

**RN36 - Sociology of
Transformations:
East and West**



**European
Sociological
Association**



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**European Sociological Association RN36 –
Sociology of Transformations: East and West
and the
Università degli Studi Internazionali di Roma – UNINT**

cordially invite you to submit paper proposals for the next

Midterm Conference of ESA RN 36
**“Top-down and bottom-up dynamics of social transformations:
Agencies, Processes, and Trajectories”**
November 6-8, 2025, Rome (Italy)

Social transformations represent a central phenomenon in contemporary societies, marked by rapid economic, cultural, technological, and environmental shifts. These changes are never neutral: they reflect tensions, conflicts, and opportunities, shaping new social equilibriums, collective identities, and developmental trajectories. At the heart of these dynamics lie fundamental questions: Who are the key actors driving these transformations? What processes determine their scope, direction, and impact? How do resistance and alternatives to change emerge and take shape?

In today's context, the drivers of transformations materialize in multiple and often contradictory forms: social movements, technological innovations, collective and individual actions intertwine with macro-structural processes, highlighting both the capacities and limits of social agents in acting and reimagining the world. It is crucial to observe how

transformations arise not only from endogenous evolutions within social systems but also from the eruption of new conflicts—such as the Russo-Ukrainian war, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Sudanese civil war, to cite just a few examples. Equally significant are the shifts in ideologies and worldviews triggered by the spread of environmentalism, populism, nationalism, traditionalism, or radical modernities, as well as the redefinition of geopolitical and geostrategic interests that pit different actors/agents and parts of the world against each other.

Social transformation, therefore, thrives on crises and disruptions but also on attempts at stabilization and resistance. Political, economic, and cultural conflicts function as powerful catalysts, prompting reconsiderations of power structures, collective identities, and dominant narratives. Emerging or revitalized ideologies redefine aspirations and social projects, offering interpretive frameworks to understand not only the trajectories of transformation but also their implications for inclusion, exclusion, and the production of new inequalities.

Types of Transformations

Today, transformations unfold across multiple dimensions, interweaving in unpredictable ways and generating new social configurations:

- **Structural:** Transformations in economic and political systems often arise from global crises and geopolitical reconfigurations. The crises of global capitalism recalibrate hierarchies between centers and peripheries (Wallerstein, 1982), while the liquefaction of modernity dissolves traditional social structures and generates new contexts of precariousness (Bauman, 2000; Sennett, 1998).
- **Cultural and Ideological:** The dissemination of new values, ideologies, and social identities challenges dominant cultural frameworks. Populisms and nationalisms emerge as reactions to structural uncertainties, while social movements build counter-narratives capable of challenging cultural hegemonies (Gramsci, 1948-1951; Castells, 1997).
- **Technological:** Digital innovations, including recent developments related to datafication and AI, transform productive models and social relations. The network society multiplies connections and inequalities on a global scale (Castells, 1996), while the hybridization of human and technological spheres raises new ethical and identity issues (Haraway, 1985).
- **Geopolitical and Geostrategic:** Geopolitical tensions and conflicts redefine global and local power balances. The risk society highlights shared global vulnerabilities

(Beck, 2002), while wars and conflicts contribute to transforming political and territorial structures (Galtung, 1996).

- **Environmental:** The climate and biodiversity crisis compels a rethinking of the relationships between society and nature. It is increasingly evident that the dichotomy between human and non-human must be overcome to promote new forms of collective agency (Latour, 2017), while ecological modernization continues to propose solutions based on technological and institutional innovations (Mol and Spaargaren, 2000).
- **Bottom-up and top-down transformations.** Social change can be initiated at various levels of society and by different agents. These changes can arise from below, for example, through social movements, or be initiated by elites and their various factions. For this reason, it is important to consider the trajectories of social change (from above or from below) and their role in the transformation (including democratization) process.

Despite their diversity, these transformations interconnect and reconfigure as parts of a mosaic subject to dynamic change. Understanding their intersections and possible trajectories requires a collective effort of critical analysis, capable of making sense of present challenges and imagining future scenarios. This conference aims to explore the dynamics of social transformations through theoretical and empirical studies that offer new interpretative frameworks and stimulate scientific debate on ongoing transformations.

Keynote Speakers

Prof. Peter Wagner, Universitat de Barcelona

Prof. Leke Sokoli, Albanian Institute of Sociology, Albania

Abstract, Language, and Submission

The organizers invite theoretically or empirically grounded papers addressing the aforementioned topics. The language of abstracts, papers, and the conference will be English. Abstracts should be approximately 500 words and must include the name(s) of the author(s), their affiliation(s), and email address(es). Proposals of the panels are also invited. A proposal of panel should contain panel description of up to 500 words plus a listing of papers with the names of the presenters with brief, 200-words individual paper abstracts.

The process for panel proposal and individual abstract submission and acceptance will be managed via Google Form.

Please refer to this web page for **panel submission**:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSesOoPzz1kPIzOAajdrDb3b4vT_aYyNowI1NCASnOYRVs5hTw/viewform?usp=header

For **individual abstract submission** please refer to:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe4AuqWfgGqEdH2CiecbnpQAQp7xq8XOvK7jjMUR0RwFUN3g/viewform?usp=dialog>

Publication opportunity

Selected papers presented at the conference may be considered for inclusion in a collective volume to be published with an international publishing house. Further details regarding the process and timeline will be shared after the conference.

Important Deadlines

Deadline for panel proposal (max. 500 words panel description + 200 words individual abstract) – **May 1, 2025**

Notification of panel acceptance – **May 15, 2025**

Deadline for submitting paper proposals (max. 400 words) – **May 20, 2025**

Notification of paper acceptance – **June 15, 2025**

Deadline for registration – **June 30, 2025**

Conference fees

- The regular fee (EUR 45)
- The discounted fee ESA or SNC MOST members (EUR 30)
- The discounted fee for Ph.D. students (EUR 20)

Accommodation and Travel

Will be covered by the participants.

Conference venue

Università degli Studi Internazionali di Roma – UNINT, Via Cristoforo Colombo, 200 – 00147 Roma.

Rome is the capital of the Italian Republic and the most populous and largest municipality in Italy and is among Europe's major capitals in terms of the amount of terrain it covers.

It is the city with the highest concentration of historical and architectural riches in the world. Its historical centre, outlined by the enclosing Aurelian Walls, layering nearly three thousand years of antiquity, is an invaluable testimony to the European western world's cultural, artistic and historical legacy and in 1980 it was, together with the Holy See's property beyond the confines of the Vatican State as well as the Basilica of St. Paul outside the Walls, were added to UNESCO's World Heritage List .

Rome, the heart of Catholic Christianity, is the only city in the world to host an entire foreign state within its confines, the enclave of the Vatican City, and it is for this very reason that it is often referred to as the capital of two States.

Over 16% of the world's cultural treasures are located in Rome (70% in all of Italy).

Contact

Applicants who are experiencing difficulties can write to the email address: rn36.esa@outlook.com

Organizing institutions

- ESA RN36 "Sociology of transformations: East and West"
- Università degli Studi Internazionali di Roma – UNINT