

Global Sociology in Turbulent Times

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These are times when, once again, we feel that all that is solid melts into air.

In a rising number of countries, state leaders are promoting distrust in science, and attacks on the social sciences are multiplying. Fake news circulates more widely and with greater impact than research-based analysis. An unprecedented concentration of wealth allows a small number of billionaires to control both mass media and social media. Scientific evidence is being denied in order to dismiss systemic environmental and societal emergencies. National or personal interests and logics of power prevail over the rule of law, international law and human rights, fuelling violence, war and settler colonialism. Artificial intelligence is reshaping the nature of knowledge and intellectual work, introducing tools that may serve both surveillance capitalism and emancipatory projects. On every continent, academic freedom is under threat.

In a world shaped by persistent turbulence and rapid transformations, how can sociology produce knowledge that goes beyond immediate reactions and contributes to a deeper understanding of ongoing changes?

The XXI ISA World Congress of Sociology will bring together a global community of researchers driven by the shared conviction that sociology has a crucial role to play in making sense of these turbulent times, by uncovering the social roots of crises and transformations, analysing how inequalities are produced and contested, examining how institutions, democracy and society are reshaped, and understanding how actors, from grassroots movements to global elites, navigate and transform our world.

Global Sociology as an Approach, a Project and a Dialogue

These turbulent times are defined by profound paradoxes. Daily news immerses us in a dystopian reality. Information has never been more accessible, yet misinformation, conspiracies, distrust and surveillance are on the rise. Technological developments, including AI, create unprecedented opportunities, yet also further concentrate power and wealth. Climate change is increasingly tangible in everyday life, yet strategically downplayed or blatantly denied by powerful actors. Deepening global interconnectedness affects all realms of social life and society, yet nationalist visions and racism are gaining strength, fuelling fragmentation, conflict, and war.

In this context, one of the core missions of sociology is to analyse this expanding interdependence at the global scale. The planet has become our shared survival unit. The global is more than an abstract analytical scale; it is a condition of shared vulnerability and shared responsibility. The interconnection of ecological, democratic, economic, and geopolitical crises calls for a global sociology capable of engaging with this complexity, moving away from reductionist narratives.

Global sociology is both an analytical perspective and a project. It invites us to forge a more inclusive discipline by building bridges – between North and South, East and West, academia and society, theory and practice. Over the past decades, sociology has been transformed through an increasingly global dialogue. Contributions from non-Western scholars, alongside feminist, decolonial, subaltern and post-Western approaches, have challenged the Eurocentrism and androcentrism that long structured the discipline. The dialogue with these critical studies has enriched sociology by providing new analyses and conceptual, methodological and epistemological tools that enable us to better address contemporary challenges, from the environmental collapse to the resurgence of authoritarianism, colonial legacies and the persistence of racial hierarchies, patriarchy and war.

The XXI ISA World Congress of Sociology will take place as a fully in-person event from 4 to 10 July 2027 in Gwangju, a city marked by South Koreans' historic struggle for democracy.

The Congress theme “Global Sociology in Turbulent Times” calls attention to the experiences of those most affected by crises and to their role in the production of knowledge. Sociologists working in contexts of war, genocide, extreme inequality, or environmental devastation linked to extractivist capitalism demonstrate that sociology remains not only possible but essential under such difficult conditions. They remind us that societies are shaped not only by crises, but also by resistance, creativity, and the pursuit of alternatives.

In times of disinformation, polarisation, and distrust in science, sociology plays a vital role in fostering rigorous analyses, critical thinking and informed dialogue. In the face of climate change, war, rising inequalities, and resurgent nationalism, sociology has become an indispensable tool for living together on a finite planet.

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