, even if not all digital subjects manifest a tendency of resistance directed strictly against algorithms, it can be ascertained that they elaborate different "antagonism of strategies" directed against social media affordances at large. This research creates optimistic premises to argue in favor of an enhanced user agency, through users who use their epistemological capital in order to successfully target and subvert particular digitally-mediated forms of power.



Navigating the AI Revolution: Transformations in Teaching and Learning Practices within Romanian Higher Education

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Description

Generative artificial intelligence is increasingly influencing the educational system. This study focuses on higher education in Romania, aiming to identify the motivations behind AI use in student learning and teaching practices. The rapid integration of AI into academic routines has raised social, moral, and ethical concerns, as people increasingly rely on these digital technologies. Using Icek Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, this qualitative, interview-based research examines the perspectives of students and teachers from contrasting academic fields (humanities versus sciences) in Bucharest. A common finding among students was their frequent use of AI for academic tasks without disclosure, presenting AI-generated work as original. While the purposes of AI use varied by field of study, both groups raised issues of responsibility, copyright, and plagiarism. A notable difference emerged among teachers. Those in humanities were skeptical and discouraged AI use, while science teachers promoted AI integration, viewing it as a helpful tool for improving work efficiency. The findings highlight new challenges for Romania's higher education system, emphasizing the direct experiences of academic participants. This research contributes to understanding the growing role of AI in education and its implications.



The international hygiene conferences: Nation building and public health in 19th century Romania

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Description

In Central and Eastern Europe, several inter-mingled modern entities – nation, state and science – emerged, in new configurations, at the end of the nineteenth century. These modern looking beings travelled through various transnational and imperial networks: as discourses; expertise; diplomas and certificates; technologies, practices, objects, habits, and fashions. All these fragments were reassembled in local contexts by elites anxious to solve their problems but also to retain enough resemblance with how these entities were deemed to look in their original places of origin.

In what follows I will briefly look at the creation and failure of a local public health project, promising “health for all”, and at the laboratory transformation of medicine and public health that disentangled the social from the medical, and created new ways of governing individual and national bodies. The moment I am focusing on is the 1892-1893 cholera epidemic, that is dramatized through the fight of two important local physicians: Iacob Felix and Victor Babeş. This complex epidemiological and political debate happened both locally and internationally, by experts travelling and playing power games inside changing transnational and national networks.

The International Sanitary Conferences were a major arena for this turning point in public health strategies, as they constituted an attempt to create a commonly regulated European epidemiological space that would have provided safe venues for commerce, by dismantling internal quarantines. I argue that these conferences created a space of legitimation for nation-building public hygiene strategies but also a transnational image of epidemiological Europe.



Visualizing Gender in the City: Contrast Structures as Reinforcers and Disruptors of Essentialism

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Description

This study examines how public gender displays in urban spaces contribute to and disrupt gender essentialism and status inequalities through various forms of contrast structures. Drawing on Dorothy Smith's concept of contrast structures, we propose two typologies for analyzing gender displays: an intensity typology and an interactional typology. The intensity typology ranges from similarity structures that challenge gender binaries to powerfully contrastive displays that reinforce traditional gender roles. The interactional typology categorizes displays based on their spatial arrangement and intentionality, from local contrasts within single displays to distributed contrasts across multiple items. Through thematic content analysis of gender displays in cities like Bucharest, Paris, Berlin, and New York, we identify recurring patterns such as tiny contrasts, abstract contrasts, and ontological contrasts. Our findings suggest that while many displays reproduce the gender binary and essentialist notions, others subvert gender stereotypes through symmetry or counter-stereotypical representations. This research contributes to understanding the ways in which urban spaces shape and reflect societal gender norms, offering a framework for future studies on the symbolic reproduction and contestation of gender orders in public spheres.



Climate change as an issue of (in)tolerance: the role of attitudes towards sexual minorities in explaining climate skepticism, knowledge and responsibility in Europe

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Description

Climate change frequently intersects with issues of social inequality. The geographic and social problems associated with climate change do not affect communities equally, and those with fewer resources and those who suffer discrimination are less able to cope and are more likely to become victims of climate change. The gender vulnerabilities associated with climate change have been relatively well-researched. Although it is increasingly recognized that sexual minorities are among the most vulnerable groups in front of climate change due to marginalization and prejudice yet, little research has been done on the subject. Several authors studied the role of different forms of intolerance in climate change attitudes; however, specifically, the case of intolerance against sexual minorities has not been extensively studied so far. We intend to contribute to the field by exploring the linkages between homophobia and European climate-related attitudes. Based on the most recent, 11th round (2023/2024) of the European Social Survey, we investigate how attitudes towards sexual minorities influence three dimensions of climate change attitudes: climate skepticism, climate knowledge, and personal sense of responsibility for climate change. The results of cluster analysis and regression analysis show that the more tolerant respondents are of sexual minorities, the less climate skeptical they are, the more they believe they have an individual responsibility to reduce climate change, and the more they fear climate change. The analysis also shows significant cross-country differences.



„It will be a joy when they start working again”. Bucharest's public water fountains and the strategies used by the unhoused to access drinking water

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Description

This paper explores the theme of water in public spaces from two different perspectives: the first, using quantitative data obtained from eight distinct sources, analyzes the network of public drinking fountains in the Municipality of Bucharest. The second perspective takes a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews to explore the strategies used by unhoused individuals to access drinking water. The theoretical framework of the paper starts from a critique of neoliberal policies, which promote the privatization of public services and the transformation of water from a common good into a commodity, while also trying to show the ways in which unhoused people suffer the most from such policies. The results of the quantitative analysis show that there are 326 fountains in Bucharest, unevenly distributed among its sectors: while the sector with the highest number of drinking fountains accounts for over a third of the total, the sector with the lowest number has only 4% of the drinking fountains in Bucharest. Interviews reveal that unhoused people regularly use drinking fountains, but a significant drawback is that they do not operate during the cold season. To obtain drinking water, unhoused individuals rely on an informal network made up of social organizations, pharmacies, restaurants and interpersonal relationships with employees of private spaces, they consume liquids from already opened recipients, or, when they can afford it, buy bottled water. In implementing these strategies, unhoused people have to navigate stigma and the prejudice of others, which can hinder their access to water, toilets, and hygiene.



Gender stereotypes in the beauty industry Case study: Nivea

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Description

This presentation will mainly focus on illustrating gender stereotypes which appear nowadays in the beauty industry through digital advertising. This specific path was chosen because it represents a prevailing part of the social media environment which contains stereotypes related to body, face, confidence, beauty, in general. The purpose of this presentation is to observe if currently the famous beauty brands (in this case - Nivea) still use gender stereotypes in the materials (photos, videos, texts, etc.) published online, on different social media platforms (in this case – Instagram). In this manner it can be observed if brands „incorporate (...) conventions and discourses of gendered consumption” in the new media (Caldeira et al., 2022, p. 832). The spotlight of this intervention is to identify if several improvements and changes can be remarked in what concerns the image of women, presented by brands on social media, given the fact that „both advertisers and researchers have become more aware of the specific effects of gender stereotyping in advertising” (Aramendia-Muneta et al., 2019, p. 3). Throughout the research questions, the authors discover the presence or the absence of gender stereotypes in the selected corpus, the strategies used in order to spread these stereotypes and the roles played by women and men in the posts. Using the qualitative and quantitative content analysis, there will be examined the portrayals of men and women that appear in the commercials (posture, age, body display, subordination, etc.) in relation with the linguistic structures used by the company in its posts.



Technological Revolution in the Office: Employee perspectives on the use of artificial intelligence in the workplace

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Description

The focus of this paper is on analyzing employees' perceptions regarding the use of artificial intelligence in the workplace, with an emphasis on identifying the motivations behind formal or informal collaboration with this entity. The research question guiding this study is: What are the reasons employees use artificial intelligence in the workplace? To address this, a sociological survey was conducted based on ten semi-structured interviews with current employees in companies across various industries. Respondents consider that certain uniquely human characteristics, such as creativity and autonomy, can only be enhanced, not completely replaced, by IA. The research also highlights other topics such as efficiency, productivity, morality, personification, stigmatization, diversity, and inclusion, which are discussed in alignment with the new active digital actor of society, ChatGPT. These reference points create a favorable context for the development of future initiatives regarding employee training sessions, promoting their integration and accommodation with artificial intelligence.



Applying Don Ihde's Post-Phenomenology to Artificial Intelligence: Analyzing Sustainable Technological Diffusion and Associated Risks

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Description

Don Ihde's post-phenomenology identifies four key relationship types between humans and technology: embodiment, hermeneutic, alterity, and background. The first two mediate interactions between humans and their environment, while the latter two represent non-mediating roles of technology. Applying this conceptual framework to various forms of artificial intelligence (AI) yields insights into the factors distinguishing sustainable AI diffusion from its negative consequences. This study examines both intended AI use cases and unintended outcomes, such as job market disruptions, deepening inequalities, the proliferation of deep fakes, the generation of dangerous chemicals, dataism (a belief in the supremacy of data), and the emergence of autonomous weapons. We propose that many risks associated with AI stem from mismatches between the intended and actual human-AI relationship types, or from the absence of necessary characteristics that facilitate a functional relationship. Our findings underscore the utility of the post-phenomenological framework in elucidating the multifaceted interactions between humans and AI, offering a robust tool for navigating and mitigating the potential hazards of AI integration.



The Dramaturgy of the Medical Institution and the Social Construction of Illness

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Description

This research aims to explore the social reality within public health institutions. The study investigates medical staff's perspectives on their daily challenges, interactions within the healing institution, and how their professional identity is shaped by their social environment. Utilizing a dramaturgical perspective and symbolic interactionism as theoretical frameworks, this exploratory study addresses the central question: "What do interactions within the hospital reveal about society's view of the healing institution?"

The methodology is qualitative, emphasizing individual subjective perspectives as drivers of social action. The primary research method is a sociological survey, employing semi-structured interviews as the main data collection technique. This is complemented by participant observation in public health institutions as a secondary method.

Key themes emerging from the research include the theory of social career as described by Matza and Goffman, doctor-patient relationships, and interprofessional dynamics within medical teams. The study also examines the hospital as a total institution, focusing specifically on staff perspectives rather than those of patients

This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the social processes and interactions that shape the healthcare environment, contributing to broader sociological insights into medical institutions and their place in society



Loneliness prevalence in later life and different social groups in Europe

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Description

Loneliness is a hot topic for scholars from different disciplines and public agenda. Some talk about a loneliness epidemic (Hertz 2020), a term used even by prestigious institutions (Surgeon General 2023). Others, using sound data and methods dismiss the claim of a loneliness epidemic emphasizing the need to differentiate between age and cohort effects (Suanet and Van Tilburg 2019). *The European Union Loneliness Survey* conducted in late 2022 on the general population aged 16 and above in all 27 EU Member States show that at least one out of ten people feel lonely most or all the time over the past four weeks. Estimations made during COVID-19 pandemic by *Eurofound Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey* show a temporary increase in loneliness, with two out of ten people feeling lonely most or all the time over the last two weeks. Although there is not enough proof that older cohorts are lonelier than younger cohorts, older people are more exposed to poorer health and social isolation which increase loneliness (Hawkley et al. 2019). I will describe the prevalence of loneliness in Europe in different older cohorts, comparing different social groups defined by countries, age groups, gender, socio-economic status, social isolation status. I will use data, if available, from the mentioned research projects and from *European Quality of Life Survey*, the *Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe*, or any other relevant source for the subject.



Building Inclusive Societies: The Intersection of Roma Social and Identity Policies

Alexandra Hosszu

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Description

The issue of Roma inclusion continues to be a significant topic on both national and European public agendas, as the ethnic disparities between the Roma and the majority population remain substantial. Four out of five Roma live at risk of poverty, while 48% of Roma live in severe material deprivation (FRA, 2021). Only 44% of Roma children attend early childhood education and care and 71% of young Roma leave early the educational system (FRA, 2021). Moreover, Roma women live on average 11 years less than women in the general population, and Roma men 9.1 years less than men in the general population (FRA, 2021). In 2021, EU has adopted a framework for equality, inclusion and participation that has been incorporated into the Romanian legislation through the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion until 2027. The study aims to explore how the approaches on Roma inclusion have evolved under the current framework compared to the previous one, with a focus on the interplay between social and identity policies. I will conduct a literature review of scientific articles and books published at the European level between 2020 and 2024, alongside a case study of Romanian strategic documents and reports.

**Digital competences and their evolution at the Partium Christian University of Oradea***Levente Székedi, Katalin Gál*

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Description

The development of digital competences has become a key success factor for individuals, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated this process. Romania finds itself in a paradoxical situation with regard to digital competencies: it performs well in terms of digital infrastructure, but it lags behind in other areas, including digital competencies, digital services, and digitalisation. This discrepancy highlights the need to prioritise the measurement and development of digital competences, in addition to digital infrastructure. This study examines the findings of two digital competency surveys of the academic community at Partium Christian University, conducted in 2018 and 2023. In the 2018 survey, 44 teachers and 201 students were interviewed, while 104 teachers and 256 students responded in 2023. The foundation for the survey was the Canadian-developed General Technology Competency and Use framework, which assesses the confidence/frequency of utilizing digital tools assigned to the epistemological, informational, social, technical dimensions (EILab, 2022). In comparison to the 2018 survey, the 2023 one included additional questions. The pandemic, which stimulated the digitalisation of higher education, occurred between the two surveys. We hypothesised that the digital competencies of students and teachers had undergone an enhancement in comparison to the 2018 survey. The findings indicate that those competencies, which are of particular significance in education, have developed to a lesser extent than anticipated. Conversely, ICT usage patterns have undergone a shift, with marked preference for mobile devices. The outcomes substantiate the necessity for training programmes aimed at enhancing the digital competencies of the academic community.



Pushing the urban poor – the institutional response to the missing social housing in Bucharest

Irina Zamfirescu

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Description

The presentation describes the symbolic violence and practices of incriminating poverty for the urban poor in Bucharest. According to data gathered in the last 10 years, public authorities ignore the matter of social housing and enforces evictions without any form of alternative housing solutions. Based on engaged anthropological methodology, this research looks into the most common local authorities' practices that leads to pushing the urban poor into deeper vulnerability.

Housing policies are among the most evident neo-liberal practices that manifest in Bucharest. We have witnessed in the post-communist years increased housing insecurity and violent displacement, as these are general phenomena in the Global North (Novak 2014; Desmond 2012). Gentrification, massive urban infrastructures or beautification of the neighborhoods are seldom the reasons for which the urban poor of Bucharest are pushed to the margin of the city (Gaffney 2010; Baker 2020). With no public data on the eviction performed in the city, it is estimated that thousands of families have been evicted after 1990. These families spent decades in uncertainty, being at the center of institutional violence expressed through police raids or social care departments threats. They are at the whims of sometimes racist and verbally violent clerks, bearing in mind their precarious understanding of the law and their lack of financial means to contract juridic help. What is more, their biggest vulnerability seems to be that they have children, a situation that is often cynical used by public authorities which try to convince them to leave their squats of informal settlements by threatening to take the children into foster care.



Medical communication in the case of diabetic patients: a sociological study

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Description

People with diabetes are part of a group with increased vulnerability both due to the symptoms and complications generated by this disease. In Romania, under the conditions of a system rated as one of the least performing in Europe and the high prevalence of diabetes diseases, the success of treatment depends a lot on the standards and accessibility of information and on the quality of communication between doctor and patient. The present study explores, through a qualitative investigation based on a sociological approach, the perception of the Romanian diabetic patient regarding the characteristics and quality of medical communication. In a field with multiple interdisciplinary variations, sociology makes a considerable contribution to the integration of the patient in the medical approach, regarding the medical situation as a social situation and the patient as a social being. Using the interview-based investigation, the study provides insight into how people suffering from diabetes perceive communication with the doctors they have contacted during the course of the disease and how these interactions unfold, from a constructivist framework. The experience-grounded perspective of the patient reveals its importance not only in understanding how health and illness are socially constructed and explaining current medical care, but also in terms of the directions in which the patient can be increasingly integrated more so as a co-producer of health care and health policies towards the modern principles of patient-centered care.



Menstruation, a lens of social inequalities. An anthropological analysis of the body and social practices of menstruators.

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Description

Menstruation, a natural biological and physiological process for people with uterus, analysed from an anthropological perspective represents a lens for social inequalities expressed through gender, sexuality, economic status and political power. Menstruation in socialism or in the present represents a shameful and hidden subject in society. Talking with women about menstruation during communist period in Romania and also with people who are experiencing menstruation in the present, showed me that the narratives regarding the subject are a result of the social power structures: political system during socialism and period products brands in the present. Moreover, trying to understand how the shame around the subject is socially constructed, I discovered how menstruators experience an otherness embodiment. Even though it is a body and personal experience, the perception of menstruation as a changing event in menstruators' lives is influenced and modified by others perceptions since the menarche (first menstruation). The narratives of menstruation as a result of hegemonic patriarchal gaze are constructed in order to restrict and control a biological process with powerful social outcomes and ramifications. Moreover, menstruation is characterised by duplicity, being at the border of private and public sphere, a fact that participates in the stigmatisation of the subject. The lack of education and veridic representation are one of the most important issues on this matter.



Studying Elites: A Sociological Exploration of Power and Social Networks

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Description

The sociological study of the elites is not a straight forward matter, because the subject comes with methodological challenges. In order to focus on the social networks of the elites and the outcomes of power dynamics and societal structures, some methodological adaptations are required. By defining elites as individuals or groups possessing disproportionate access to resources, influence, and decision-making authority, this research highlights the critical role social networks play in maintaining and enhancing their privileged positions. Access to the research universe is extremely difficult, if not impossible to achieve. The study of the elites' social world is usually mediated or intermediated. Even in the case of direct access, there is a form of mediation (or hedonism) so that the image of the elite is one that is studied, constructed, and prepared for the public, including the public made up of the sociologist studying the elite. This study focuses on what methodology (or methodologies) we can use in the sociology of elites so that the final product ensures the proper knowledge. The most sensitive issue facing the sociology of elites is finding an optimal methodology that not only provides an accurate understanding of the elite phenomenon (what they are, who they are, and what role they play), but also ensures the relevance and accuracy of the analyzed data.



Profiling Educational Inequality: Insights from Ialomița County's Secondary Education System in Romania

Simona Tonț

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Description

This study examines secondary education in Romania, with a quantitative approach, addressing the research question: "What is the profile of educational inequalities at the high school level in Ialomița County?" Using data collected at the level of secondary schools, I analyzed educational inequality considering various predictive factors, including students' residential environment, families' socioeconomic status, academic progression throughout high school, and academic performance in ongoing assessments, periodic evaluations, and final exams at both middle and high school levels. The sociological analysis revealed significant educational inequality within the education system, particularly concerning high school students' academic results throughout their studies and in the national baccalaureate exam. The study highlighted several educational disparities, including a reverse gender gap in academic results, as well as inequalities related to residential environment and students' enrollment in theoretical, vocational, or technological high school tracks.

A typological profile of high school students emerged, considering both their academic journey and completion of studies. Understanding this profile is crucial for future interventions in the education system aimed at mitigating multiple forms of inequality.



Nonprofit organisations as relevant stakeholders in the facilitation of work (re)integration following a chronic illness diagnosis: results from a qualitative study

Adela Popa, Anca Bejenaru, Anabella Beju, Oana Lup, Felicia Morândău, Livia Pogan, Ioana Silistraru

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Sibiu, Romania

Description

Chronic diseases in the working-age population produce considerable impairment in work participation, as they are increasingly prevalent in Europe and Romania. Part of the workers with chronic conditions quit the labour market, yet a considerable proportion of them continue working during treatment or return to work after sick leave. Nonprofit organisations (NPOs) can potentially influence the work (re)integration process alongside other categories of stakeholders, yet their role in this process has not been studied so far in the Romanian context.

Building on a theoretical framework informed by the Person-Environment Fit theory, we employed a qualitative design and collected data through semi-structured interviews with 11 officials of Romanian nonprofit organisations which are active in fields relevant to this topic. Thematic analysis using NVivo 14 was employed to emphasise the main topics in their discourses. The presentation will address how NPOs' representatives view their role in work integration and return to work following chronic illness, their perspectives on barriers and facilitators, and the collaboration with other stakeholders.

The preliminary results show a relatively informal involvement of NPOs in the work (re)integration of workers with chronic illnesses and many barriers that impede their true participation in facilitating this process. Nevertheless, their expectations and intentions are to be more involved in formal collaborations with other stakeholders (government institutions, employers, health professionals, or labour force agencies) in the future. Based on the data collected, several recommendations are advanced to increase the role and contribution of these organisations in return to work facilitation.



Ethnic identity and social background: changing factors of inequality in educational attainment and material well-being among Hungarian minority youth (2001-2020)

Valér Veres

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Description

The aim of this research is to investigate the changes over time in the social inequalities of chances in the attainment of good material well-being and higher educational attainment among minority youth from Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine over a 20-year perspective. The focus of the research is on the specific disadvantages of the minority youth generation, including the double minority status, Hungarian-Roma youth. The emerging trends will be compared with the situation of youth in Hungary and with changes in their opportunities.

As a conceptual framework, we started from Castells' concept of a global networked society, where young people living in t/he global metropolitan centres or in the "fourth world" or "black holes", where more often young people are living in a precarious status (Standing).

The data sources for the survey research among 15-29 year old Hungarian speaking populations (Mozaik2001 and the Hungarian Youth Survey) from Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia Voivodina, mainly using OLS and loglinear regression and index building techniques.

The results show structural inequalities among the Hungarian minority youth communities' ability to achieve a good material situation and higher educational attainment in the countries, which make them more likely to experience persistent material deprivation and to enter a state of precariat, in the sense of Standing. For most of countries, a specific intersectionality has produced time-invariant inequalities in chances, with Roma-Hungarian identity and a background of many children and children of less educated parents, having low chances of achieving high levels of education and material wellbeing.



Religious Influences on Public Attitudes Towards Science and Technology in Europe: A Preliminary Analysis

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Description

This study presents an exploratory investigation into public attitudes towards science and technology within the European context, with a particular focus on religious influences. Utilizing data from the Eurobarometer survey, a cluster analysis was conducted to identify distinct typologies of responses with respect to scientific literacy and skepticism. Key findings highlight the relationship between several influence factors such as religious beliefs, political orientation, and media consumption in shaping or being associated with certain public opinions on science and technology, as described by the identified typology groups. This analysis offers an understanding for further qualitative exploration, particularly in the context of Eastern Orthodox viewpoints on emerging digital technologies.



The Motivations for International Migration of Vietnamese Workers to Europe

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Description

This paper examines the motivations for Vietnamese workers to migrate to Europe using a literature review and analysis approach. By synthesizing data from research reports, statistical sources and policy documents, the study aims to clarify the main factors influencing the migration decisions of Vietnamese workers. The analysis shows that economic motivation is the most important factor, with workers seeking better employment opportunities, higher wages and improved living conditions in Europe. Educational factors, such as opportunities for further training and higher education, also play an important role in the migration decision. Social factors, including family reunification and the presence of a Vietnamese community in Europe, support the migration process. In addition, international labor cooperation programs provide important support and opportunities for Vietnamese workers. The study also identifies the challenges migrants face, such as language barriers, cultural differences and legal barriers, which affect their integration and experience in Europe. The paper provides policy recommendations to address these challenges, including improving support services and migration policies. This study provides a comprehensive view of the factors driving Vietnamese labour migration and provides useful information for policymakers and stakeholders on the needs and experiences of Vietnamese workers abroad.



Absent but still there. Representations of Polish and Romanian service providers on Ukrainian war refugees with disabilities

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Description

Paper submitted for the panel *Intersectionalities between refuge and additional sources of vulnerability*

Refuge and disability rarely meet in migration studies, despite some 25% of a regular population have some sort of disability. Using the flow of Ukrainian refugee flow we consider such intersectionality, delving into documenting “images of disability”, seen comparatively between the two capital regions of the larger countries that neighbor Ukraine: Poland and Romania. Warsaw and Bucharest received large inflows of refugees from Ukraine, and both societies were welcoming them, also in the vein of common historical animosities towards Russia. Both Romania and Ukraine are young welfare regimes, with social systems under consolidation, and a certain degree of reluctance towards disabilities. We explain how Ukrainian war refugees with disabilities face their multiple uncertainties, as seen through the lenses of service providers in the two countries. We use a set of 40 interviews with such providers in Warsaw and Bucharest, including both public clerk and civic society (mainly NGO activists and volunteers). We stress out the roles of differences between the Ukrainian culture (more stigma on disability) and the Polish/Romanian ones, the impact of differences in institutional differences of disabilities, the effects of willingness to help and prejudice, the effects of previous experience. It turns out that disabled people are only partly invisible for the two receiving capitals when helpers tell their short story about refuge, while they become part of the detailed story.



War as a natural laboratory to learn how to provide services to those in need. The case of Ukrainian refugees with disabilities of Warsaw and Bucharest

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Description

Paper submitted for the panel **Intersectionalities between refuge and additional sources of vulnerability**

When helping others, experience becomes important, in particular under circumstances to interact with a different culture, such as the ones implied in providing services to refugees (Russell & White, 2002). When disability adds to refuge, multiple types of experience become necessary (Bernardes et al, 2011), and capacity of cross-sector collaboration is an asset (Fehsenfeld, 2019). This paper explores the impact of the Russian invasion in Ukraine on the capacity of Polish and Romanian organizations that provide services to Ukrainian refugees to Warsaw and Bucharest, with a focus on the situation of disabled refugees. Based on 40 interviews with service providers, it turns out that the unfortunate event served as natural laboratory to practice, acquire, and increase skills in multiple domains, leading to personal and institutional expertise. We inspect differences between Warsaw and Bucharest, the first city having more experience on dealing with incoming flows of immigrants, while the second was a new comer in this respect. We also consider the distinction between public providers (public administration) and NGO entities, observing the upsBucureg of the latter. Implications for policy are considered within the framework of curtailing civic society under the illiberal wave.



Defining vulnerability in case workers' day to day activities

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Description

Paper submitted for the panel **Intersectionalities between refuge and additional sources of vulnerability**

The refugee crisis generated by the war in Ukraine put neighbouring countries, such as Romania or Poland, in a new situation: that of receiving societies, thus having to manage significant inflows of persons fleeing the conflict area. In each country, a (constantly changing) legal framework is put in place in order to manage the access to social benefits associated with having a refugee status or temporary protection.

In this paper, we explore a specific part in the activity of service providers working with refugees in the two countries, namely the definitions of special cases or exceptions: cases of individuals who would not benefit from certain rights, such as free accommodation or food, granted to refugees from Ukraine in Romania or Poland, were it not for the special interventions of case workers. In doing so, we analyze data obtained as part of a research project focused on refugees with disabilities coming from Ukraine to Warsaw and Bucharest, through interviews with stakeholders working with refugees and, respectively, with disabled people. We argue that, in order to make up for limitations and shortages in rules and regulations, service providers use empirically grounded definitions of social categories (disabled; unable to work) that complement the formally constituted ones. Moreover, this categorization process is shaped by two distinct factors: the emotional work on behalf of case workers and the institutional infrastructure within which they operate.



Liquid networks: the flow of digital domestic devices

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Description

The dynamic reality of human/ non-human interactions in the domestic digitalised realm can be captured by multiple social theories and methodologies. In order to explore it, the concept of digital housework is used in a theoretical framework of liquid modernity. Precisely, the embrace of instant living practices in Europe is measured and clarified considering the fluid materiality of the social world. Therefore, the research question is: Which are the patterns of digital domestic devices flow? To answer it, this research uses both qualitative (cultural biography of objects) and quantitative (secondary data analyse) methods. The results include (1) an analyse of the flow patterns of 109 digital domestic technologies in and out of 28 Romanian households and (2) an analyse of practises relating domestic tech purchase and replacement in the European countries by examining if the characteristics considered important when buying digital devices corelate with the actions undertaken regarding digital devices that are no longer in use. These findings are discussed addressing the specifics of ecological actions in a liquid modernity, regarding both actor networks and social networks. Withal, some implications of the study are submitted.



The presentation of the Gusti School in the Hungarian-language Korunk journal of Cluj during the period of the official restoration of sociology in the 1960s until the "mini-cultural revolution" of 1971

Levente Székedi

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Description

The Hungarian-language Korunk [Our era] journal of Cluj-Napoca was one of the main vehicles for transmitting the ideas of sociology in the ethnic Hungarian intellectual circles in Romania in the communist era, and it also played a key role in the rehabilitation of the Gusti School. In his previous, already published research the author of this study observed, that towards the middle of 1960s the discourse of the rehabilitation of sociology became increasingly present in the Korunk journal, along five trends: autonomization, professionalization, specialization, opening and the revision of tradition. The latter trend also entails dealing with the Gusti School in the manner of “constructively and critically” re-utilizing its main theoretical and methodological tenets, which also connects the ethnic Hungarian sociology of Romania to the “progressive” interwar Transylvanian social scientists, collaborating with and inspired by Dimitrie Gusti. The present study analyses articles and studies published in the Korunk between 1965-1971, observing infrequent and somewhat marginal references to Dimitrie Gusti in the beginning of analysed period, taken over by more substantive texts in 1969, when the then recently rehabilitated Gusti-disciple, József Venczel started to publish in the Korunk. The references to Gusti became somewhat scarcer in 1970 and even more reduced in number in the following year.



From Exposure to Decision: Social Media and Vote Change Types in Electoral Campaigns

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Description

The voting decision process and what shapes voters' choices during electoral campaigns is central to the study of voting behaviour. The proposed study aims at analysing the most common vote change types and assesses the effects of social media exposure on three different types of vote change: reinforcement, conversion, and crystallization. Incorporating selective exposure theory, the study posits that voters' preferences for information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs and attitudes play a crucial role in how social media influences vote changes. In the context of voting behaviour, this theory helps explain how exposure to social media content, which is often tailored to match the users' preferences through algorithms, can lead to reinforcement of existing vote intentions. It also provides a framework for understanding the mechanisms behind vote conversion and crystallization, as voters encounter and engage with politically congruent content, potentially solidifying their wavering preferences or converting their vote choice in favour of the information that resonates with their selective exposure preferences. We use longitudinal data collected during the Romanian electoral campaigns in 2009 and 2024 to assess our hypotheses. Findings based on 2009 analysis reveal that exposure to social media increases the chances of crystallization and conversion. For the reinforcement category, the results show a significant effect of exposure to social media on vote intention. Exposure to social media increases the chance of voters changing, reinforcing, or crystallizing their vote options. Social media contributes to the voting decision process by having an informational and reinforcement role.



Facebook: A Tool for Citizens' Engagement and E-participation in Bucharest Municipality

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Description

With the proliferation of information and communication technologies, the public participation of citizens has found significant potential for transformation in the online interaction with the public administration. Concepts like e-participation and e-government became fruitful areas of practice, policy making and theoretical explorations. The objectives of this research is to inquire into how social media (SM) was used by Bucharest municipality for communication and citizens engagement, as well as to explore the type of e-participation citizen engage in. The methodology employed content analysis of the Bucharest City Hall (Primăria Municipiului București - PMB) Facebook page (posts and their comments sections) in 2023. The content analysis used a citizens' engagement index adapted for this research from previous scholars to explore metrics such as popularity, commitment and virality. The type of content and media in the SM posts was also analysed, as well as the PMB's tactics and strategies of communication towards the citizens. One of the key findings indicated a one-way communication from the municipality towards the citizens. The commitment metrics showed that, when it comes to a more intense e-participation (eg. comments), citizens have low engagement with the SM of PMB. However, when they do engage in this type of participation, they do it from a rather adversarial stance. In regards to the types of content on the Facebook page of PMB, it can be concluded that the most often distributed ones were: cultural activities & sports and public works & town planning.



Multidimensional precariousness of early career researchers

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Description

The paper has the objectives to analyze the subjective representations of precarity, to capture the interplay between the call/passion and precariousness, and to explore the main coping strategies for researchers in social sciences in Romania. Using the life-course approach, the life trajectories of researchers. A qualitative study was conducted among the academics in social sciences. The precariousness is captured economically (low wages, no travel grants for conferences, and the lack of financial research support), and low working conditions. On the other hand, the study identified academic precariousness, which complements the other dimensions of precariousness. The researchers describe the lack of subscriptions to literature, support from PhD supervisor, and feedback. Maintaining a balance between two jobs requires great effort, even in conditions where similar skills are required. This strategy has undesirable effects on the development of the academic career. The passion for research is what maintains interest in this profession, but the lack of resources is a demotivating factor.



Generation Z Navigates AI: Bucharest Students Confront ChatGPT and Automation

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Description

This study examines the perceptions and approaches of Bucharest students towards emerging Generative AI (GenAI) technologies and increasing global automation of work. As rapid technological changes profoundly affect lifestyles, socialization patterns, routines, and professional futures, industries and governments often prioritize efficiency over individual well-being. The research employs qualitative methods, including one-on-one interviews and a group interview, involving 13 students from diverse academic backgrounds such as STEM, humanities, social sciences, and arts. Data collection spanned six months.

Findings reveal a general concern among participants about endangered domains, particularly the arts, due to fears of property theft and plagiarism facilitated by GenAI tools. Notably, the study uncovers a striking contrast between STEM and humanities students regarding future coexistence with these technologies. STEM students tend to perceive it as a prophetic mission to optimize these technologies, while humanities students focus more on the need for regulation.

This research raises important questions about the social construction of reality in interaction with digital technologies and how Generation Z navigates persistent socio-technical acceleration. It contributes to our understanding of how young adults conceptualize and respond to rapidly evolving technological landscapes in academic and professional contexts.



"Boys cry sometimes..."

Ionuț-Adrian Drinceanu

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Description

This qualitative research is exploratory, uses the qualitative sociological survey method, and its data collection instrument is the semi-structured interview guide. The qualitative thematic analysis method is used to analyze the data and the sampling is non-probability and convenience sampling. In the research, perceptions of crying are shaped by individual biographies and interactions, confirming the interactionist sociological perspective. Interactions between individuals are essential for learning social norms and meanings that influence crying related behaviors. Socialization reproduces emotional culture, including beliefs about emotions and related reactions, through different socializing agents. In the case of crying, being an emotional reaction, the socialization agents are: workplace, family, media, school and romantic relationships. In this research, different types of crying related behaviors are compiled and categorized according to the duration, the occurrence of a reaction, the intensity of the emotion, the physical manifestations of the body, the authenticity of the emotion, and the presence of people. I have also included reasons for crying that represent specific situations or specific emotions, from sadness to joy. Emotional work in controlling crying includes active awareness and management of emotions in various social contexts. This effort is particularly visible when individuals avoid crying in public, using various strategies to control or mask crying. These observations highlight the complexity and variation in how crying is perceived and managed in society.



Accounting for Romania's Steady Levels of Particularized Trust. Sociological Institutionalism and Romania's Middle-quality Institutional Trap

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Description

According to data that span more than twenty years, Romania has been characterised by steady levels of particularized trust. Specifically, particularized trust has not varied significantly once Romania joined the European Union in 2007, and, thus, levels of particularized trust in the early 2000s are comparable with the ones in present-day Romania. Therefore, the main research question that our presentation poses is whether sociological and historical institutionalism could offer an explanation for Romania's significant and long-term particularized trust. Unlike other explanations of Romania's particularized trust that have placed emphasis on agency—perceptions of corruption, failed social and economic policies, casual intolerance or decline in the quality of public deliberation—, our approach is rather structural-prone and rests on the middle-quality institutional trap concept, that is, a robust institutional equilibrium which emerges at the intersection of a low capacity state and a “democracy with adjectives”. Our presentation relies on the method of process tracing and has a twofold purpose. First, we seek to understand whether the middle-quality institutional trap can be employed as a causal mechanism that may account for Romania's steady levels of particularized trust. Second, our presentation tries to improve the middle-quality institutional concept, which was initially devised to capture mainly the institutional experiences of Latin American countries and, notably, paid little heed to the issue of particularized trust. In our view, this concept might be enriched with Romania's institutional experience. Which, broadly speaking, refers to a fairly low capacity state by the EU standards that has been dealing with the social and economic disintegration caused by neoliberal reforms.



Watching anime with Bourdieu: A sociological analysis of the mechanisms behind the development of identification and affinity regarding male anime characters.

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Description

This research situates anime within the global cultural context, highlighting how anime, through its immersive storytelling and relatable characters, constructs and reinforces perceptions towards others, the self and the world around them. This study is situated at the intersection between pop culture studies and gender studies, analyzing the mechanisms behind the development of affinity and identification with male anime characters while also exploring the way masculinity is perceived and negotiated in relation to these characters. Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital were utilized in order to interpret the results upon observing that attitudes and hierarchies are constructed regarding anime characters and real people in society are identical.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 12 respondents, 6 females and 6 males, in order to avoid gender biases. The respondents were chosen using convenience sampling while also using the snowball method. The interview was made up of two parts, the first part exploring the real life perceptions and attitudes of the respondent while the second part examining the perceptions and attitudes regarding anime characters. Thus, it was possible to analyze the way they mirror each other by applying Bourdieu's theoretical framework.

The study reveals that identification and affinity are deeply rooted in broader socio-cultural structures. Additionally, significant differences emerge in the way masculinity and aesthetics are perceived and valued by each gender. Male respondents care more about a character's masculinity, seeing them as potential role models, while female respondents are interested more in the expression of personality through aesthetics.



Is the grass greener on the other side? Remittances, inequality, and changing labour regime in Romania's agriculture

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Description

Food security is becoming increasingly problematized, as the last Covid-pandemic and the ensuing lockdown, or the crisis on Ukrainian cereals in the last summer have demonstrated. How migration and return change agriculture in different countries of origin, including the Eastern Europe, is less understood. In this paper we look at the ways in which agriculture and the labour regime in agriculture changes under the impact of international migration and return in different Romanian contexts. We analyse how two types of actors get involved in the Romanian agriculture: small scale entrepreneurs and self-employed agricultural workers on one hand, and poor returnees from West European agriculture seasonal workers, on the other hand. We argue that inequality affects agriculture substantially by unfolding diverging effects of remittances and social remittances - while richer Romanian farmers try to emulate ideas and practices from abroad, often failing, the poor disinvest their labour as their expectations changed. We have carried out qualitative research in the summer of 2021 and in 2022 in different rural localities in the southern Transylvania and in the region of Timișoara, a larger city in Western Romania. By juxtaposing different rural and regional contexts and different types of returnees in agriculture we thus have a more refined understanding on how relations of inequality played out in such contexts.



Tackling Sexism within the EU Labor Market. A Descriptive Approach on Why We Need to Switch the Focus on Modern Manifestations of Sexism at the Workplace.

Crimela Dragan

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Description

This presentation aims to highlight the necessity to pay more attention to some new, multiple forms of sexism recently identified within gender-related literature, as those manifestations have a negative impact on women's equal opportunities and treatment within the workplace. Those are recent conceptualizations of gender-based discrimination that bring to attention the fact that gender-equality issues are no longer authentic, as women already benefit from equality within different public areas (such as workplaces) and private fields (inside the household). I do not contest the progresses that have been made related to gender equality but, statistically speaking, no country has fully achieved gender equality in its true sense, and this is why we need to switch our focus on naming, studying, and addressing them properly. Due to the existent legislation against any forms of discrimination at the EU level and worldwide, direct cases of discrimination are converted into much subtle, covered manifestations that sometimes cannot even be named, let alone approached from a legal perspective. Considering so, the *theoretical* framework will be based on the concepts of benevolent (Glick & Fiske, 1996), modern, subtle sexism (Benokraitis, 1997), and neosexism (Tougas, 1999), while the *practical* part will try to point out the lack of focus on those new manifestations of sexism within EU labor market, as supported by (i) a poor legislation against gender-related microaggressions (ii) a descriptive situation of gender discrimination within workplaces at the EU level, alongside with the causes and effects on the victims.



**Foreigners in the power networks of King Charles II of Romania.
Approaching the interwar foreign relations from a royal perspective
(1930-1937)**

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Description

Within the economy of the present intervention, I attempt to analyze the frequency with which foreign citizens transiting Greater Romania, between 1930 and 1937, were received in royal audiences by Carol II of Romania. The audiences granted by King Carol II to foreigners, on the territory of Greater Romania, will be analyzed according to their frequency, nationality and identity of the participants. A profile of the external relations Romania developed during the democratic reign of King Charles II will emerge from this analysis. The external relations of the Kingdom of Romania from 1930-1937 will be structured and analyzed according to the official status of the foreigners officially received in such royal audiences: ambassadors, politicians, army generals, bankers, industrialists and businessmen, people of culture, academics, scientists, artists, clergy, and media representatives. Future work will be focused on statistically modeling the structure of the dataset using relational hyperevent modeling.



Nursing Homes in Romania. Exploring the Intersection of Commercialization and Institutional Dynamics

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Description

The migration on a broad scale that has occurred in the past twenty years has resulted in a notable reduction of skilled workers in Romania, impacting various sectors of employment, including healthcare and caregiving. The complex phenomenon, exacerbated by the diminishing influence of the welfare state, necessitates a reevaluation of intergenerational care frameworks, leading to the development of new care models led by institutions. This study focuses on the institutional, policy-oriented, and legislative aspects of senior care arrangements that involve outsourcing and commercialization. It explores how these arrangements shift the responsibility of care away from the private family sphere. Preliminary observations, derived from the analysis of official data, reveal substantial disparities in the spatial distribution of licensed services across counties and within each specific county. The significant variations in the accessibility of government services throughout the country are primarily determined by the interplay of legislation, financial systems governing these services, and commercial interests. The study provides an in-depth understanding of the intricate relationships among social welfare, commercialization, migration, and the evolving landscape of aged care in Romania. The findings address both immediate challenges and offer insights into broader societal implications within European and global contexts.



Technology Media's Role in Framing Artificial Intelligence Inequality and Bias: A Mixed-Methods Research

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Description

Issues concerning the potential impacts of artificial intelligence on bias and inequality have garnered significant attention in public discourse. The present study aims to examine how inequalities and biases produced in the context of artificial intelligence development are framed in technology news. The data used are news articles published in a popular technology media online magazine published in the last four years (2020-2023). Methodologically, the study employed a mixed method approach, using topic modelling for a quantitative appraisal of themes related to the issue and thematic analysis for a qualitative, in-depth assessment of the themes discussed. Findings reveal various types of inequalities and biases framed by technology media sources. Findings also indicate key moments in terms of technological advancements and highlight the most influential companies' actors involved in the discourse on AI technologies and inequalities.



Personal, Social, and Technological Factors Predicting Children's Responses to Sharenting: The Case of Romania

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Description

The widespread digital practice of online sharing of children's personal data, known as **sharenting**, is gaining attention in academia and among policymakers due to concerns about the vulnerable position parents put their children in through their online behavior. It is often argued that this practice can negatively affect children, making them vulnerable to online risks and identity theft, and can damage the parent-child relationship by undermining trust (**Sterling et al., 2021**). Moreover, sharenting contradicts the protective social and legal role of parents and may violate children's rights to their (digital) identity (Doğan Keskin et al., 2023).

Unlike some studies that take a normative or abstract stance, our study favors children's perspectives and takes a broader stance. While sharenting can put children in risky and unpleasant situations online (exposing them to bullying or hate speech, damaging their online reputation), other parental digital practices that do not expose children's personal data could have the same result. As such, the aim of the study is to understand the individual, social and technological factors that predict how various children feel about and respond to unpleasant situations in which they are placed by their parents online practices (including sharenting). We will rely on the 2018 Romanian EU Kids Online database, which collected data from a nationally representative sample of 9-16-year-old Romanian children (**Velicu et al., 2019; Zlamal et al., 2020**).

The theoretical framework used in the study combines the EU Kids Online analytical framework (**Livingstone et al., 2017**) and family systems theory (Peebles & Chen, 2023).

**“Enjoy the playing!?” De-professionalization and its related challenges amongst kindergarten teachers in Hungary**

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Description

Teachers' profession has met numerous challenges and been undergoing substantial changes in the past decades. Teachers in many European contexts have experienced: loss of prestige, low salary, growing external control and decreasing professional autonomy. In Hungary this has led to an educational crisis, as schools are suffering from an extreme lack of teachers. This is also true for kindergartens, which have been in the meanwhile accorded with an ever more important role in the “production of school-ready children”. Based on qualitative empirical research, we present those transformations that have significantly affected this profession during the past decade in Hungary. In addition to regulatory-institutional changes we show that broader socio-cultural processes such as the transformation of parenting norms also pose new challenges. We argue that these broader transformations have resulted in the amplification of external pressures from two sides: from the state through increasing control and requirements as kindergartens are undergoing schoolification and standardization, as well as from stronger parental requirements as intensive parenting norms are reconfiguring the relations between parents and professionals. This have led to the de-professionalization of kindergarten teachers: a decrease in their autonomy and social prestige. These processes, furthermore, often collide with the main values that teachers accord to their profession, whilst they are often not provided with the resources for satisfying these new requirements. This is causing unresolvable tensions for the teachers, which further aggravates the situation of this profession, making it more difficult to find solutions for the growing shortage of professionals.



The effects of international migration on prison life

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Description

Some shortcomings of international cooperation mechanisms are the failure to identify the person's domicile, with the consequence of hindering or significantly hampering judicial proceedings, the execution of European arrest warrants without deducting the period spent in custody abroad or the extradition of the person from abroad to continue serving the sentence in Romania without a minimum characterization of the convicted person, which often leads to a delay of early release.

22% of new entrants to the penitentiary system are received in Rahova Penitentiary. One explanation for this high percentage is the intake of final convicts from Bucharest Airport.

Meanwhile, the number of persons surrendered from partner states on the basis of guarantees provided by the PNA increased in 2022, with 442 prisoners transferred for the execution of their sentence, compared to 2021, when 365 prisoners were transferred.

As a result, the number of prisoners transferred to serve sentences increased by 21% in 2022 compared to 2021.

The figures from the 2023 Rahova Penitentiary report show an increase of 110%, from 365 to 767 prisoners received in the Romanian system through extradition, which further demonstrates not only the magnitude of the phenomenon, but also its acceleration.

Behind the cold official numbers there are stories to be told and different perceptions to be explored on the consequences of the internationalization of life for people, in general, and inmates, in particular, which are worthy of further exploration in order to address the shortcomings of a generally recognized imperfect system.



The standardization and mediatization of local and ethnic identities mirrored by supporters rivalry between supporters of two local teams in a developing post-Fordist city

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Description

In Cluj-Napoca the social significance of rivalry between the so-labelled “Romanian” Universitatea Cluj 1919 and the “Hungarian” CFR 1907 football teams represents more than a symbolic fight and competition between supporters due to the different cultural embeddedness and social history. The community-based CFR was established in 1907 by the employees of the Hungarian Railways, whereas the new Romanian administration created the U in 1919 to promote nation-building. In the early 2000's local ethnic Hungarian business groups formed the owner circle of the CFR, having Champions League successes. The U is owned mainly by Romanian businesspeople and administration members. The base of CFR supporters is formed by middle/upper-middle-class strata, characterized by upward mobility who were the winners of the social changes, while the majority of the U's fans are not.

After 2000 both teams went through the process of professionalization, which led to the commodification of the game and the commercialization of players. Thanks to television, in turn, the practices of the supporters also changed, the representation of the identity of the two teams became more visual and eventually standardized.

Based on textual and visual analysis techniques complemented with interviews conducted with supporters the presentation aims to show how local and ethnic identities and cultural narratives related to football have become standardized mediatized products in line with local social and economic changes following the post-Fordist turn. Theoretically, I adopted a constructivist perspective on how social groups construct their mediatized common identity.



ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS: Criteria and degrees of openness

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Description

Individuals as social beings engage in multiple romantic relationships. At first thought, only the process of attraction offers amplitude, but like any interaction or social structure, it can be of several types. Considered a relationship model in many societies, the best known and practiced is monogamy. In opposition to monogamous relationships, the term "consensual non-monogamous relationships" (CNM) refers to relational arrangements in which partners agree to have more than one romantic or sexual partner during the relationship and is often used as an umbrella term to encompass several forms of relationships, such as open relationships, polyamorous relationships, or swinging practices. In relationships there are various rules or relational contracts on the terms and conditions exposed by the partners, but the question arises: are these rules flexible? The present quantitative research wants to put into perspective monogamous and open relationships as elements of the same axis - where monogamous relationships represent the foundation of closing a romantic relationship, and at the other end are open relationships as the extreme of openness - and determine if there are degrees or levels of openness between the two extremes. Starting from the strictness of monogamous relationships regarding certain behaviors that a partner of the relationship could perform with an individual outside the relationship and which are considered not as socially accepted within such type of relationship, the study aims to discover the criteria which determines the degrees of openness of monogamous relationships until they fully reach openness.



Suburbanization Patterns in Romania in the Light of the Newest Census Data

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Description

Recent years have seen significant changes in the patterns of suburbanization in Romania. This presentation will explore these evolving trends by analyzing and interpreting newly released census data, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of suburban growth dynamics.

Initial findings from the census data highlight several key trends. Firstly, Romania's urbanization trajectory appears to be reversing: after a period of rapid growth following state socialism, there has been stagnation and now a decline. Currently, 52.2% of Romania's population resides in urban areas, a decrease of nearly two percentage points since 2011. The largest population declines have been observed in major cities such as Bucharest, Timișoara, Cluj, Iași, and Galați. Meantime, there is a noticeable increase in the population living in suburban areas compared to previous census periods. The most rapidly growing communities are typically villages located near these major cities, such as Florești (Cluj), Popești-Leordeni (Bucharest), Bragadiru (Bucharest), Miroslava (Iași), and Giroc (Timișoara).

The study primarily investigates the qualitative aspects of the phenomenon, creating a typology of models in formation. Understanding these shifting suburbanization patterns is crucial for urban planners, policymakers, and researchers to devise effective strategies for sustainable urban development.

Keywords: suburbanization, urbanization, Romania, spatial patterns, decentralization, sustainable development.



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Speaking ill of the dead - Temporality and ethics of posthumous discourse

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Description

“Don’t speak ill of the dead” is a well-known saying related to the taboo of damaging the reputation of a departed individual, preserving a favorable image in the ways we commemorate them. For my presentation I wish to challenge this notion, explore why it is that no harm should be done to the reputation of the deceased and also why we should speak up and potentially cause disrepute to the departed.

In my presentation I will utilize Erving Goffman’s (1959) perspective regarding the social actor and how we play our multitude of roles through carefully choreographed customs and examine the silence imposed culturally on the living, combined with the perspectives of Noelle-Neumann’s (1993) perspective on silence, public opinion and reputation, together with Eviatar Zerubavel’s (2006) perspective, addressing the denial of misdeeds committed by the departed in life as a means of control and the power of speaking-up.

Is speaking ill of the dead an act of necro violence? Should the living pretend that all the misdeeds of the deceased have been erased or never happened in the first place? When can we speak up and should the departed hold the same power over us as they did in life? I wish to explore all of these questions and present my perspectives and findings on the matter while using well-known, controversial figures as examples.



Fitness trackers, ontonorms, and the medicalization of everyday life.

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Description

The widespread use of fitness trackers often ends up reconfiguring not just the ways in which users interpret their own sensory information, but also popular and personal conceptions about the body, the self, physical activity and even personal relationships. Wearables and the technological ecosystem around them operate with various fundamental assumptions at play in how both scientists and users end up describing care, bodies and physical activity. Different trackers thus incorporate different ontonorms, afford different kinds of actions, and lead to different entanglements inside the cognitive assemblage between senses and sensors. One direct consequence of this is that everyday life enters the wearable clinic, where the power of the gaze is replaced by that of the algorithm. Mundane activities, relegated to the background, become infused with medical possibilities. Everything can be data-fied, and become an apparently neutral event, while still keeping the human anxiously in the dark.



Trust. Emotional literacy or knowledge in Education

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Description

Literacy is a concept that enables us to encapsulate the basic and prerequisite knowledge of something in order to express and function, is an ability to represent and understand content, in that certain area of life. Trust is more of a *cognitive evaluation than an emotion*, according to Brene Brown.

These first elements of literacy are given from the womb and in early childhood in direct relation with the first prime care giver. That is where trust starts to build through attachment.

The early learning education stage is placed according to tests as essential and fundamental for later success and development. Such an approach sends us to research the relational context, to life experience and the way emotional literacy of one's is constructed during their educational years.

Looking at how trust is built as a dominant aspect in emotional literacy, and how it is woven in the social fabric of someone's life is a great way of bringing out front the unmet quality needs of students. By supporting social and emotional learning in cultural linguistic ways in schools we enable children to communicate and develop according to their potential.

ELSA is an educational structure in England that is equipping educators, parents and carers to support children's well-being and development in education. Online Focus group presentation and the results from interviewing 12 specialists or members of ELSA in order to channel the main aspects and concepts for further research and interviews with teachers and students and parents in local Romanian schools.



“In this together”? Gender inequality associated with home-working couples during the first COVID lockdown

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Description

The first lockdown, conferred upon us by the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, created a unique, 3-month-long, laboratory-like situation that made gender relations and women's work especially relevant for social research. Full-time employed parents who switched to working from home were in a unique position to renegotiate the division of housework, childcare, or the management of school-related tasks. This paper explores what happened to the gendered division of unpaid work and what factors explain the (failed) renegotiation between full-time working parents. To explore this issue, we interviewed 52 Hungarian-speaking mothers in two countries, Hungary and Romania, who were living in heterosexual dual-earner families with children under the age of 14, and who were working full-time. Results show that, despite the unusual situation, the usual pattern of the division of unpaid work was sustained by most parents. Even though they were unhappy and sometimes overwhelmed with their workload, most mothers did not mind the division of care duties. Research findings deliver evidence that mothers' lack of willingness and ability to renegotiate the division of unpaid labor in the household was determined both from “inside” and “outside” households. The gendered nature of care work and intensive parenting and mothers' position in the labor market, including the flexibility of their employment, are two sets of mutually interwoven factors that contributed to women's lack of willingness to challenge the unequal division of reproductive work.



Between Embrace and Reluctance: Teachers' Engagement with Generative AI - An Exploratory Qualitative Study on Romanian Teachers

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Description

With the rise of Artificial Intelligence technology in the last decade, some studies have approached the educational opportunities of AI (Liu, 2021; Charisi et al., 2022), but they mostly have focused either on young children (pre- or primary school) or on university students. Almost all of them approach the guided or prompted educational use of AI, assuming a central role for teachers in the process.

The advancement of Generative AI—a technology that creates new content by learning patterns from existing data—introduces new practices in the educational use of AI, empowering students to take control of the use/misuse of such technology in school-related contexts.

But how prepared are teachers to face the challenges this new situation brings? While some previous studies proposed theoretical frameworks to explain teachers' attitudes towards new technology in general (e.g., the Technology Acceptance Model, Davis, 1989), there is still a lack of factual data about teachers' actual engagement with and knowledge about generative AI. How aware are they of the possibilities and limits of generative AI? What are teachers' AI-related practices, and how competent are they in using this technology? What is teachers' attitude towards generative AI in general and its educational potential in particular?

To answer these questions, we use data from an exploratory qualitative study with 15 primary and secondary school teachers from Romania. The data were collected between May-August 2024 using semi-structured interviews and snowball sampling. The data were thematically analysed.



Time structures and artificial intelligence. New capital flows on emerging markets

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Description

Artificial intelligence is redefining temporal structures in ways that enhance predictive capabilities and accelerate decision-making processes. Traditional tasks that once took days or even months can now be completed in a matter of minutes or seconds. Natural language processing, machine learning algorithms and other data mining models produce an unprecedented compression of time that influences individual lives, societal norms, and economic systems. We discuss this process of time compression by considering the concept of time capital and its different connections with financial, cultural, social and semantic capital. We show that artificial intelligence enables a commodification of time that leads to the creation of new markets for products and services. This process involves a different way to link time to labour and productivity with consequences on how people understand themselves and the world around in terms of predictability, anticipation and governability. Therefore, artificial intelligence raises critical questions about the nature of work, social norms, creativity, innovation, resilience, as well as about the ethics of liability and responsibility.



THE ADULT AUTISM DIAGNOSIS NETWORK

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Description

In Romania, we do not have a clear system for evaluating and diagnosing autism in adults. Until 2013, autism was not recognized by the national health services as an adult condition, being replaced at the age of 18 with other diagnoses, such as schizophrenia. Now, in theory, the condition is defined for adult diagnosis, but it remains a difficult and unclear process, lacking standardized procedures. Finding it difficult to encounter a psychiatrist willing to evaluate autism in adults, especially in state funded clinics, where autism is still taboo, people can not follow the usual path of patient-doctor-evaluation-diagnosis. Instead, the diagnostic process heavily relies on the awareness that autistic adults generate through their relationships with others and on the complex processes of self-diagnosis and peer-diagnosis people undergo before seeking an official form of evaluation. Therefore, a diagnostic network is being built, primarily involving members of the autistic adult community and only later, if ever, involving mental health professionals.



When Online Personal Space is Open to Hate: A Qualitative Exploration of Antigypsyist Hate Speech Experienced by Young Roma

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Description

Recent research highlights a surge in cyberhate and online problematic behaviors involving children and young people in various roles, as witnesses, perpetrators, or victims. This study addresses the existing gap in the literature regarding how young Roma perceive and cope with antigypsyist online hate speech and how they approach this discourse, by normalizing or challenging it. During the COVID-19 pandemic, narratives about Roma oscillated between blatant and coded racism, adapting to avoid flagging by IT/media platforms. This paper aims to understand Roma youths' experiences with antigypsyist online hate speech based on their experiences in the online media space. It presents their subjective perceptions as members of a highly discriminated ethnic group. The main research question is: How do Roma youths evaluate the intensity of the perceived antigypsyist online hate speech they encounter in their personal accounts?

Using a qualitative methodology, the study explores the discursive repertoires against Roma, identifying the main forms and themes of antigypsyist hate speech. Data were analyzed using a content analysis method, with 388 monitoring tool (MT) instances collected from September 2020 to September 2021. Although the findings are not generalizable, they offer a solid foundation for developing policies to combat antigypsyist online hate speech and promote a safer, more inclusive internet.

The study concludes that racially loaded toxic discourse is a pervasive feature of the online public space, spread across diverse user groups with varying cultural and educational backgrounds, often lacking empathy towards victimized groups.



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Antigypsyism and its environmental occlusions

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Description

This paper explores various forms of antigypsyism occurring through environmental banishment that gets manifested at the ground level (body, house or street). These environmental occlusions are significant because they link socio-cultural practices of racialisation, meanings of the “racialised Other” and environmental scripts that are made (il)legible in social space. I draw on cases from several Transylvanian cities – Miercurea Ciuc, Targu Mures and Daroiaia - to theorize these broader theoretical connections and, in this way, the novel ways in which antigypsyism gets scripted in the Anthropocene. The methods used include interviews and group discussions as well the analysis of photographs, secondary sources and surveys. The main results is to show that the apparent non-anthropoc character of environmental impacts is occluded in the local social space and hence requires a new critical reading.



How health (doesn't) change in reaction to external (non-personalized) events – evidence from a refugee shock

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Description

Refugee shocks are a current reality. Existing literature educates us on their economic impact, yet little is known about their effects on health and well-being. We depart from the assumption that people (i.e., residents) deploy physical and psychological resources as a reaction to disruptors (i.e., refugee shocks). We predict these resources erode over time, increasing vulnerability to symptoms of stress. We focus on Switzerland for two practical reasons. First are the clear 'shocks' in refugee arrivals represented by the Yugoslavs in the 1990s. Second is access to data to exploit a quasi-experimental setup. Our primary source is the Swiss Health Survey, supplemented with information from the Swiss Census, the Statistics of the Foreign Resident Population, and the Building and Dwelling Survey. We estimate an (instrumented) pseudo-panel difference-in-differences with treatment intensity model to compare regions that received varying numbers of refugees. We uncover no changes in the estimates of health outcomes. Moreover, these estimates are consistent over time when considering the moderating effect of education. The lack of vulnerability of residents in experiencing lower health refutes the narrative of the 'threat' foreigners pose to locals. It appears external non-personalized events don't have the same influence on health as personal life events.



Analyzing Research Trends of Immigration Using multiple paradigms of modernity

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Description

Sociologist Zygmund Bauman, which has coined the term “*Liquid Modernity*” believes that the main characteristic of modern societies is that they are changing faster than previous ones and are defined by uncertainty. Sociologist Lazăr Vlăsceanu somewhat approves with Bauman’s perspective, but believes that modern day societies are characterized by the presence of “*multiple modernities*”. To support his point of view, he employs multiple sociological paradigms, meant to illustrate the different ways in which both individuals and societies are referring towards modernity. Thus, he manages to prove the fluidity within modern day societies differs based on perspective of the researcher. Some of the paradigms Vlăsceanu are “consecrated modernity”, “recent modernity” “reflexive modernity” and “post-modernity” perspective.

Immigration is a phenomenon which occurs globally. However, there are regions in which is has barely been studied. Moreover, there is no paper which analyses the evolution of scientific research on immigration. This paper wants to cover this literature gap, by evaluating published papers on immigration using the different paradigms of modernity illustrated by Lazăr Vlăsceanu. My research provides an in-depth analysis, meant to present the evolution of the academic papers which research immigration. Through the method of document analysis, of the scientific papers retrieved from DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals) database, using key-words as research unit, I identified the main themes associated with immigration and their evolution. Initially, immigration was perceived from an economic perspective of reflexive modernity, but after the 2015 crisis, it was seen from a post-modern view of assimilation.



Integrative Approaches to Inter-ethnic Relations: Addressing the Gaps in the Research of Hungarian Minorities in Romania

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Description

After 1989, the study of Hungarian minorities and interethnic relations in Romania has been dominated by ethnopolitical, social-psychological, and historical institutionalist perspectives, heavily influenced by nationalism research. These approaches have three main shortcomings. First, they are deterministic, suggesting that established Hungarian institutions and regulatory environments leave individuals no choice but to performatively reproduce Hungarian identity and reinforce a parallel institutional world. Second, they treat ethnic boundaries as entirely permeable, overlooking that Hungarian and Romanian ethnicity is closely tied to language proficiency – a form of human capital that requires accumulated work and resources, unequally distributed. Third, they focus primarily on the regulation of minority rights within the 'quadratic nexus' of minority leaders, the host state, the kin state, and international institutions, largely ignoring how structural changes brought by globalization, transnational deregulation, and marketization impact interethnic dynamics. Given the rise of populism and nationalism in the EU, the role of elites in shaping and instrumentalizing nationalism cannot be overstated. However, to gain a nuanced understanding of everyday interethnic relations, we need to address these gaps. In the intersection of critical economic sociology, political economy, transaction cost economics and economics of language, we present recent analyses that place greater emphasis on the resource nature of ethnicity, the reflective nature of bottom-up initiatives, and the effects of transnationalism and marketization. In line with the conference's focus on intersectionality, our goal is also to bridge the fragmented academic world of ethnic relations research by addressing the seemingly irreconcilable contradictions between symbolism and economism.



Ok, we hodl, but when do we sell: Insights from cryptocurrency trading behaviour experiments for airdrops

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Description

This paper investigates the trading behavior of cryptocurrency holders in response to airdrops, focusing on the decision-making process regarding when to sell or buy more of the freely received tokens.

The study utilizes an experimental design where participants interact with a simulated crypto wallet over 100 rounds, with the cryptocurrency price fluctuating in each round.

Key variables examined include **gender**, experience in **crypto trading**, **monthly income**, **the amount of the airdrop received**, and the **total value of cryptocurrencies** in the participant's wallet.

By analyzing how these factors influence trading decisions, the research provides valuable insights for token project developers on optimizing airdrop strategies. Specifically, it helps in identifying the most responsive demographics and determining the optimal token distribution amounts to foster active participation in the ecosystem. The findings aim to enhance the understanding of cryptocurrency trading behaviors and improve the efficacy of airdrop campaigns in the digital asset market.



Timisoara European Capital of Culture 2023 - a sociological story

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Description

Timișoara has won in 2016 the title of European Capital of Culture for 2021 (ECC), but due to pandemic reasons, the title was postponed for 2023. There were made several sociological researches, before and after decision, concerning the public interest for this program (2013, 2016, 2018, 2021 and 2023). In this paper we make a comparative analysis on the evolution of the population's interest for this program during a decade with a focus on the Program impact on the cultural consumption.