

17th Conference „Social Monitoring and Reporting in Europe“

Rising Conflicts and Polarisation in European Societies? Indicators, Empirical Evidence, and Future Prospects

Villa Vigoni, Lovenno di Menaggio, October 9-11, 2023

Call for Papers

Today most European societies and their citizens are experiencing rising social and political conflicts and polarisation. Intensified struggles over values, power, influence, access to status and scarce social and economic resources manifest themselves in a wide range of social phenomena including various actors. Examples include protest movements, traffic blockades, civil disobedience, strikes, demonstrations, polarized political opinions and attitudes, confrontational political debates and (social) media discourses including manipulative campaigns and digital hate speech, conflicts around wokeness, identity and minority issues, but also potential tensions between governments. Historically, periods of increased social conflicts and polarisation have been often related to profound structural transformations and the emergence of new societal models.

This fragmentation within European societies was building up over the past years, not least in a context of several consecutive and partly overlapping crises, notably the conflictive UK/EU Brexit process, Europe's refugee and migrant crises, the Covid-19 pandemic and the debate on how to respond to it, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the current energy crisis with skyrocketing inflation and a risk of economic recession threatening the living standards of large parts of Europe's population. These current multiple conflicts and crises are hitting European societies in a context of already existing long-term challenges, particularly climate change and green transition, growing geopolitical rivalries, and rising populism and authoritarianism. Some of the present conflicts and polarisation are primarily subjectively perceived and/or communicated via the various (social) media. Others are linked to structural differences and cleavages, like (increasing) social and economic inequalities, regional and urban-rural disparities, minority and migration issues, or gender and generational relationships. And still others may be rooted in the long-term dynamics of social (economic, political, cultural) change, like digitalization, individualization, declining trust in institutions, or geopolitical tensions.

This call for papers invites contributions examining the various facets and manifestations, causes and consequences of rising conflicts and polarisation in European societies. Issues that may be addressed include (but are not limited to):

- empirical evidence on the incidence and intensity of conflicts and polarisation in Europe in the various political, social, cultural, ideological, economic spheres (including the different manifestations of conflicts and the different social actors involved);
- empirical analyses of objective and (subjectively) perceived conflicts and polarisation;

- construction of indicators and indexes, including tools for monitoring social and political conflicts and polarisation;
- comparative analyses of conflicts and polarisation across time and/or European nations;
- implications of social and political conflicts and polarisation for citizens' quality of life and well-being (including the various aspects and sub-dimensions of quality of life/well-being);
- empirical analyses of causes and drivers of increasing (or decreasing!) conflicts and polarisation;
- consequences, and short- and longer-term impacts of conflicts and polarisation;
- methodological issues, particularly with regard to the measurement and the analysis of polarisation.

We invite contributions using national as well as cross-national perspectives or specific case studies; comparative approaches are particularly welcome.

As always, we are also inviting contributions presenting new initiatives, projects and releases for a session on recent developments in European social monitoring and reporting.

Submission procedure: The deadline for submissions is **April 30, 2023**. Please submit your abstract in English (no more than 500 words) to Christian Suter (christian.suter@unine.ch). The abstract should include the title of the contribution, all author(s) names and affiliations as well as contact information. It should contain clear information on the research methods, data sources and analytical tools to be used. Please indicate in the abstract submission if you are requesting a travel grant (see below). Decisions about the acceptance of submissions and travel grants will be made by the conference committee. Authors will be notified by **May 31, 2023** of abstract acceptance/rejection.

Travel grants: Thanks to the support of the World Society Foundation (Zurich, Switzerland) the organizers award a limited number of travel grants covering travel and accommodation (in full or in part) for one author per accepted paper using the most economical travel route. Researchers from Eastern Europe are in particular encouraged to apply.

Venue: The conference will be held at Villa Vigoni, Loveno di Menaggio (Italy), October 9-11, 2023. There is no conference fee. For more information see: <https://www.villavigoni.eu>.

Conference committee: Jeroen Boelhouwer (SCP, The Hague), Peter Farago (formerly FORS, Lausanne), Laura Kestilä, (National Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki), Tadas Leončikas (Eurofound, Dublin), Heinz-Herbert Noll (formerly GESIS, Mannheim), Christian Suter (University Neuchâtel), István György Tóth (TARKI, Budapest).

For information on previous conferences see: <https://www.tarki.hu/villa-vigoni-conferences>.

Supporting institutions:

