5th Conference of the Academy of Sociology
Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, October 8–10, 2025

Call for Papers

Today's societies are facing enormous challenges, whether due to climate change, health epidemics, armed conflicts, economic upheavals, demographic ageing, migratory movements, multifaceted social inequalities, political populism, or public disinformation through, among other things, generative artificial intelligence. How to deal with these problems is the subject of considerable public debate and controversy. These issues are, furthermore, increasingly accompanied by the emergence of new social divides, all of which is putting liberal democracies under extraordinary pressure. At the same time, however, progress has been made in various areas, be it in the reduction of the global poverty rate, the promotion of gender equality, or the legal recognition of social minorities.

Describing and explaining such developments – and dealing with the concomitant societal issues – also presents a challenge for science, and for sociology in particular. Contemporary sociology is thus, as a result of the social causes and repercussions of many of the phenomena described, a genuine problem-solving discipline. Due to both improved data infrastructure and the accompanying expansion of analytical and empirical knowledge, our discipline is in a better position than ever before to make an informed contribution to solving social problems. What solutions does sociology currently offer? Which role does it play in the concert of disciplines when it comes to policy advice and media attention? How can the influence of sociology be strengthened?

The Academy of Sociology aims to provide a platform for and contribute to this discussion by promoting scientifically sound, evidence-based policy through rigorous sociological research. The 5th Conference of the Academy of Sociology will be dedicated to societal challenges and sociological answers.

We invite researchers with an analytical-empirical orientation from sociology and related fields to present their current research on a wide range of substantive topics. A particular focus will be on the relevance of science for tackling social problems. However, since understanding social phenomena is often a necessary preceding step, there is also great interest in presentations of fundamental research. The presentations may address current challenges in the areas of theory, description, explanation, intervention, and prediction. Relevant questions include, but are not limited to:

- Which of the broad range of theories of the social sciences have proved successful, and which also have practical benefits? How do current theories need to be developed and tested?
- How should our data infrastructures, research methods and measurement instruments be further improved to yield valid descriptions of social phenomena? What role do quantitative and qualitative data play in analytical-empirical sociology?
- What are convincing examples of causal explanations of the emergence, reproduction, change, and consequences of social phenomena?
- What criteria should be applied to replicative research to better validate empirical findings? How can the principles of open science be promoted?
- How successful is sociology in deriving evidence-based proposals for practical interventions and political reforms and in evaluating these measures? To what extent can social institutions and public policies be transferred between social contexts, e.g. in regulating the labor market, or preventing crime?
- What about the prognostic quality of sociology? How do we deal with the fact that, in practice, algorithms are increasingly used to derive recommendations for action from correlation patterns in complex, process-produced data? How satisfactory is this for sociology, which advocates theoretically derived research designs, methodologically controlled data collection, and the specification of explanatory mechanisms? How can the methodological foundations of computational social science be strengthened?

Contributions on substantive topics that do not deal with the main theme of the conference are also warmly welcome.

Researchers are asked to submit a full paper or an extended abstract (2–3 pages, incl. 3–4 keywords to facilitate session assignment) and to prepare a short abstract (up to 250 words) using the conference management system (see the conference website for details or go straight to Converia). The oral presentations will be limited to 25 minutes (including discussion). The conference will also include a poster session. Please specify whether you prefer an oral or a poster presentation. Researchers may be involved in a maximum of two contributions as sole or co-author. Closing date for submissions is May 15, 2025. Acceptance decisions will be communicated by the end of June 2025.

The conference language is English. We foster interdisciplinary and international exchange and encourage international scholars to participate in the conference. Please note that all (presenting) authors must register as participants. Young scholars can apply for a travel grant. For further information, please visit the conference website: https://as25.sociology.uni-mainz.de/