

Social Dynamics in the post -Covid age. Inequalities, integration, migration in regional, urban and rural context

Conference at the Centre for Social Sciences,

Budapest 17-18 October 2022

Registration and participation at the conference are free of charge. All costs (travel, accommodation) are to be covered by the participants.

Registration deadline: July 10.

Registration form: [Click here](#)

This two-day conference aims to provide an analysis of the complex social, political and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The European continent was already experiencing turbulent times when the pandemic arrived in terms of rising social inequalities, mass migration, climate change and the continuous discord of fake news. The conference will assess the changes caused by the pandemic to social mobility including international migration and tourism, as well as considering implications for sustainability in a regional, urban and rural context.

The framework for the event will be social integration, which means the mechanisms that coordinate the repetitive actions of members of society and set the framework for social reproduction, the processes of cultural reproduction, socialization and cooperation, trust and participation, and the expression of belonging to the community as well as direct personal relationships. Social integration is a particularly important dimension to consider when assessing the effects of the epidemic and the characteristics of the post-COVID era. The quality and degree of integration and the system of social inequality have a fundamental impact on the success of the fight against the pandemic. The long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are the rearranging of social inequalities and health status in addition to solidarity, networks, willingness to cooperate, trust, sense of exclusion, social, political, and labour market activity.

The pandemic itself is an environmental disaster, but little is known about its long-term consequences on dealing with climate change, It may represent a switch in behaviour, which will open up new opportunities to re-shape the relationship between man and nature. Alternatively, it will cast a shadow over this challenge. The impact is difficult to foresee, especially in the face of a war threatening a food crisis, the natural devastation of which is immeasurable.

The post-COVID age coincides with the unpredictability of a period of war, the political effects of which have already become apparent with the rise of populism and the strengthening of European integration and unity. But how will all of this impact on the legitimacy of social stability and political integration? We invite members of the scientific community to answer some of these questions.

Organizing committee:

Bernadett Csurgó, Imre Kovách (chair), Luca Kristóf, Boldizsár Megyesi, Attila Papp Z

1. Social inequality and integration

Convenors: Karolina Balogh, Ágnes Győri, Ákos Huszár and Miklós Illéssy (Institute for Sociology CSS)

In recent decades, income and wealth inequalities have increased in most countries around the world. The section seeks to find out how this affects the stratification of societies. On the one hand, we expect presentations on the topic of how the structure of society has changed in various countries around the world in recent times. To what extent may traditional concepts of social structure and stratification research, such as class, status, stratum or milieu be used to describe the structure of our societies? What kind of dimensions of inequalities can be differentiated and to what extent are they connected to each other? Are there any recent changes in this respect?

On the other hand, presentations are also expected that contribute to the exploration of the various consequences of inequalities. How do growing inequalities appear in the labour market, education or health? How does family background and family ties influence social integration? What kind of challenges do they create for social inclusion? To what extent do they lead to the escalation of social conflicts? In summary, what is the relationship between inequalities and integration in today's societies?

2. The role of elites in social integration

Convenor: Luca Kristóf (Institute for Sociology CSS)

The sections seeks to explore the role of elites in social integration. While the studies of social inequalities primarily focus on social structure, we also need to consider the agency of actors who have disproportionate control over or access to socially valued resources such as economic, social or cultural capital. The elites, defined by their resources and power have enduring influence on decisions that are shaping our societies. Therefore their structure, recruitment, legitimacy, attitudes and behaviour are all important factors in the examination of social integration and social dynamics. This section expects contributions dealing with political, economic and other (civil, cultural, scientific etc.) elites. Possible topics include elite-elite and elite-mass relations and networks, perception and evaluation of the performance of elites, problems of elite polarisation, inclusiveness/exclusiveness of the elites and so forth. Interdisciplinary approaches are especially welcome.

3. Impacts of COVID-19 on migration issues in Europe

Convenors: Eszter Kovács, Attila Papp Z. (Institute for Minority Studies, CSS)

Contributions on the following topics are particularly welcome, but need not be limited to:

- The global pandemic's effects on emigration and return migration trends, and how it shaped transnational mobility
- The impacts of COVID-19 on diaspora communities and migrant institutions
- Changes in migrant sending states' diaspora policies (particularly in the field of social security and welfare of citizens abroad) due to the health care emergency situation
- Consequences of COVID-19 on migrant receiving states' immigration policies and labor market
- Responses to the coronavirus on the level of individual migration strategies: long-term settlement, return migration plans, and host country citizenship acquisition
- Mobility experiences of volunteers during the pandemic

4. Social and methodological challenges to research on civil society and social movements

Convenors: Márton Gerő (Institute for Sociology, CSS), Dániel Mikecz (Institute for Political Science, CSS)

The Covid-19 pandemic challenged the political landscape of European countries. New actors and movements emerged, states have been centralized, and the need for a strong leader is strengthened. At the same time, the populist challenge seriously affected the relationship between institutions and society. After the last years, it is clear, that populist tendencies and the weakening of democratic institutions go hand in hand with the crisis of knowledge production. The crisis affects the traditional (printed and online media), and the role of expertise and scientific knowledge as well. This crisis on the hand creates a new cleavage in modern societies and advances the conditions favouring the rise of populism and, on the other hand, challenges the research on social movements and civil society, or political sociology in a broader sense.

In this panel, we seek contributions addressing

- a) the methodological challenges in the research of social movement and civil society: How do we measure participation, and institutionalization of actors? How do we examine the mutual relationship between institutionalized civil society, social, movements, political parties and state institutions?
- b) the relationship between populist attitudes, conspiracy theories and the rise of anti-vaccine movements?
- c) the impact of emergency measures related to the pandemic on political participation and what might be the long-term impact of the crisis on politics and democracy.
- d) how do civil society actors increase (or weaken) the resilience of a society during a crisis? What is the role of the state in mobilizing, or demobilizing civil society's resources during a crisis?

5. Human ecology – crosscutting themes: healthy and environmentally sound food production and climate change, protection of the environment, energy and water resources

Convenors: Karl Bruckmeier (NOVA-University of Lisbon and South Bohemian University), Boldizsár Megyesi (Institute for Sociology, CSS)

For healthy and environmentally sound food production come new risks and threats with global environmental change. Problems and potential solutions for food production are caused through climate change, pollution of air, water and soils through industry and agriculture, and increasing scarcity of natural resources such as energy and water resources. The knowledge basis for the theme is interdisciplinary, as in environmental sociology and human ecology (relationships between humans, society and environment). We invite presentations, based on empirical research, case studies, or reviews and secondary analyses of empirical research, with a focus on Europe or single European countries. Questions as the following should be taken up: Consequences of wars and disturbance of global delivery chains for food systems? How to maintain rural and/or urban food systems under conditions of climate change? The impact of environmental pollution (air, water soils through industry and agriculture) on the maintenance of food production? Which forms of climate-resistant agriculture and food production can be developed in the coming decades? How to reduce the dependence of agriculture and food production from fossil energy resources? Consequences of the new policies supporting blue and green growth for food production and a bio-based economy?

6. Placemaking in the (post)-Covid era

The role of cultural heritage and local resources in tourism and development in a regional and urban-rural context

Convenors: Adrienne Csizmady (Institute for Sociology CSS), Bernadett Csurgó (Institute for Sociology CSS), Melanie Smith (Metropolitan University)

The aim of this session to explore how cultural heritage and other local resources can contribute to community wellbeing in the (post)-Covid times. We aim to discuss the relationships between cultural heritage, sense of place, placemaking and tourism development in a regional and urban-rural context. We will use the concept of placemaking as a framework to discuss place-related concepts, phenomena and processes in recent societies.

We argue that place-related activities and phenomena such as place attachment, sense of place, place branding and place identity are crucial aspects of local and regional development and have a significant role in the development of quality of life and wellbeing of communities. It is highlighted in several studies that the changes in rural and urban place development and place-related identities are closely connected to increasing consumption and recreational functions of places. These recreation and consumption functions or characteristics of places and regions are strongly connected to tourism and sustainable development including economic, social, ecological and cultural aspects, which are important agents of social change.

This section invites papers that focus on a broad interpretation of the placemaking process including rural and urban tourism, place identity, community building, cultural heritage and local resource use. We also especially welcome papers that examine rural-urban relationships and regional development.

7. From de-peasantisation to pathways of rural innovation and regeneration

Convenors: Imre Kovách (Institute for Sociology, CSS), Silvia Sivini (Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Calabria)

The defining social change of the second half of the 20th century was the disappearance of the traditional peasantry in Europe, which the literature interpreted as the concept of de-peasantisation. This has closely linked to the dramatic decline in the share of agricultural production in GDP and the absolute and relative proportion in the number of the agricultural population. De-ruralization and shrinkage of the rural population have also taken place in the development centres, while in the later developing regions, the rate of decline was much smaller and the proportion of the rural population is still significant.

The purpose of the panel is to provide a forum for the presentation of research findings on de-peasantisation and its social, cultural, and political outputs and to explore who replaced the traditional peasants, what social groups make up Europe's current rural population. We expect to find what the key factors were in this social change and what are the social, political meanings and reasons for the reinvention of peasant cultural traditions.

The panel aims to contribute to deepen understanding of the issues and process of rural transformation and regeneration. We are waiting for the answer what paths lead from de-peasantisation to regenerating the rural? Are there different paths of regeneration in the later developing regions and in the development centres? Who are the new entrants in agriculture and successors in farming? What are their promising economic and social practices? Who are rural newcomers what is their innovations that contribute to local development? Which are the innovative policies for rural regeneration? Which is the role that rural youths can play in rural regeneration (actions, innovations) and which are the main obstacles they have to face? Which are innovative practices that can favour access to land?

We would like to invite participants to discuss key actors of ruralisation, specific capitals, policy and drivers in generational renewal, innovation and rural development.

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