



University of Pécs
1367

Shared Futures: Psychosocial Perspectives in Times of Polycrisis

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Queen Nnodi

[Presentation title to be confirmed]

Keynotes, Workshops & Faculty Lectures

Social representations and citizenship

Eleni Andreouli.

Professor of Social Psychology — Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, The Open University, United Kingdom

The talk will present a socio-psychological approach to citizenship drawing on the theory of social representations and particularly the notion of the representational project. I will argue that instead of a status or an identity, citizenship is more helpfully understood as an everyday practice anchored on future-oriented political visions (what I call citizenship projects). Using examples from recent (eg Brexit) and current European politics (eg rise of various kinds of populism), I will illustrate the concept of the ‘citizenship project’ in moments of political uncertainty, where multiple visions of the future emerge and become possible. The talk will also highlight the importance of cross-disciplinary engagement and participatory methodological perspectives.

The paradoxes of polarization: The unexpected role of system justification. A study in 13 countries.

Xenia Chryssochoou

Professor of Social and Political Psychology — Social and Political Psychology Lab, Department of Psychology, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens, Greece

In this presentation, I draw on data from the WIDE Lens Survey of the OppAttune Horizon Project, conducted across 13 European countries (N = 6,123), to examine whether disaffection leads to extremism. Combining variable-oriented and person-oriented approaches, the study focuses on everyday forms of political extremism, particularly online behaviors that undermine opposing views and exclude those who express them.

From a variable-oriented perspective, I argue that system justification can foster acceptance of everyday extremist behaviors by motivating individuals to defend the existing social order. I further propose that this relationship is mediated by trust in institutions. Mediation analyses largely support this argument: across most countries, individuals who more strongly justify the system are more likely to accept everyday extremist behaviors, partly because they place greater trust in institutions.

A person-oriented analysis complements these findings by identifying distinct ideological profiles based on attitudes toward the social order, democracy, institutional trust, social disintegration, political efficacy, vulnerability, and social mobility. These profiles differ significantly in their support for everyday extremism and populist beliefs.

The findings reveal that individuals who strongly justify the system and report lower levels of disaffection are often more supportive of everyday extremist behaviors than those who perceive society as unjust and dysfunctional. Overall, the results challenge the assumption that disaffection is the primary driver of extremism and highlight the importance of lay understandings of the social order in shaping polarized attitudes and behaviors in contemporary Europe.

Constructing Shared Futures: Multimodal Political Discourse in Times of Polycrisis

Inari Sakki

Professor of Social Psychology — Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland

This presentation explores how political actors use language, images, and other multimodal resources to shape public understandings of contemporary crises and imagined futures. Drawing on discursive and multimodal approaches, it examines how political discourse surrounding issues such as migration, climate change, and war constructs collective identities, mobilises emotions, and collective action.

This session is delivered as a three-hour condensed presentation and workshop.

There is nothing more practical than a good theory': Researching and applying social representations theory in contexts of adversity

Sandra Jovchelovitch

Professor of Social Psychology — Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science, London School of Economics, United Kingdom

[Abstract to be confirmed]

Advancing Women's Equality in a Closed Political System

Csernus Fanni

Gender Equality Adviser at Amnesty International Hungary and Assistant Professor at ELTE, Hungary

In the European Union, Hungary has one of the highest gender pay gaps, indicating deeply structural and institutionalized forms of labour market discrimination against women. These gender-based inequalities produce consequences that systematically shape women's economic, physical, and mental security, as well as their overall well-being. The presentation examines how policy measures, economic incentives, and communication strategies implemented between 2022 and 2026 relate to the system justification of gender inequalities, how they aim to induce identity-based fragmentation among women, and how these mechanisms reduce women's economic agency and access to resources. Beyond outlining the problem, the presentation provides concrete examples of how, in a closed political environment where democratic participation is limited and civic space is shrinking, bottom-up tools and coping strategies can be employed to advance women's interests and rights and promote greater equality in the labour market.

Higher Education Inclusion in Hungary: A Focus on the Roma Population – Data, Research, and Good Practices

Trendl Fanni

Assistant Professor — Department of Romology and Sociology of Education, University of Pécs, Hungary

Higher education inclusion remains an underexplored topic in Hungary, particularly when it comes to the Roma population. In my presentation, I would like to provide a comprehensive overview of the educational attainment and trends among Roma in Hungary, addressing relevant issues in education policy and the sociology of education. The presentation will also highlight educational innovations associated with the city of Pécs, the findings of research examining these initiatives, as well as some of the dilemmas and challenges that have emerged in connection with them.

Polycrisis and the changing world order – A geopolitical analysis of our ‘age of uncertainties’

István Tarrósy

Professor of Political Science and International Studies, Africa Research Center — Department of Political Science and International Studies, University of Pécs, Hungary

The contemporary international system is undergoing a profound transformation marked by the simultaneous interaction of multiple crises that transcend traditional geopolitical, economic, environmental, technological, and societal boundaries. This condition, increasingly conceptualized as polycrisis, reflects an era in which interconnected disruptions reinforce one another, accelerating the erosion of the post-Cold War order while reshaping the distribution of global power. Rather than viewing these crises in isolation, this lecture tackles how they collectively signal a structural transition towards an increasingly asymmetric multipolar world order characterized by heightened uncertainty, strategic competition, and contested global governance – all in the doorstep of a ‘climate catastrophe’. The lecture explores how the diffusion of power beyond the traditional Western centers of gravity has transformed the geopolitical landscape, placing the Global South at the heart of contemporary debates about international order. The rise of emerging / regional powers, the growing significance of South–South cooperation, and the expanding bargaining capacity of developing countries increasingly challenge the longstanding distinction between norm takers and norm-makers in global governance. Consequently, questions surrounding sovereignty, legitimacy, institutional reform, and the production of international norms have become central to understanding 21st-century geopolitics. Particular attention is devoted to Africa as an illustrative case of these broader transformations. Once widely perceived as peripheral to global politics, the continent has become a pivotal arena where geopolitical rivalries intersect with domestic political trajectories, demographic dynamism, resource politics, and competing development models. While external powers continue to pursue strategic influence through investment, infrastructure, security partnerships, and access to critical minerals, African states increasingly demonstrate political agency by diversifying partnerships, strengthening continental initiatives such as Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and seeking more favorable positions within evolving global governance structures. The lecture, therefore, challenges narratives portraying Africa merely as the object of a

“new scramble,” instead emphasizing the continent’s growing capacity to negotiate, balance, and shape international relationships according to its own priorities. Finally, the lecture underscores that navigating the current age of uncertainties requires renewed attention to human-centered development, resilient governance, strategic partnerships, and more inclusive forms of multilateralism. The future international order will depend not only on shifts in material capabilities but also on whose norms, institutions, and visions of development prevail. Understanding polycrisis through the perspectives and agency of the Global South, therefore, offers valuable insights into the evolving architecture of global politics and the prospects for a more representative and sustainable international order.

Pathologizing Knowledge: Climate Anxiety and the Depoliticization of Ecological Crisis

Kiss Kata Dóra

Assistant Professor — Department of Social and Organizational Psychology, University of Pécs, Hungary

The talk offers a critical analysis of the mainstream psychological discourse on climate anxiety, situating it within the ideological structure of contemporary capitalism. As economic decline, ecological breakdown, and social precarity converge into a condition of polycrisis, ecological distress in the Global North is increasingly framed as a matter of individual "climate anxiety." Drawing on the tradition of ideology critique, the analysis examines what this framing accomplishes and what political implications follow from it. The dominant psychological approach, exemplified by the American Psychological Association's guidance on climate change, pathologizes a response that is in fact a rational reaction to a genuine catastrophe, reframing a collective political condition as a private disorder to be clinically managed. Against this, the paper proposes reading climate anxiety not as a distortion of reality but as a symptom of an accurate perception of it, arising where awareness of ecological crisis surfaces despite the ideological mechanisms that sustain existing patterns of production and consumption. This anxiety cannot, however, be treated as a universal psychological phenomenon. It is bound up with a specifically Global North position, encompassing the fear of losing the privileges of the capitalist core and reinforced by cultural representations that shape how ecological catastrophe is imagined and felt. Finally, the paper considers what follows from reframing ecological distress from anxiety toward concern, an affect oriented toward the world and toward collective response. Rather than resolving these questions, the discussion aims to open them for further reflection and dialogue.

Diversity as an Organising Principle of the Symbolic Relations Between Groups: A Reflection on the Socio-Dynamic Model and on Social Identity Mapping

Alessia Rochira

Associate Professor — Department of Human and Social Sciences, University of Salento, Lecce, Italy

The socio-dynamic approach to social representations (Doise, Clémence & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1993) defines them as organising principles of the symbolic relations between individuals and groups.

Within this approach, the question of how such principles can be studied empirically has received sustained attention and has produced a substantial body of work; it nevertheless remains an open and fruitful question, since what has to be observed is not a content but the work that this content does on the relations between groups. The present work seeks to contribute to this discussion through an ongoing study on the social representations of ethnic and cultural diversity in local communities in Southern Italy.

Diversity is a suitable object for this purpose, since it exists only in the relation between the groups that share the same place. Harrison and Klein (2007), working on organisations, distinguished three phenomena that are usually confused under this single term: variety (the number and the range of different groups), separation (the distance between their values and opinions) and disparity (the inequality of their resources, status and power). The study asks whether these three types describe the ways in which residents represent the groups of their community, and whether the prevailing type changes according to which groups are involved.

For this purpose, the Social Identity Mapping procedure (Cruwys et al., 2016), in which participants place their own groups on a sheet, has been adapted and is used as a visual elicitation device, in the tradition of photo-elicitation (Harper, 2002): the map produced by the participant takes the place of the photograph and becomes the material for the subsequent discussion. The presentation describes the adaptation of the procedure, reports preliminary results from the first pilot interviews, and discusses the analysis protocol, which is still being defined.

Workshop: Photo-elicitation versus synthetic photo-elicitation: enhancing the method or developing a new one?

Isabella Rega

Associate Professor in Information Science in the Department of Information Science at the Haute École de Gestion, Haute École spécialisée de Suisse occidentale (HES-SO), Switzerland

This workshop introduces participants to photo-elicitation as a visual research method and opens up debate on the possibilities and challenges raised by AI-generated images. Through two hands-on exercises exploring future imaginaries, one using participant-taken photographs, the other using GenAI-produced images, we will unpack what changes, and what is at stake, when the "photo" in photo-elicitation is synthetic rather than captured.

Workshop: The Power of Images and Discourse: Semiotic and Psychosocial Approaches to the Italian Fascist Regime (1925–1930)

Pierluigi Cervelli, Mauro Sarrica and Marco Binotto

Sapienza University of Rome

The workshop presents preliminary findings from the Sapienza University research project *Fascism and the Power of Images (2024–2027)*, investigating the relationship between political discourse, the use of images, forms of efficacy and the construction of interpretive adherence.

It focuses specifically on the discursive representation of national identity and on the images of women, children and the family under the Fascist regime in Italy, and particularly on the years

between 1925 and 1930 — the period in which the regime consolidated its power and Fascism was transformed into a dictatorship.

The project's interdisciplinary methodology brings an archive of images into relation with a corpus of political speeches. By examining the relationship between photographic texts and the content of political and administrative discourse, including discourse bearing on demographic policy, the workshop sets out to identify possible points of interaction and complementarity between semiotic and social-psychological methods. Its overarching aim is to consider how political language, rather than transmitting information, rearticulates the relationship between enunciator and enunciatee with a view to securing emotional adherence, and how photography was used to translate the contents of Fascist ideological discourse from verbal language into images — and with what forms of efficacy.

Doctoral Presentations

Frame Sponsorship and Policy Problematisations in the Making of Italian Renewable Energy Communities. Two Readings: The National Press and the Regulatory Chain.

Ignazio Terrana

Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) enable citizens, associations, small businesses, and local authorities to share self-produced energy. The presentation focuses on the final two studies of my doctoral thesis, which critically examine the media discourse and regulatory landscape surrounding RECs in Italy. Study 2 explores how these communities are framed in the Italian national press to determine whether initiatives that redistribute energy ownership have become politically contentious. Through a qualitative frame analysis of a corpus of $n = 142$ editorial items published between 2021 and 2026, the study pays close attention to frame sponsorship. The concept, traditionally defined as the actors and resources that articulate a frame, is extended here to the newspapers themselves, which operate as sponsors in their own right within Italy's polarized-pluralist media system. The findings reveal that while two competing frames (techno-economic and solidarity-oriented) coexisted in near-parity across the six years, RECs never sparked true political contention. Instead, three-quarters of the coverage was concentrated in two newspapers that divided the interpretive packages between them, backed by the same corporate energy sponsors. While the intended beneficiaries were constantly represented (citizens, associations), they were never directly quoted. Study 3 qualitatively analyzes the Italian REC regulatory chain through a corpus of $n = 22$ texts, tracking the trajectory from the EU Directive RED II down to national decrees and operating rules. It investigates how each text constructs the "problem" RECs are meant to solve, which subject positions are made available to citizens, and what remains unproblematised. The results reveal a progressive technical and economic reductionism across the regulatory chain, with the citizen's role downgraded from an active participant to a passive consumer or administrative applicant, leaving issues of community-led governance largely unproblematised.

Building Local Agency and Institutional Demands: Trade Union Perspectives in the Just Transition Discourse

Anna Golnerits

Background: The concept of a "Just Transition" (JT) has evolved from a defensive framework protecting labor interests into a holistic socio-ecological paradigm aimed at maximizing benefits and minimizing hardships for workers during the shift toward a low-carbon economy. Driven by major

supranational milestones—including the 2015 Paris Agreement, the 2019 European Green Deal, and the 2025 Green Industrial Deal—the discourse increasingly navigates complex tensions between centralized legal regulations and diverse local, regional, and sectoral realities.

Objectives: Utilizing Social Representation Theory and a dialogical approach, this study examines how politically engaged, actively resisting trade union organizations conceptualize, internalize, and operationalize the Just Transition process across supranational and national levels. It contrasts the institutional framing of macro-level organizations with the localized realities and diverse perspectives of national confederations.

Methodology: The study conducts a multi-level textual analysis on a total corpus of 107 policy briefs, working papers, statements, and recommendations released between 2015 and 2026 by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), and the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI). This macro-level view is complemented by a national-level analysis of public press releases, open letters, and policy papers from across various European trade union confederations. Methodologically, data processing was executed using IRaMuTeQ 0.8 alpha 7, employing Descending Hierarchical Analysis (DHA), Similarity Analysis, and Specificity Analysis.

Results: Macro-level text mining revealed distinct institutional representations: the ETUC heavily guides procedural frameworks and regional industrial strategies, the ETUI frames socio-economic and technological research, and the ILO consistently champions an eco-social, opportunity-focused, and highly inclusive view centering on minority voices, vulnerable groups, and gender articulation. Temporally, the European trade union discourse has progressed through four distinct phases: (1) Climate Response (2015–2018) (2) Green Recovery & Social Dialogue (2019–2021) (3) Just Transition Consolidation (2022–2024) (4) Sectoral & Ecological Focus (2025–2026). At the national level, the data exposes stark regional and sectoral differences—ranging from a focus on heavy industrial restructuring in specific clusters to localized interventions.

Conclusion: While macro-level European policymaking often runs the risk of letting Just Transition dialogue be overshadowed by immediate macroeconomic crises, national-level data demonstrates that the ecological transition remains a persistent, deeply felt issue on personal, workplace, and governmental scales. The high diversification among national trade union narratives reveals that climate justice stretches far beyond purely technological or financial adjustments. Ultimately, the study questions whether overarching supranational bodies like the ETUC can successfully reconcile these internal regional frictions to build a unified, equitable global front.

One Future, Many Senses: Social Representations and the Politics of Plausibility in the Energy Transition

Mirella de Falco

How do groups imagine, organise, and contest the future together? Analysing 15 Threaded Futures workshops conducted with adults (18-75) in Italy, Portugal, and Hungary, we show explore how social groups collectively construct energy futures as part of their common sense. The goal of the energy transition is anchored in existential nuclei -survival, lineage, connection- such that the most accepted futures are consistently those in which energy disappears from perception altogether. Groups hold the ideal at a protective distance from present compromise; lay theories of change, in

turn, are organised by a recurring rupture grammar, in which catastrophe is threaded as an undesired-but-necessary enabler of institutional renewal. Groups reach a shared future through bivalent collective symbols: a single word such as nature or silence carries incompatible meanings across speakers, producing a verbal rather than a real consensus. Together, these findings illustrate how collective futures are objectified, positioned, held together, and contested, with direct implications for social representations theory and its potential "futures turn".

Belonging, Identity Construction and Social Representations for Displaced Communities in the New Digital Milieu

Geremia Trinchese

This research project aims to explore how online displaced communities, with specific reference to Palestinian and Kurdish cases, engage with platform-based digital affordances in order to construct and negotiate collective identity, foster a sense of belonging and strategically mobilise political resistance and demands on the international stage, in defiance of the structural constraints and algorithmic biases imposed by social media platforms.

Decolonisation as a social representation: A multi-study investigation of knowledge, positionality, and academic practice

Subas Amjad Ali

This presentation provides an overview of my doctoral research examining how decolonisation is represented, experienced, and translated into possibilities for change within academia. The thesis comprises three interconnected studies that move from mapping scholarly discourse to examining the perspectives of decolonial scholars and, subsequently, the wider academic community. Study 1 employs a lexicometric analysis of 300 article abstracts on decolonisation to identify dominant themes, conceptual structures, and tensions within scholarly representations of the field. Study 2 draws on 12 semi-structured interviews with decolonial scholars to explore how decolonisation is understood, negotiated, and practised within academia, with particular attention to knowledge production, power, resistance, positionality, and imagined academic futures. Concepts and dimensions emerging from these interviews informed the development of Study 3, a mixed-method questionnaire completed by 351 participants from the wider academic community. Combining quantitative and qualitative items, this study examines how academics across different disciplinary and geopolitical contexts engage with questions of knowledge production, positionality, methodological practice, colonial legacies, institutional transformation, and decolonial possibilities. Taken together, the three studies trace a progression from scholarly discourse, to situated experience, to broader empirical examination. The thesis therefore approaches decolonisation not only as a critique of existing academic structures, but also as a struggle over knowledge, power, belonging, and the possibilities for imagining and creating alternative academic futures.

When Meaning Is Constructed Through Debate – The Multidimensional Model of Helping

Müller Tündér Éva

Dominant psychological accounts treat helping as an individual disposition grounded in empathy, altruism, or prosocial motivation. In contrast, this study approaches helping as a socially constructed and situated practice. Drawing on Moscovici's Social Representations Theory, Bourdieu's theory of capital, and perspectives on power, it proposes a threefold typology. Assistentialist helping provides immediate relief and positions the helper as provider, but may reproduce dependency and paternalism. Competence-based helping develops skills and autonomy, framing the helper as instructor, while leaving open who defines competence. Emancipatory helping treats helper and recipient as partners seeking collective and structural change, emphasizing interdependence rather than adaptation. The empirical study examined how these models acquired meaning through debate. A three-stage deliberative forum was conducted with Hungarian (N = 42) and international participants (N = 39). Participants first reflected individually on one assigned model, then developed arguments in small groups, and finally defended their positions in a plenary discussion. The forum showed that meanings were not merely expressed but constructed through comparison, criticism, metaphor, and revision. Debate centered on temporality, autonomy, control, motivation, cooperation, and structural responsibility. Although participants initially defended separate positions, both groups converged on the view that the models are complementary. Immediate assistance can stabilize crisis, competence-based support can strengthen agency, and emancipatory action can transform the conditions reproducing disadvantage. The findings support a multidimensional model of helping in which ethical value depends on context, sequence, power relations, and participation. Deliberative debate therefore functions as both a research method and a site of collective theory-building.

A Study of the influence of Worldviews on Proactive work behaviour

Andrea Mele

My research aims to understand how culturally mediated and shared meanings influence proactive behaviour in the workplace. Through a mixed-method approach to analysing workers' experiences, I intend to explore the nature and connections between the different levels of representation active in the workplace. This will be essential in order to focus on how and to what extent they promote or hinder proactivity. This study will seek to shed light on the antecedents and determinants of proactive behaviour, opening up new possible directions for the development of more satisfying and generative professional experiences.

Performing Memory: The construction of cultural trauma surrounding massacres in Italy (1980) and Mexico (1968).

Rodrigo Andrés Rodríguez Fuentes

This literature review establishes the state of the art in cultural trauma studies, examining how this concept has been developed and studied in recent years. Grounded in Jeffrey Alexander's Strong Program in Cultural Sociology and the contributions of authors such as Ron Eyerman, Giuseppe Sciortino, and Nelson Arteaga, the review demonstrates that culture is treated as a relatively autonomous variable, focusing on its internal meaning-making process rather than treating it as a dependent superstructure of conditions such as the economic, political, or religious.

The review evaluates key theoretical dimensions in existing literature, including power dynamics, meaning struggles, collective identity, and the civil sphere. Carrier groups—such as victim associations, activists, and intellectuals—act as cultural creators who construct scripts and perform trauma narratives across institutional ceremonies, media, and interdiscursive public spaces. Furthermore, concepts like *absentia* and *nostalgia* illustrate how historical failures and idealized pasts actively shape national, ethnic, and social identity construction.

Finally, the document identifies some conceptual and methodological gaps in current scholarship. Existing studies frequently rely on discourse analysis and focus on spectacular events, while underdeveloping the roles of social media and mundane, everyday interactions. Likewise, the performative dimension is not developed at a deep level. To overcome these limitations, the project advocates combining performative theory and thick description to better articulate the dialogue between collective memory, cultural trauma, and the democratic horizons of modern civil societies.

Cross-Strait Online Narratives of the Nanjing Massacre: Memory, Identity and Politics

Diao Haoxuan

This study examines how mainland Chinese and Taiwanese users construct social representations of the Nanjing Massacre on Reddit (2019–2025), a multilingual and unmediated arena where cross-strait users engage without state mediation. Drawing on Social Representations Theory, collective memory research, and geopolitical psychology, a comparative content analysis was conducted on 70 Reddit threads, yielding 1,490 coded segments across eight analytical dimensions.

Findings reveal a structurally specific pattern of divergence. At the surface level, the two communities are statistically indistinguishable: they discuss the same topics, deploy the same rhetorical actions, and invoke the same historical analogies. Divergence emerges exclusively at the intersectional level, where rhetorical choices are paired with specific targets, accountability allocations, and stance profiles. Simplified Chinese users cluster predominantly in Promoter and Ironist positions, consistent with a hegemonic memory anchored in state commemoration; Traditional Chinese users cluster overwhelmingly in Observer, constituting a polemic counter-position characterised by chosen silence rather than active contestation.

These findings are interpreted through a three-mechanism model of discommunication: premise mismatch at the epistemic level, asymmetric rhetorical tools at the discursive level, and identity boundary maintenance at the social-identitarian level. Together, these mechanisms constitute a structural condition that forecloses genuine cross-community dialogue, not through individual communicative failure, but through the co-presence of incommensurable memory regimes in a shared digital space.

The role of social representations in the assessment of political credibility

Simona Epure

My main research interest is in how social representations shape perceptions of political credibility. Through my studies, I intend to develop a standardized instrument to measure political credibility, along with cognitive, moral, and affective factors. My research project aims to explore how social representations contribute to the assessment of political credibility, examining how individual psychological traits and affective-moral variables interact with political discourse evaluation.

Agenda Access Without Agenda Control: Reframing Citizenship in the 2025 Italian Referendum

Alessandro Ralli

Political communication has long examined both the conditions under which issues enter the public agenda and the strategies through which they are prevented from gaining or maintaining salience (Cobb & Ross, 1997; Colistra, 2012; Buchmeier, 2020), but this literature has rarely been applied to migration-related claims-making. Migration and citizenship scholarship has documented migrant-led mobilisation as political agency – acts of citizenship (Isin & Nielsen, 2008; Ataç et al., 2016), counter-narratives to dominant media frames (Binotto & Bruno, 2026) – but rarely in political-communication terms of agenda access and durability over time. The two fields do not fully talk to each other: what migrant-led movements achieve when they reframe an issue, and whether that reframing secures sustained salience, remains largely unexamined. My doctoral research examines this underexplored intersection through the 2025 Italian citizenship referendum, combining an original media dataset (social media, television, press) with focus groups with the campaign's communication team. After two decades of mobilisation, the referendum brought citizenship reform before a broad public, marking a significant instance of counter-political mobilisation regardless of its electoral outcome. Preliminary analysis of activist Instagram posts shows the referendum period coincided with growth in followers and reach, a window of visibility that let activists advance their own themes through reframing. Television, social-media data and focus groups show, however, that this access did not translate into lasting frame and agenda control, as media and political actors contained the campaign's salience through agenda denial and competing pre-existing narrative frames (Ralli & Binotto, forthcoming).

Social representations of HIV/AIDS and professional lives: The case of people Living with HIV/AIDS in Yaoundé

Noelle Tchatchou

In Yaoundé, antiretroviral therapy has turned HIV into a manageable chronic condition, yet the meanings attached to the virus appear to have shifted far more slowly than its clinical course. This thesis examines how social representations of HIV shape the professional lives of people living with HIV in the Cameroonian capital. The study adopts an exploratory and abductive mixed design combining three corpora. A survey of 218 respondents was analysed through prototypical method, complemented by bivariate tests and multiple correspondence analysis. 28 life-narrative interviews with people living with HIV were then analysed thematically. Finally, 29 prevention campaign images produced between 2000 and 2025 were examined through a sixteen-criterion grid.

The survey results indicate a representational structure organised around disease, bodily wasting, sexuality, incurability and fear, with death remaining the single most frequent evocation. Education emerges as the factor most consistently associated with representational content, and four contrasting profiles of respondents can be distinguished. The narratives suggest how these meanings translate into workplace practice, where participants navigate between protective silence and selective disclosure, at a psychological cost that varies with gender, employment sector and economic position. The visual corpus indicates that work is almost entirely absent from public discourse on HIV.

Taken together, the findings point to a persistent gap between formal non-discrimination norms and everyday professional experience. The thesis proposes an integrated analytical model articulating social representations, stigma and intersectionality, and draws from it implications for social work practice and for the place given to employment in HIV policy in Cameroon.

From War Photojournalism to Self-Representation: Visual Connections Across Memory, Everyday Life, and Belonging

Giacomo Di Benedetto

War photography has long been questioned for its potential to reproduce unequal regimes of representation, particularly when depicting distant suffering through processes of decontextualization, spectacularization, and victimization. While recent studies on the war in Ukraine have highlighted transformations in professional photojournalistic practices and the role of atrocity images in processes of witnessing, accountability, and claims for justice, less attention has been given to the visual narratives produced by individuals directly affected by conflict.

This research explores how participatory visual practices can enable Ukrainian refugees to reclaim representational agency and contribute to alternative narratives of war. Drawing on participatory action research and visual methodologies, the study investigates how photography can become a tool for self-representation, collective reflection, and the reconstruction of meaningful connections across displacement. The research adopts a Photovoice-based approach, combining a participatory photography workshop, collective discussion, and a "Visual Connections" exercise linking everyday

images produced in Italy with photographs shared by family members and close social networks in Ukraine. Expected outcomes include an understanding of how self-produced images challenge dominant visual regimes, how everyday photography sustains forms of belonging and kinship across distance, and how participatory image-making can contribute to more inclusive and sustainable representations of war.

The role of social representations in the psychological distress caused by gambling

Huțul Andreea

The project integrates Social Representations Theory into the study of gambling involvement, investigating how socially shared beliefs shape individual experiences, public attitudes, and problematic gambling outcomes. The first study explored Romanian lay representations of problem gambling and their variations according to gambling involvement, sex, and life satisfaction, revealing an ambivalent image that combines responsibility and blame with suffering and psychopathology. Building on these findings, the second study developed and validated an 18-item instrument assessing five dimensions of gambling-related social representations: irrational behavior, personality defects, positive effects, negative effects, and mental illness or suffering. The third study examined the relationships between social representations, gambling-related cognitive distortions, and problem gambling, suggesting that more positive representations may facilitate distorted cognitions and increase vulnerability to problematic gambling. Taken together, the studies indicate that social representations may constitute a contextual pathway through which gambling becomes normalized and psychologically sustained. Particular attention will be devoted to the theoretical and practical implications of these findings. Prevention initiatives should address socially shared beliefs rather than focusing exclusively on gambling frequency or individual risk behavior. Moreover, understanding these representations may inform balanced anti-stigma communication, reduce blame and self-stigma, encourage help-seeking, and strengthen the social legitimacy of treatment and prevention strategies.

The role of social representations in the psychological distress caused by pornography use

Huțul Tudor-Daniel

The project addresses an important limitation of existing models, which have primarily emphasized consumption frequency, behavioral dysregulation, religiosity, and moral incongruence, while paying less attention to socially shared beliefs. By integrating Social Representation Theory into the Pornography Problems due to Moral Incongruence model, the research seeks to explain why similar patterns of pornography use may produce different psychological outcomes across individuals. The first study examined Romanian representations of pornography consumers and their variations according to gender, relationship satisfaction, and sexual satisfaction, identifying both positive and negative meanings that may contribute to distress. Building on these findings, the second study

developed a 12-item instrument comprising three dimensions: immorality, mental illness, and denial of culpability or exoneration. The third study incorporated this instrument into a broader psychological framework and tested whether social representations moderate the relationship between problematic pornography consumption and pornography-related psychological distress. Results indicated that this association becomes stronger as representations become more negative, whereas it was not significant among individuals holding less negative representations. These findings highlight social representations as a relevant contextual mechanism that can intensify distress beyond consumption frequency alone. The project has theoretical implications for extending the PPMI model and practical implications for assessment, psychoeducation, prevention, and clinical interventions that distinguish behavioral dysregulation from distress shaped by stigma, moral judgment, and socially shared beliefs.

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Queen Nnodi

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