

RESEARCH COUNCIL Webinar Working Group (WWG)

Background on the ReCo Webinar Series

The ISA is a unique organization. International in focus and consisting of two types of members (individual and collective) it brings together sociologists from all continents in the pursuit of scientific dialogue and discovery.

The ISA counts 68 Research Committees, Working Groups and Thematic Groups (RCs/WGs/TGs), which cover the impressive range of sub-disciplines in sociology. The Research Council (ReCo) is the governing body of these topic-specific collectives. While the ISA's in-person Congress and Forum are already places for the RCs/WGs/TGs to meet and exchange, there has been a vibrant discussion within the ReCo about the need and interest to benefit from our global membership and offer a space for the cross-fertilization of ideas from the diverse RCs/WGs/TGs.

Aims and Scope

The **purpose** of this series is to:

- Organize a series of cross-cutting webinars that are of interest to ISA RCs/WGs/TGs members because they facilitate scientific discussions around current research
- Facilitate the collaboration of ISA RCs/WGs/TGs
- Record these webinars and make them available to ISA members who can use them in their teaching or other forms of training/engagement

The **theme** of the series is focused on “**Reconnecting RCs/WGs/TGs**” whereby we will have thematic sessions that start from a common entry point and explore how the topic is approached differently and can engage different sociological approaches in dialogue among two or more RCs/WGs/TGs.

The 2025 Webinar Series will consist of four webinars that will address following themes: 1) Our Planet and Us; 2) Sociology-Policy Interfaces; 3) Global Cities, People and Crises; 4) How to approach AI in teaching/researching in Sociology?



Generative Artificial Intelligence in the Research Process of Scholars and Students: Tool or/and Co-Contributor?

This webinar focuses on generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in the research process. Although to an extent AI in general has already been applied to various purposes in the research process (e.g. automated machine learning for text analysis), the rapidly accelerating advancement and accessibility of GenAI in recent years have produced novel benefits and challenges. It has the potential to reshape teaching, learning and the conduct of research in the future. The webinar examines both the use of GenAI in the process of learning about the research process (i.e. how students use it) and doing social research (i.e. how researchers use it).

Another important question is whether and to what extent GenAI not only reveals itself as a research tool, but also how the technology has an imminent constitutive effect on the research process and the researchers themselves. The webinar explores where the boundary lies between the application of GenAI as an efficient tool in different steps of the research process and GenAI becoming a “substantial” contributor alongside (or in place of?) a researcher.

The webinar does not aspire to produce any conclusive statements. It aims to facilitate a critical discussion among invited speakers and to prompt the audience to reflect upon the uses of GenAI in their research process practice.

The webinar is collaboratively organised by Inga Gaižauskaitė (RC33 Logic and Methodology in Sociology), Michael Grothe-Hammer (RC17 Sociology of Organizations), Lutfun Nahar Lata (RC21 Urban and Regional Development), Dirk Michel-Schertges (RC36 Alienation Theory and Research), and Markus Schulz (RC07 Futures Research).

Agenda: 20 November 2025 | 14:00 – 16:00 GMT

Chairs:

- Inga Gaižauskaitė, Senior Researcher in Sociology, Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences, Lithuania
- Lutfun Nahar Lata, Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Social Policy, The University of Melbourne, Australia
- Markus S. Schulz, Max Weber Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies, Germany

Kick-off Presentations:

What university students actually do with ChatGPT in their studies

Michael Grothe-Hammer, Professor in Sociology (Organization & Technology), Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway



University Research and ChatGPT/GenAI: Academic technician or withering scholar?

Dirk Michel-Schertges, Associate Professor in Educational Sociology, Aarhus University, Denmark

Discussants:

- Jens Peter Andersen, Senior Researcher, Aarhus University, Denmark
- Aisha Naz Ansari, Research Specialist, Aga Khan University, Pakistan
- Oscar Fontanelli Espinosa and Ligia Tavera Fenollosa, Research Professors, Research Group on Generative Artificial Intelligence, Latin American Social Sciences Institute, Mexico

About the Speakers:



Jens Peter Andersen is a Senior Researcher at the Danish Centre for Studies in Research and Research Policy at Aarhus University. His research combines theories from the sociology of science with quantitative scientometric and computational social science methods. This includes publication-based studies of social networks, funding allocations, structural inequalities and surveys of scientific staff. His work on inequality, bias and social stratification in academia has been published in *Nature Human Behaviour*, *PNAS*, and *Elife*, and he was the rapporteur of an European Commission expert report on gender inequalities in academic research during COVID-19. His current research also looks at the role of GenAI in academic research.



Aisha Naz Ansari is a Research Specialist at the Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development, Pakistan, and an Associate Fellow of Advance HE, UK. She is a member of the ESIC Working Group on AI for Evidence Synthesis under Cochrane Collaborations. She has conducted and published research in the areas of educational technology, teacher education, AI in higher education, systematic reviews, public-private partnerships, and classroom teaching and learning. Her particular research interest lies in exploring how the integration of AI shapes the processes and outcomes of educational activities such as teaching, research, and the development of graduate attributes. To date, she has 30 research publications to her credit.



Oscar Fontanelli Espinosa is Associate Professor in the Methods Lab at the Latin American School for Social Science (FLACSO) campus Mexico, where he founded and coordinates the International Diploma in Social Data Science. His interdisciplinary research focuses on applying computational social science methods, including machine learning, network theory and text mining, to the modeling and analysis of different phenomena such as population distribution, human mobility and information spread in digital networks.



Ligia Tavera Fenollosa is a Research Professor in Social Sciences at the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) in Mexico City. She serves on the board of the Research Committee 07 "Future Studies" of the International Sociological Association, and previously served on the board of Research Committee 48 "Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Change." Currently, she is President of the *Red Mexicana de Estudios de los Movimientos Sociales* and former Editor of *Movimientos. Revista Mexicana de Estudios de los Movimientos Sociales*. Her research focuses on social movements, collective action, crisis response, civic innovation, and the role of social media. Her work has been published in journals such as *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* and *Revista de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*, among others.



Michael Grothe-Hammer is Professor in Sociology (Organization and Technology) and the Head of the "Organization & Society" Research Group in the Department of Sociology and Political Science at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. He is also President of the Research Committee 17 "Sociology of Organizations" of the International Sociological Association, and Co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Organizational Sociology*. His research focuses on the relation between society, organizations, and technology. His works have been published in journals such as the *British Journal of Sociology*, *European Societies*, *Critical Sociology*, *Sociological Inquiry*, *Current Sociology*, and *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*.



Dirk Michel-Schertges is Associate Professor in International Sociology of Education at the Danish School of Education (DPU) - Aarhus University. He is also President of the Research Committee 36 "Alienation Theory and Research" of the International Sociological Association. His main interests include the (re-)construction of identity formations in light of contemporary processes of alienation within the cultural contexts of aesthetic education/Bildung, art, critical theory, alienation theory and research, educational policy, educational/pedagogical and social theory, political socialization, political education, social inequality, and biographical and historical approaches to the concept of Bildung.