



CALL FOR PAPERS

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu

and

European Sociological Association RN36 – Sociology of Transformations: East and West

cordially invite you to submit paper proposals to the

Midterm Conference of ESA RN36:

„Social transformations: new challenges, practices, and critique”

September 28-29, 2016, Sibiu, Romania

Description:

Transformative processes occur worldwide and can be subject to various interpretations from different theoretical perspectives. Despite the end-of-history rhetoric surrounding the initial stages of ‘transitions’ from state socialism to democracy and capitalism the transformations are far from being finished. Moreover, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Asia have experienced a broad variety of transformation paths leading to very different results, ranging from a spiral of economic decline to relative prosperity, from democratisation to the maintenance of hybrid or even fully autocratic regimes, from embracing Euro-Atlantic integration to insisting on traditional political and cultural divisions, and so on. These days we are witnessing the unleashing of forces that radically affect the stability of European social development. These forces manifest themselves in such aspects as rising social inequality and exclusion; widespread disillusionment after the expectations of the initial stages of transitions, increasing distrust in political and other institutions, mass migrations; political radicalisation and the threats to social welfare.

Societies in Central and Eastern Europe have gone through more or less radical transformations, while trying to balance in very different ways between universal prescriptions and their local specifics. The complex systemic changes, simultaneous reforms in different spheres, stimulated by technological developments have created social acceleration in post-communist societies. “Speeding up” is constructed as a ‘natural’ condition of social life in public discourses and seen as a main factor of successful transition. The socio-cultural implications beyond these processes (social stress, polarization between ‘winners’ and ‘laggards’, capacity of cultural reproduction, etc.) as well as the tensions between the agents of social acceleration and resistance are waiting to be discussed.

These problems set the stage for a more reflexive and critical way of thinking about social

transformations. An in-depth exploration of transformations in this region might produce significant new lessons and ideas. Classical sociological approaches to social transformation tended to focus on large-scale changes – crises, revolutions, long-term economic and social development, whereas relatively ‘small’ changes can produce unpredictable and ambivalent challenges for a particular society. Such ‘small’ changes also require constant research monitoring, followed by theorising upon research data.

Change deserves to be explored in many areas of social life in CEE countries as well as all over the world. Some specific areas of research may be more mainstream, while others seem to be at a peripheral zone of scientific discourse. However, they are (or should be) more debatable and perhaps complicated than they appear to be. A wide range of factors arising from (and elucidated by) different analytical frameworks – institutionalism in particular – contribute to explaining the different trajectories of countries over time.

This conference invites submissions approaching transformation in a wide variety of fields, including but not limited to:

- transformations and sociological theories;
- mediation and public discourses of transformation and social change;
- critical approach to CEE transformation;
- unanticipated consequences of transformation;
- post-industrial society or non-industrial society?
- economic and social gap between the East and West;
- Europe: more or less unity?
- paths of transition on a local/regional/national level, challenges and solutions;
- class division and inequality;
- generations in the context of transformation;
- spaces of poverty and exclusion in Central and Eastern Europe;
- rural and urban areas, local communities life and practices;
- migration flows, new challenges, consequences, and possible solutions;
- the idea of nation state in transformation;
- political tensions and political order, new challenges for consent;
- political behaviour and political values;
- ecology, gender, city-movements, protest movements as new waves of transformation;
- civil society: development and barriers, self-government, self-organization, NGOs;
- values, identities, cultural practices;
- intellectuals and their impact on social changes discourse: past and present.

Abstract, language, and submission:

The organizers invite theoretically or empirically grounded papers on the above topics. Special consideration will be given to empirically grounded papers, either comparative or country-based. The language of the abstracts, the papers and the conference will be English. Abstracts should be about 400 words, and should be accompanied by the name(s) of the author(s), his/her/their affiliation(s) and e-mail(s).

The processes of abstract submission and acceptance will be managed using the online platform of the Romanian Sociological Society (Conference Management System):

<http://societateasociologilor.ro/conference/index.php/esarn36/>

Please make sure you initially create an account for yourself on the conference platform and choose the status of *Author* in the process, at:

<http://societateasociologilor.ro/conference/index.php/esarn36/2016/user/account>

Organizing institutions:

- ESA RN36 "Sociology of transformations: East and West";
- Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu (LBUS);
- Alumni Association LBUS Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities;
- Romanian Sociological Society (RSS).

Important Deadlines:

Deadline for submitting paper proposals (max. 400 words) – May 30, 2016

Notification of paper acceptance – June 15, 2016

Deadline for registration – June 30, 2016

Conference Fees:

Regular fee – EUR 45

Discounted fee for ESA and RSS members – EUR 30

Discounted fee for PhD students in Sociology – EUR 20

Accommodation and Travel: Will be covered by the participants.

Meals: Organisers will provide meals for participants.

Conference venue:

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Library Building, 2A Lucian Blaga, 511069 – Sibiu, Romania

Location:

Sibiu (in German: *Hermannstadt*; in Hungarian: *Nagyszeben*) is one of the most important cities in Transylvania, Romania. Its particular historical existence made Sibiu a multicultural city, despite the fact that nowadays the majority of the population is Romanian. Romanians, Germans, Hungarians and Roma co-exist in a city which turned diversity into a trademark. The city of Sibiu was highly successful in preserving its multicultural heritage.

In the context of its remarkable cultural importance, it became, along with Luxembourg, the European Capital of Culture for 2007. Its beautifully preserved Old Town is highly appreciated by tourists around the world, being included among 'the most charming towns in Europe' by *Huffington Post* (2014). Among its most important cultural attractions, the Brukenthal Museum and the Astra Museum National Museum Complex deserve a special mention. Since 1994, Sibiu hosts the Sibiu International Theatre Festival, the third largest performing arts festival in Europe.

Conference webpage and e-mail:

<http://conferences.ulbsibiu.ro/esa-rn36>

conf.esarn@ulbsibiu.ro

2016 International Conference of the Romanian Sociological Society:

The ESA RN36 Midterm Conference will be followed by the International Conference of the Romanian Sociological Society (RSS), with the topic „New Societies, Old Minorities / New Minorities, Old Societies?” (September 29-October 1, 2016, Sibiu). Both events will be hosted in the premises of the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu. The participants to the ESA RN36 Midterm receive a discount participation fee for the RSS International Conference.

For more details, please visit the following webpage starting from March 15, 2016:

<http://conf2016.societateasociologilor.ro>