# List of organized open sessions

# Advances, opportunities, and challenges of digital trace data for sociological research [s1]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Friedolin Merhout, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Mauro Martinelli, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

## Description:

In recent years, sociologists have increasingly drawn on digital trace data to provide new lenses on established topics in sociological research and study phenomena previously beyond the scope of investigation. As the digitalization of Nordic societies advances, these data hold increasing value for research but also reveal their weaknesses more clearly. While new European regulations promise more access to digital trace data (e.g. Digital Services Act), previously open and accessible data sources grow more restricted (e.g. Facebook, X). At the same time, accessible sources of digital trace data become more well known and their use and limitations a topic for debate among sociologists and other social scientists – such as the recent debate by Franzén and Raubenheimer in Acta Sociologica.

This session invites papers that present recent advances in collecting and working with digital trace data, highlight new opportunities for applying these data to investigate established and emerging social phenomena, or identify challenges that these data present for effective use for sociological research. Relevant topics could include, but are not limited to, the closure of X's (formerly Twitter) free research API and alternative social media sources that could replace it such as Telegram, Bluesky, or Flashback; methodological, technical, and substantive developments to make use of the Digital Services Act to request, receive, and process data from online platforms operating in the European Union; identification of untapped digital trace data sources or novel applications of known digital trace date (such as from Airbnb, TikTok, etc.) for sociological research.

# Behind the scenes of digital public services [s2]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Frida Alizadeh-Westerling, University of Helsinki, Finland
Karoliina Snell, University of Helsinki, Finland
Heta Tarkkala, University of Helsinki, Finland

## Description:

Digitalisation is often presented as an easy solution to combatting growing costs of public services. Digitalised public services are associated with smooth service provision regardless of time and place, possibilities to automate decision-making and new types of predictive services. However, sociological research has pointed out how careless implementation of digital services might cause novel forms of powerlessness, discrimination, or inequality. While it is important to understand customer experiences and consequences of digitalisation for citizens, in this session we approach digitalised public services from another angle. We are interested in how and why are these services designed, constructed, and implemented? What kind of visions of services, citizens and society drive digitalisation? How are work tasks and organisational responsibilities changing in public services and what new types of digital and data work emerge? What kind of ideology or digital design is embedded in digital systems?

We invite contributions that discuss what precede or takes place behind digitalised services and systems. For example: what kind of visions or digital design principles they are based on, what kind of work is required to keep them functioning, or what kinds of new practices or roles they give rise to? This could mean examining hidden labour, design patterns or identifying clever workarounds and fixes in everyday work. It could also be an analysis of organizational implementation of certain visions related to outcomes of new, digitalised technologies and datafication. We welcome wide variety of conceptual and theoretical choices, discussing empirical cases based on digital public sector.

# Care and technologies in a digitalised society [s3]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Barbara Fersch, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark
Marjo Kolehmainen, University of Turku, Finland
Doris Lydahl, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

## Description:

Digital technologies play an infrastructural role in our everyday lives, also in providing care. This open session invites sociologically informed papers interrogating how digital technologies, from specific health technologies to popular platforms and applications, reconfigure care. Digitalization has for decades been touted as one major solution to welfare state challenges and digital technologies are increasingly used within the welfare sector, changing the ways we understand 'good care'. They further transform the relations between caretakers and care providers. Yet they also challenge the categories of caring and cared-for – for instance, from the perspective of more-than-human care, different technologies have capacities to care. Further, technologies themselves might require human care. We are thus interested in asking what the digital enables, and what new ways of thinking about care are made possible. While digital elements can improve care services for some groups within society, they can also lead to new forms of exclusion for others; however, the patterns and underlying dynamics of these forms of digital exclusion in the field of care remain underexplored so far.  This session advances an approach where care is understood broadly, discussing different forms of informal and formal care from self-care to peer support and from care work to organizational perspectives.

The potential themes include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- What kind of new questions, data and methods the emergence of digital technologies in formal and/or informal care raises?
- What kind of care networks do digital societies foster? How do we best study them?
- How does the use of digital technologies in care advance sustainability, more just societies and more inclusive care services and practices?
- How do digital technologies reproduce already existing social injustices and what kind of new digital divides are produced?
- What role do intersecting categories like age, educational background, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or urban-rural dimensions play in the patterns of digital exclusion?
- What kind of risks and vulnerabilities are intertwined in the processes where digital technologies take part in caring practices?

# Causes and consequences of digital differences on social inequalities at school [s4]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Markus Lörz, Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education (DIPF), Germany

## Description:

Social inequalities have been observed in very different education systems for decades - both in terms of qualifications and competencies (OECD, 2019). Digitalization in the education sector also creates a dynamic whose effects on social inequalities have not yet been sufficiently understood. However, both the use of digital media and the ability to confidently and effectively handling digital media are now a prerequisite for successful participation in increasingly digital school lessons.

A key finding of previous research is that pupils' digital skills vary depending on their social background (Drossel et al., 2020; Passaretta & Gil-Hernández, 2022). The proposed session deals with the question of how digital differences according to social background arise (causes) and what effects these have on educational participation and educational success at school (consequences). The session focuses on the group of pupils in primary and secondary education and discusses research that deals empirically and theoretically with questions of social inequality in the course of increasing digitalization. On the one hand, we invite papers that deal with the question of which students are particularly affected by digital differences (risk groups), how these digital differences arise (mechanisms) and how these differences could be reduced (intervention). On the other hand, we also invite papers that focus on the impact of digital differences and explore the question of how social differences in educational participation and educational success are changing in the course of digitalization (consequences).

# Conceptualizing and measuring gender ideologies: theory, instruments and challenges [s5]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Daniela Grunow, Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Taylan Acar, Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main, Germany

## Description:

Gender ideologies play a vital role for change and persistence in the gender division of labor, parent-child relationships and life course transitions i.e., partnership, fertility decisions, family formation and dissolution. Gender ideologies are also interrelated with other spheres of life such as political attitudes, racism, party identification and voting. Even though gender ideologies have been changing in all high-income economies, and quantitative research has made important progress in identifying and capturing the multidimensionality of gender ideologies, the field appears to be stuck in terms of theorizing and measuring gender ideologies. First, we lack a strong theoretical foundation that would help explain changes and variation in gender ideologies and link them to a wide range of outcomes. Second, most large-scale data sets employ few items to measure gender ideologies, often overlooking expectations towards men's contributions to housework and childcare. In addition, measures refer to items presuming cis-gender individuals in heterosexual relationships. Third, the items widely in use mostly consider respondents' individual (dis)agreement to questions that date back to 1960s/70s and may not reflect current realities properly. For instance, items have been developed assuming a unidimensional understanding of gendered separate spheres. Current research, however, compellingly shows that gender ideologies are multidimensional and individuals have different attitudes toward different spheres of family life. Lastly, classical gender ideology items are potentially prone to social desirability bias and fail to provide details regarding the situational context.

This session aims at bringing together scholars working in the field to exchange views and share novel insights against these challenges related to theorizing and measuring gender ideologies. Scholars would prepare a short (10 minute) input statement on one or more of the aspects raised here, or a related issue.

## Environment risk and expertise [s6]

Open working group. Open for abstract submission. The session will consist of papers circulated beforehand with appointed commentators, but also purely oral presentations are welcomed.

### Session chair(s):

Rolf Lidskog, Örebro University, Sweden

### Description:

Scientific advances, technological development and changes in risk consciousness have led to stronger demands on society to manage and control various kinds of risks. Risk should be assessed, prevented, governed and communicated in order to avoid severe negative impacts. Much thinking about risk management treats risks as separated from, and external to, its social context, thereby concealing the political and conflictual nature of risk issues. There are not only diverse definitions and understandings of risk, but the benefits and burdens of risk are unevenly distributed, socially, spatially and temporally. This working group welcome papers that discusses environmental and risk issues in contemporary society. In line with the conference theme, studies on the Nordic welfare state are welcomed, and contributions ranging across different levels of analysis, theoretical approaches and methods. Presentations can be either in the form of a written paper circulated beforehand (with a discussant appointed) or an oral presentation (no paper circulated beforehand).

# Frontiers in segregation research [s7]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Benjamin Jarvis, Linköping University, Sweden

## Description:

In this open session, we invite abstracts dealing with segregation research, broadly construed. Abstracts may touch on different domains (e.g., labor markets, schools, neighborhoods, online fora), social categories (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, class) or sets of social entities (e.g., people, firms, built infrastructure). We welcome abstracts concerning new methods and measures, those pursuing purely theoretical questions, and those performing empirical analyses of segregation processes. Empirical papers employing qualitative and/or quantitative methods are welcome.

# Investigating the persistence of health inequalities in Nordic countries [s8]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Márta Radó, Karolinska Institutet, Sweden
Stefanie Möllborn, Stockholm University, Sweden

## Description:

Although Nordic countries are characterized as some of the most egalitarian countries in the world, inequalities in health behaviors persist, contributing to health disparities. These inequalities commence early in life and persist into old age. This session will address the reasons behind the persistence of health inequalities. In particular, we welcome submissions that aim to identify the most important environmental determinants of health inequalities or evaluate policies that can reduce these disparities. We are open to a variety of methodologies and specifically encourage submissions that employ advanced quantitative methodologies capitalizing on Nordic administrative register data or survey-based approaches. Research inquiries may encompass, but are not confined to, the role of social networks, intergenerational transmissions, and life course processes.

# Lifestyles, consumption, and inequality [s9]
Open session

## Session chair(s):
Mikkel Haderup Larsen, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Mads Meier Jæger, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

## Description:
Sociologists link lifestyles and consumption to inequality: your cultural taste (i.e., what cultural activities and objects you like) is a signal to others of where you belong and who you are. For example, Pierre Bourdieu famously linked highbrow tastes to high socioeconomic position and argued that others misrecognize highbrow tastes as indicating high status and talent. For this session, we invite research that investigates the links between lifestyle, consumption, and inequality. Do social and economic groups prefer/engage in different lifestyle activities– and to what extent are the observed preferences and consumption patterns in Nordic countries different from other national contexts? What are the material and social returns to specific lifestyles, for example in terms of labor market outcomes, networks, and status? We invite empirical research that addresses these or related questions by means of quantitative (e.g., surveys, online experiments, text data) or qualitative data (e.g., interviews, online ethnography), as well as research that addresses salient theoretical debates. The aim of the session is to shed new light on how lifestyles and consumption link to inequality, what (if anything) is special about the Nordic countries, and the potential mechanisms through which lifestyles and consumption operate. The session is open.

# Outsourcing household work across Europe: effects from a social and gender-equality perspective [s10]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Elien Dalman, Lund University, Sweden
Lisa Eklund, Lund University, Sweden
Annika Elwert, Lund University, Sweden
Therese Nilsson, Lund University, Sweden

## Description:

Previous research suggests that uneven distribution of household work can have consequences for economic, demographic, and social outcomes. As unpaid household work is largely feminised, the double burden of paid and unpaid work has mostly, though not exclusively, impacted women and mothers. To alleviate the pressures of the double burden, several European countries have implemented reforms to reduce the cost of household and other domestic services. As such, they may be seen as indirect family policies (e.g. Doepke et al. 2022). With the dual purpose of advancing gender equality (for users) and creating formal jobs (for service suppliers), the Swedish RUT and ROT reforms are one example of such reforms. These reforms allow tax deductions for outsourced household and maintenance work. Other European countries have introduced similar reforms over the past decades, such as Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France and Germany (cf Carbonnier & Morel 2015; DAMVAD 2015).

Yet, there is limited research on the reforms and their consequences. This is noteworthy both given the gender equality ambition of such reforms and the fact that they have become so popular. These policies could have repercussions for labor market outcomes, the division of paid and unpaid work, gender-equal parenting, intergenerational care arrangements, (re)partnering, fertility, and wellbeing. It is also pertinent to understand if different socioeconomic groups are more or less affected by policies aimed at reducing the double burden of paid and unpaid work.

We welcome (inter)national and (inter)disciplinary contributions studying reforms related to outsourcing household work and their impacts for users as well as suppliers, including studies on social and gender differences in outsourcing household work. We also welcome policy analyses of the RUT and ROT reform and their equivalent in other countries.

# Parenting in the Nordic countries [s11]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Sunna Símonardóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland
Ásdís Arnalds, University of Iceland, Iceland

## Description:

The transition into parenthood often coincides with a return to traditional gender roles, even among couples who previously shared responsibilities equally as having children tends to amplify the gendered division of labour within couples. Worldwide, mothers continue to devote significantly more time to unpaid domestic work and childcare while fathers spend more time in the workforce. Parenting ideologies such as intensive parenting have become more common and can be instrumental in the reproduction of gendered behaviours. Nordic welfare systems have had important repercussions for people who want to parent and have created contexts and possibilities that may be different from other Western countries. In this session we will explore interdisciplinary and inter-Nordic research and knowledge on the topic of parenting. We welcome contributions that explore parenting in various contexts and through different methodologies. Possible topics include but are not limited to, public discourses on parenting, policies, fertility intentions and behaviours, cultural representations, institutional framing, experiences, parenthood ideologies and non normative notions of parenting and gender.

# Pretrained models and sociology: ethical, methodological and theoretical considerations [s12]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Hendrik Erz, Linköping University, Sweden
Sebastian Gießler, University of Tübingen, Germany

## Description:

Novel digital technologies have brought society not just apps to interact with known and unknown others. It has also enabled us to publish content faster than ever. Just as *data production* has accelerated, so has *data collection*. Increasingly, the combined cultural output of humanity is refined into large data sets for training neural networks such as ChatGPT or Llama (text), and DALL-E or Midjourney (images).

Sociologists increasingly use models trained on these data to classify, map, and transform text and images. These models turn otherwise inaccessible data into variables that plug into well-understood statistical methods. In addition, they work in a "plug'n'play"-fashion. But what impact do these models have on established measurement strategies and theory?

Pretrained models raise questions regarding their usage for sociological inquiry that we want to address around three structural pillars: ethics, methods, and theory. We invite contributions that tackle one of these pillars, or any combination thereof.

Questions that submissions may ask include, but are not limited to:

- Ethics and Privacy
    - Are the ethical frameworks of sociology appropriate to address problems of pretrained models, like quantifying proper human labor conditions?
    - How can we manage privacy issues of data collection?
- Methods
    - How do model selection criteria change with the advent of pretrained models? Is "generative sufficiency" sufficient?
    - How does the selection of hyperparameters influence which questions we can ask?
- Theory
    - Do computational methods of data production and data processing have implications for sociological paradigms?
    - How can we ensure that pretrained models align with theoretically guided measurement strategies?

# Religion and changing religiosity in contemporary societies [s13]
Open session

## Session chair(s):
Elis Carlberg Larsson, Linköping University, Sweden

## Description:
In contemporary societies, we have observed a complex evolution in religious practices. On one hand, there is a notable trend of individuals leaving traditional organized religions. On the other, there are tendencies of increased spirituality, often pursued outside conventional religious organizations. Moreover, regions like the Nordic countries, have experienced a significant increase in religious pluralism, together, indicating a changing religious landscape.

These developments raise pertinent questions about the current state of religion and religiosity: How has religion and religiosity transformed over time? What are the contemporary forms of religion and spirituality? How did the current state of religion and religiosity emerge? What role does religion and religious belief have in individuals' life today? Together they call for a deeper exploration of who practices religion, how they do so, and the broader consequences of these practices.

Against this backdrop, this session invites scholars to a discussion on the current landscape of religion and religiosity. It encourages a discussion that not only revisits traditional sociological questions about religion but also explores new inquiries emerging from this changing religious terrain, as well as shed light on how we got here.

# Remote working and regional mobility [s14]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Nico Stawarz, Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB), Germany
Heiko Rüger, Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB), Germany

## Description:

Remote working (e.g. working from home, coworking spaces) is undoubtedly one of the most important developments in recent years, as a result of a general trend towards the availability and use of information and communication technologies in the digital age. The COVID-19 crisis has further fueled the spread of remote work. It is therefore not surprising that many scholars are beginning to look more closely at remote work and its interrelationships with various social characteristics. One important dimension in this context is regional geographical mobility, which is an integral part of many individuals' life courses. Regional mobility is also relevant at the societal level, e.g. in relation to the functioning of labor markets and climate change. In this context, this session focuses on the relationship between remote work and regional mobility (internal migration, daily/weekly commuting, and residential multi-locality), and the (new) inequalities that this entails. The session will address questions such as:

- How does remote work affect internal migration decisions and patterns? Does it offer opportunities for rural areas?
- Does remote work lead to a reduction in commuting behavior or replace weekly commuting?
- Does remote work strengthen or weaken social inequalities related to regional mobility?
- How do potential changes in regional mobility behavior due to remote work affect outcome dimensions such as well-being, health, or work-family conflict?

We look forward to receiving innovative proposals. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses are welcome. Studies with a focus on extending existing theoretical models as well as longitudinal and/or internationally comparative designs are particularly welcome.

## Robots in social life: interactions, hierarchies, and intimacies [s15]
Open session

### Session chair(s):
Marcus Persson, Linköping University, Sweden
Kristina Palm, Karlstad University, Sweden

### Description:
In this session we will discuss the role of robots as mediators and agents in situations involving human interaction.

We define a robot as an autonomous machine that can carry out a complex series of actions automatically. This broad definition of robots includes both material robots and immaterial bots. Material robots can be designed in various ways, such as humanoids, animals, vehicles, and various machines. By immaterial (chat)bots we refer to software programs bound to digital platforms. Also, some robots consist of both material and immaterial aspects, e.g., a robotic device with an integrated ai-engine.

We invite abstracts that apply a robotic theme in various contexts of social life where humans can be observed to interact with robots and bots, such as, home, work, education, administration, health care, industry, tourism, sport, transportation (and more).

Depending on context, human interaction with robots will generate different topics and questions of sociological interest. The session is open for abstract submission, and we welcome contributions on different topics related to the overall theme. For instance, Robots and…

- work environment
- automation and standardization
- identity and competency
- group dynamics, power, and hierarchies
- leadership and responsibility
- sociotechnical relations and agency
- emotions and emotional labor
- companionship and intimacy
- embodied and unbodied experience
- technofeminism and gendered relations
- disability in working life

# Shaping, stealing, protecting digital identities [s16]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Ismo Kantola, University of Turku, Finland
Marianne Silvan-Lempinen, University of Turku, Finland

## Description:

Today, one might say our identities are digitally profiled and negotiated. Siloing Net content consumers for the needs of marketing, accomplished by algoritmic processing of queries made by the very same consumers, on the digital platforms certainly contributes to the shaping of identities on the individual as well as community level.

Weakening of symbolic efficiency of digitalized cultural artefacts - thanks to the massive unending flow of digital contents in the Net - deprives youth of means to express identity or group identification. Corrosion of symbols due to increase in availability of all kind of cultural products and commodities due to their conversion to digital format brings about a certain uneasiness into the endeavour of marking one's identity or group identification via symbols (such as the music I like to listen to). Study of resistance to and in commercialised popular cultures might, perhaps, help get to better grips with this novel phenomenon.

Identities are under risk in identity and personal data processing and transfer e.g. due to data leaks, neglect of safety measures, or phishing. Here identities maybe exposed to violation, blackmailing or even theft.

Technological development entails not only challenges but affordances for new kind of use as well. Technology makes it possible to form different kind networks e.g. for young people who are exposed to threat of exclusion. Equally, the loneliness of the elderly might, perhaps, be aided with the help of digital technology. Face to face meetings have been challenging in recent years, for example due to the pandemic. Could we use technology for the future to find ways to help in situations where physical encounters are not possible? Could the online environment allow for anonymity? In small towns, it is difficult for individuals to attend, for example, AA meetings if they feel they will be stigmatized. Does the online environment give us the opportunity to act at this point as well?

The Session is open to and welcomes papers based on sociological research on the use and experiencing of digital media in the making, shaping and in negotiating identities on individual as well as group level. Presentations from theoretical, methodological and/or empirical are equally encouraged.

# Simulation approaches to social research [s17]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Benjamin Jarvis, Linköping University, Sweden

## Description:

With the simultaneous increase in the accessibility and power of computational tools, simulations including but not limited to agent based modeling (ABM) — have gained wider acceptance as tools for developing social theory and working out the macro implications of various micro-level behaviors. In this open session, we invite abstracts using simulation approaches to answer sociological research questions. Applications of simulation approaches in any area of sociological research are welcome.

Simulation approaches to social research [s17]

# Social policy in the Nordic welfare states: digitalization and economization as social work rationales [s18]

Open session (circulated papers and discussants)

## Session chair(s):

Ditte Andersen, The Danish Center for Social Science Research (VIVE), Denmark
Alexandrina Schmidt, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

## Description:

Digitalization and economization are engines of quantification, Steffen Mau argues in *The Metric Society* (2019, 21ff). Digitalization drives an intensified collection, storage and analysis of data, while economization makes efficiency and profitability key evaluation criteria in contexts previously subject to other logics. An 'economic style of reasoning', Elizabeth Popp Berman explicates, emerges as a dominant framework for thinking about policy problems, and while it is often perceived as politically neutral the rationale epitomizes values like choice, competition and efficiency at the expense of values like universalism, equality, rights and democratic participation (*Thinking like an Economist*, 2022). In this session, we will discuss how digitalization and economization work as rationales in social work and public policies in the Nordic welfare states.

We invite papers on a) digitalization and/or b) economic rationales in social work with marginalized citizens in the context of Nordic welfare states and current social policy paradigms. The session aims to stimulate our sociological imagination by convoking various empirical and theoretical analyses to expose differences and similarities across fields of social work and countries, as well as a discussion of these in the context of contemporary policy paradigms and social work rationales.

Examples of contributions that would fit the session:

- A study of how digitalization influences the encounter between welfare professionals and marginalized citizens
- A study of how economic rationales such as social investment influences the encounter between welfare professionals and marginalized citizens

Contributions can be empirical and/or theoretical, and embark from a citizen, welfare professional, policymaker or other perspective.

The session is open and will be organized workshop-style. Participants are selected based on abstracts (please include a short bio and motivation for participation in this session) and the selected participants will be expected to circulate paper drafts two weeks before the conference. Participants get a discussant assigned to their paper and will be assigned as discussant for another participant. Participants are encouraged to read all papers in advance to help foster a lively discussion.

# Social stratification in a digital world [s19]
Open session

## Session chair(s):
Jani Erola, University of Turku, Finland
Elina Kilpi-Jakonen, University of Turku, Finland
David Reimer, University of Iceland, Iceland

## Description:
As societies change, there is both overall stability as well as transformation in structures of social stratification. This session focuses on quantitative research examining social stratification, in particular those forms that create systematic inequality between different social groups. The session invites presentations that relate to changes in social stratification brought about specifically by processes related to digitalisation as well as other topical issues of social stratification, including developments related to COVID-19 and environmental change. The session also welcomes research examining how artificial intelligence is likely to transform labour markets and the implications of this for social stratification.

The core social groups of interest in this session are those based on social origin, education, occupation, gender, migrant status, ethnicity and marital status. The session invites presentations that aim to explain differences between groups and how inequality accumulates over the life course, as well as presentations that examine the intergenerational transmission of status and social mobility. Cross-nationally or within-countries regionally comparative and longitudinal studies that examine the influence of social structures and institutions on stratification and inequality are also welcome.

# Sociality in the Digital Age: Interactions, Emotions, Lifestyles, and Norms [s20]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Andrea Voyer, Stockholm University, Sweden

## Description:

Understanding digital sociality is crucial to sociology because the digital landscape continues to shape and redefine the nature of human relationships and interactions. Digital sociality includes both positive aspects, such as increased connectivity and access to diverse perspectives, and challenges, including issues related to privacy, online harassment, and the potential impact on mental well-being. In other words, from social media to online communities, the digital age is redefining social connections and facilitating the emergence of new lifestyles, social norms, social groups, and senses of solidarity and alienation.

This session delves into the multifaceted dynamics of sociality within the contemporary digital landscape by focusing on interactions, emotions, lifestyles, and norms. The papers in this session will scrutinize the evolving nature of relationships, interactions, or self-presentations in virtual spaces. They may also consider the links between digital and non-digital sociality. The blurred boundaries between online and offline spheres can have transformative effects on personal identities, group affiliations, and lifestyle choices. Likewise, digital interactions shape and challenge established social frameworks and conventions such as family forms or the division between work and leisure, and the papers may examine the digital age's implications for societal norms. Increasing our understanding of the complexities inherent in sociality in the digital age, the papers in this session will contribute to broader discussions about the implications of digitalization for human relationships and emotions, and social structures.

# Spatial Marking, Neighborhood Stigma, and Neighborhood Inequality [s21]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Guilherme Chihaya, Nord University, Norway
Jeffrey Mitchell, Umeå University, Sweden

## Description:

This session will focus on the role of spatial marking in creating and reproducing neighborhood stigma and inequality. Spatial Marking refers to the explicit institutional labelling of neighborhoods, often conforming to socially held prejudices, using adjectives such "hazardous", "poor," "vulnerable," and "risk areas." The paragon of spatial marking policies was carried out by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) in the United States, which is often referred to as neighborhood redlining due to the color used to mark areas as "undesirable," often majority African-American neighborhoods in their maps.

The Nordics have a long history of area-based initiatives such as the Swedish Metropolitan Development Initiative (Storstadssattningen) and the Danish Urban Development Committee (Byudvalgets indsats). The most recent iterations are The Swedish list of vulnerable areas (Utsatt område) and the Danish list of vulnerable residential areas (Udsat boligområde). The lists' target neighborhoods are widely publicized on media, figuring prominently in the political debate. This potentially contributes to increasing the stigma of poverty and criminality faced by these neighborhoods and their inhabitants. The potential unintended negative consequences of these kinds of policies have been shown by research in the United States and in other European countries, but there is much room for contributions using Nordic cases.

We invite contributions studying the effects of spatial marking on neighborhoods and their residents, regardless of methodology.  Methodological contributions such as methods for the causal inference of spatial-marking effects, new qualitative approaches to neighborhood stigma, and those based on computational and digital sociology are also welcome.

# The pandemic of loneliness? Individual and societal aspects of loneliness in recent societies [s22]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Sabine Diabaté, Federal Institute for Population Research, Germany
Anne-Kristin Kuhnt, University of Rostock, Germany

## Description:

Loneliness is a complex phenomenon with multiple causes and consequences. It affects both older and younger people in the populations of the Nordic countries and around the world. In addition, the perception of loneliness has been intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic and its social distancing measures and by the use of social media in a digitalized world. Social isolation and loneliness are likely to become major risk factors impacting recent societies. Perceptions of (social, emotional, existential) loneliness are associated with vulnerability in several areas of life, such as health conditions, family life, or social participation. Perceptions of loneliness also have an impact on social cohesion. Social cohesion is the basis for living together in an open, democratically organized society. This basis is currently under stress. That's why we want to offer a session to explore the causes, prevalence, demographics, and individual and societal consequences of loneliness. We aim to improve the understanding of the underlying mechanisms contributing to the different types of loneliness by inviting theoretical, methodological and empirical papers.

# The sociology of chronic illness [s23]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Dan Grabowski, Steno Diabetes Center Copenhagen, Denmark
Kasper Olesen, Steno Diabetes Center Copenhagen, Denmark

## Description:

In Nordic welfare states chronic illness is increasingly treated and managed outside of traditional health care facilities. With approximately a third of the population in the Nordic countries living with at least one chronic illness, the role of social settings in civil societies, such as families, local communities and workplaces, becomes of increasing importance for prevention and management of chronic illness. Sociology of chronic illness has an untapped potential to explore and intervene in the conditions and possibilities when living with chronic illness. Because of the shared cultural, geographical, and social features across the Nordic countries we propose a session focusing on current and future research in the unsettled field of sociology of chronic illness in and especially outside the traditional healthcare setting.

Questions relating to identity processes, self-understanding's, and social imaginaries in relation to illness and health are of central concern within a sociology of chronic illness. How do these mechanisms affect the way we understand ourselves in the context of complex societies that are increasingly affected by technologies and digitalization? The constant development and integration of digital health innovations is changing how societies communicate about health and illness and the structures for positive health and illness management are therefore rapidly changing.

Possible session themes include but are not limited to: The sociology of chronic illness in the family setting, stigma related to chronic illness, chronic illness in a life-course perspective, management, and prevention of chronic illness in civil societies. Digitalization and technological innovations in healthcare.

# Untangling the entangled processes of digitization and privatization [s24]

Open session

## Session chair(s):

Heidi Mork Lomell, University of Oslo, Norway

## Description:

Much of our personal, social, and professional life has migrated onto digital platforms. Both private citizens and public institutions are increasingly dependent on a privatized, digital infrastructure. Almost every aspect of the digital is private: private companies design, produce, sell, maintain, and govern, the digital.

This raises several questions for sociology. The categories of public and private are central in structuring our social lives. We use the categories to distinguish between the state and the economy, or the political and the market, we use it to distinguish between the public and private realms or spaces, from issues of ownership to the distinction between family and the larger economic and political order.

How applicable are these categories in digital environments? What happens when private and commercial interests enter traditional "public" fields through digitization? How do we approach the role of private interests in digital sociology?

For sociologists, the private foundation of digital technologies should be a key component for understanding digitized societies, especially the major differences between a public and a private approach to regulation, accountability, and transparency.

In this session, we invite papers that explore how the concept of privatization offers an important point of departure for understanding digital societies. Possible topics include:

- The role of privatization in digital societies
- Privatization and marketization of knowledge production
- The encoding of market/commercial logics into public/state institutions and practices through digitization
- What is public and what is private in digital societies?
- The growing complexity of public-private partnerships in a digital world

# Additional Open Sessions [s31 – s44]

In addition to the specified sessions (s1 – s25) above, the sessions below represent broader sociological themes to which abstracts can be submitted to. Depending on the types and number of submissions to these sessions, the final set of sessions at NSA2024 will likely be a curated version of the below list.

## Session chair(s):

To be determined

## Session titles:

- Advances in analytical sociology [s31]
- Cognitive sociology [s32]
- Crime and deviance [s33]
- Economic sociology and the sociology of work [s34]
- Environmental sociology [s35]
- Gender and family [s36]
- Health and well-being [s37]
- Media and communication [s38]
- Nordic welfare states [s39]
- Sexualities [s40]
- Social network analysis: methods and applications in sociology [s41]
- Social stratification and inequality [s42]
- Sociology and Computational Social Science [s43]
- Other/uncategorized [s44]