

invites to the

International conference



Innovation and tradition: intersections, interactions and disputes in culture

October 26–27, 2026

Cuernavaca, Mexico

Our modern 21st Century world is accelerated due to huge technological changes with a deep impact in our everyday common lives. Since telegraph inaugurated the electric and electronic media era, many new technological layers have been added creating a faster and wider communication sphere (Habermas, 1999), transforming the way we perceive our environment and creating a different epistemological organization of the world (Lowe, 1986).

New media has always been a defiance for traditional power –Weber dixit–, as it reaches different people that were outsiders to the original communication sphere, as the Gutenberg’s printed Bibles religious revolution in the 15th Century (Briggs, 2002), or the mimeograph for the Spanish liberals in 1970s to break out Franco’s regime (Castells, 2009). Since the rise of the Internet in the 1990s to the proliferation of AI prompting tools in the 2020s, the media environment has become more complex and diverse. Many cultural assets emerged through the last 30 years, modifying not just the way we consume news, sports or entertainment, but also the way we interact with other people for pleasure or business.

The rise of digital communication not only generates different cultural assets, but it also strains culture to find a new placement in this late-modern cultural setting. The old cultural items must redefine its place in a world that is throwing away many of the liberal values that used to give order to the world, such as democracy, multiculturalism and open debate for social matters. Many things that we used to place as traditional practices were created to rely on them for building modern states and national identities through 19th and 20th Century, such as the iconic music for some Latin American countries, as the samba in Brazil during Getulio Vargas's period, the arise of tango and the prominent figure of Carlos Gardel in Argentina, or mariachi through the classical black and white Mexican movies in the Post-Mexican Revolution scenario (Larraín, 1994). These "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm, 2000) are now struggling to find a place inside this vertiginous cultural field where now reggaeton and corridos tumbados are not only Latin American musical trends, but they are in the top of worldwide popular music, taking back certain traditional values.

On the other side of this complex scenario, digital culture is also struggling to consolidate its place. The strong promise for a new whole digitalized human environment is not reaching its promised land. Meta has just announced the collapse of their Metaverse project, in which they invested nearly 80 billion dollars (Ashworth, 2026). Virtual reality doesn't become as popular as it was expected, not just for Meta. Reinforcing this example, in the musical industry, vinyl records surpass 1 billion sales in 2025, a barrier never beaten in 40 years (Leimkuehler, 2026). People are turning back to physical music formats, despite the astronomical musical offer in digital platforms. Maybe Schumpeter's idea of a creative destruction through modern innovation (Dalton, 2024) is no longer appealing. Culture has not surrendered to technological innovation (Postman, 1993); it is reconfiguring their relationship.

In this scenario, contemporary sociological thought must debate about the position of traditional and innovative culture in the second quarter of 21st Century, not only in the obvious tension between poles (Poole, 2018), but also in their links, intersections and other forms of relationship.

This colloquium emerges from the need to think and propose new epistemological positions to the cultural frame. From an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspective, our aim is to bring together researchers from fields like sociology, communication science, Cultural Studies, anthropology, history, computational sciences, political science, and others, to explore critical

reflections on cultural tradition and cultural innovation. Presentations will be organized around the following thematic axes:

1. Memory and heritage

Memory and cultural heritage are no longer stable repositories for identity. They become dynamic fields under constant reinterpretation. In the context of accelerated technological change, heritage is increasingly mediated, digitized, and recontextualized, raising questions about authenticity, preservation, and ownership. The digital world is challenging traditional institutions such as museums, classical art and religious practices to reconfigure their identity for new diverse audiences. At the same time, cultural memory is reshaped for algorithmic logics, producing new forms of collective remembrance and selective forgetting. This axis invites reflections on how memory heritage is negotiated, reconstructed, or disputed in an evolving cultural ecosystem.

2. Digital media and Artificial Intelligence

Digital media and Artificial Intelligence are redefining not only communication processes but also epistemological frameworks through which reality is interpreted. AI-driven systems—from recommendation algorithms to generative models—intervene in cultural production, distribution, and consumption, challenging established notions of authorship, creativity, and agency. At the same time, these technologies amplify asymmetries of power, data control, and cultural representation. Rather than a linear narrative of technological progress, this axis explores the ambivalent role of digital infrastructures as both enablers of democratization and mechanisms of control, questioning how culture is being reorganized under conditions of automation, platformization, and datafication.

3. Tradition, innovation and creativity in cultural industries

Cultural industries operate as privileged spaces where tradition and innovation intersect, hybridize, and compete. Contemporary creative economies increasingly rely on the recombination of traditional cultural forms with digital technologies, producing new genres, aesthetics, and markets. However, this process also raises tensions regarding authenticity, commodification, and cultural appropriation. The resurgence of certain traditional elements within globalized markets –often mediated by digital platforms—suggests that innovation does not necessarily displace tradition but

reconfigures its meaning and value. This axis examines how cultural industries negotiate these dynamics, particularly in music, film, design, and digital content production.

4. Education in the AI and Post-COVID era

Pandemics forced all scholar institutions worldwide to assume new teaching models and strategies in which digitalization overcame a central role. Now, in the post-pandemic educational landscape, the rapid integration of AI technologies has transformed pedagogical practices, institutional structures, and knowledge production processes into hybrid learning environments and AI-assisted tools, challenging traditional models of teaching, the student-teacher relationship, and intellectual authority. At the same time, this new scenario increases historical inequalities and structural gaps, such as access to technology and digital literacy. This axis invites critical perspectives on how education systems are adapting or resisting these transformations, and how cultural transmission, critical thinking, and humanistic values are being redefined in an increasingly automated and mediated learning environment.

5. Cultural policies in the post democratic world

In a context where liberal democratic values are being rejected by the new despotic political system, cultural policies face new challenges regarding regulation, representation, and governance. The rise of digital platforms amid global cultural phenomena, complicates traditional forms of state and market agents to intervene in culture. Simultaneously, issues such as censorship, misinformation, fake news, cultural sovereignty, and identity politics are gaining relevance among new generations born in the Internet era. This axis explores how cultural policies are being rearticulated in a post-democratic frame, where the boundaries between public and private are blurred, and where cultural production becomes a strategic field for political and ideological dispute.

6. Gender, diversity and cultural representation

The intersection of gender, diversity, and cultural representation remains a central terrain of symbolic struggle in contemporary social studies. Digital media have expanded the visibility of marginalized voices while also reproducing new forms of exclusion, stereotyping, and algorithmic bias. Cultural innovation has opened spaces for alternative narratives and identities, yet these coexist with persistent structural inequalities. This axis addresses how representations of gender,

ethnicity, sexuality, and other forms of diversity are negotiated within both traditional and digital cultural frameworks, emphasizing the role of culture as a site for resistance, negotiation, and transformation.

7. Sustainability, environment and cultural practices

The growing awareness of environmental crises has foregrounded the relationship between culture and sustainability. Cultural practices –both traditional and contemporary– play a crucial role in shaping environmental values, behaviors, and imaginaries. At the same time, technological innovation introduces new possibilities and contradictions, from digital dematerialization to the ecological impact of data infrastructures. This axis examines how cultural systems respond to environmental challenges, exploring the role of indigenous knowledge, sustainable traditions, and innovative practices in redefining human-environment relationships within the context of global ecological transformation.

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Submission Guidelines

- Abstract length: 300 words.
- Keywords: At least 4 keywords, according to UNESCO Thesaurus guideline.
- Language: English or Spanish.
- File format: pdf.
- Filename: *LastName_FirstName_Title.pdf*.
- Submission method: Online submission form on the event web page or email to ocerrillo@tec.mx
- Full paper (optional): Authors may submit a full paper of 10,000 words for consideration for post-conference publication.

Important Dates

- Abstract submission opens: May 6, 2026.
- Abstract deadline: June 26, 2026.
- Notification of acceptance: July 24, 2026.
- Final registration for accepted authors: by August 14, 2026.
- Colloquium dates: October 26–27, 2026.

Registration and Fees

A differentiated fee structure will be announced on the event website, including reduced rates for students and ISA/RC14 members. Detailed registration and payment instructions will be published soon. Participants are advised to arrange accommodation early.

Organizers and Contact

Organizers: ISA RC14 Sociology of Communication, Knowledge and Culture and the School of Humanities and Education, Tecnológico de Monterrey Campus Cuernavaca .

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