

# The European Social Survey

## Round 13 Question Module Design Teams (QDT)

### Stage 2 Application

Applications **MUST** be submitted by 17:00 (UK time) on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Applications should be emailed to [ess@city.ac.uk](mailto:ess@city.ac.uk)

<b>Is this application for a new or a repeat module</b>	
New module	Repeat module

<b>Expected module length</b>	
15 questions	30 questions

#### Proposed title for the Module

Interdisciplinary perspectives on social (dis)connectedness in Europe

#### Abstract (Max 250 words)

In recent years, the possibilities for interacting and staying in touch with others have multiplied tremendously. Despite these advancements and the opportunities they present, many individuals still experience social disconnectedness—a lack of meaningful social bonds that extend beyond physical isolation or being alone. Global organisations, such as the World Health Organization, have repeatedly identified social disconnectedness as a pressing issue due to its profound individual and societal costs. Recognizing the issue's severity, some national governments have responded by establishing ministries dedicated to combating social disconnectedness. While disconnectedness is often considered dysfunctional, people sometimes actively seek solitude for its beneficial effects. Moreover, having social capital may change experiences of social disconnectedness. An ESS module dedicated to social (dis)connectedness integrates the multitude of conceptual approaches that originate in diverse disciplines, including (but not limited to) psychology, sociology, economics, communication, and political sciences. The proposed module will foster integrative, transformative theory building and lay the foundation for empirically based sound interventions, thus addressing a societal challenge that will remain urgent for many years. Given the rich diversity of cultural, societal, economic, and political contexts across Europe, the ESS framework allows for an in-depth exploration of both country-specific and cross-country factors. By uniting different disciplinary perspectives across multiple countries, and drawing on the QDT's extensive experience in large-scale survey development and analysis, the proposed module is poised to deliver insights of the highest value to academia and European society alike for many years to come.

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**Please ensure that your application includes:**

- A completed Stage 2 application cover sheet - Mark on the cover sheet whether you are applying for a new or repeat module
- The main body of the application (max. 20 sides A4) including sections covering:
  - The rationale for fielding the module on the ESS in 2027-28
  - How the module can be implemented on the ESS
  - Team expertise and experience
  - Dissemination plans
- Bibliographic references (max. 3 sides A4)
- CVs (max. 2 sides A4 each) for up to five proposed QDT members, including contact details

**Please also ensure that:**

- Your application is in PDF format (other formats will NOT be accepted)
- It is written in Arial font size 11 pt
- Page margins are at least 2cm
- All pages are numbered
- All sections of your application are combined into a single document
- The proposed team includes people from at least three ESS countries (including an ESS ERIC member or observer country)

## Interdisciplinary perspectives on social (dis)connectedness in Europe

### 1 Rationale

Opportunities for connecting with other people have expanded significantly in recent years due to increased mobility and digital networks. Compared to two or three decades ago, the possibilities for interacting and staying in touch with others have multiplied tremendously. Today, individuals can connect with others over vast distances at virtually no cost, using both asynchronous and synchronous communication methods, including text, audio, and real-time video. Despite these technological advancements and the opportunities they present, many individuals continue to experience social disconnectedness—a lack of meaningful social bonds that extend beyond mere physical isolation or being alone. National governments and global organisations, such as the World Health Organization, have repeatedly identified social disconnectedness as a pressing issue due to its profound individual and societal costs (Walker, 2018; WHO, 2023). Countries like Great Britain and Japan have recognized the severity of both individual and societal level issues by establishing ministries dedicated to combating loneliness and social isolation (Yeginsu, 2018).

The European Social Survey (ESS) provides an ideal platform for the proposed module because social disconnectedness is an acute cross-national challenge, which is apparent, for instance, in the so-called loneliness epidemic (HHS, 2023). To illustrate, a recent European survey revealed that 13% of respondents reported feeling lonely most or all of the time over the past four weeks, and 35% reported feeling lonely at least some of the time (EU-LS, 2022). Given the rich diversity of cultural, economic, and political contexts across Europe, the ESS framework allows for an in-depth exploration of how different societal factors influence individuals' experiences of social disconnectedness. Cross-national comparisons afforded by the ESS can help identify country-specific as well as across-country factors that either mitigate or exacerbate feelings of disconnectedness, thus providing valuable insights for targeted interventions and policies.

The QDT uses the term *social disconnectedness* to describe an unpleasant subjective experience, which serves as an umbrella term encompassing various related constructs such as ostracism (being ignored and excluded), loneliness, rejection, or social/economic/political participation. These constructs, while distinct, share the notion of a misfit between one's desired versus actual level or form of connection. One of the biggest sources of social disconnectedness is interpersonal, that is, being disconnected from other people, including being left out, ignored, or feeling lonely. In addition, social disconnectedness may emanate from other sources, such as feeling unable to participate in society due to health or financial reasons, not feeling politically represented or heard, or feeling unable to keep pace with changes in societies, such as digitalization that permeates all life areas (e.g., elderly individuals struggling with smartphone-based applications). Irrespective of their source, feelings of social disconnectedness constitute powerful threats to fundamental needs such as belonging, control, or a meaningful existence, which explain why social disconnectedness can prove so profoundly disruptive.

At the individual level, social disconnectedness is associated with severe mental and physical health issues, including depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline, ultimately increasing mortality risk

(Büttner & Greifeneder, 2024; Cacioppo et al., 2002; Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015; Rudert et al., 2021). The recent COVID-19 pandemic highlighted these issues, as social isolation measures to mitigate the spread of the virus were significantly detrimental to individuals' mental health, societal engagement, and economic productivity (Deb et al., 2022; Pancani et al., 2021; Vindegaard & Benros, 2020). At the societal level, social disconnectedness undermines social cohesion, fosters disengagement from political and community life, and weakens trust in public institutions (Bogatyreva et al., in print; Reilly, 2017). Social disconnectedness has also been linked to increased support for extremist groups, reduced trust in others, and readiness for political violence (Ellis et al., 2021; Hales & Williams, 2018; Pfundmair, 2019).

Research on social disconnectedness spans multiple fields, including (but not limited to) psychology, sociology, economics, communication, and political sciences. Unfortunately, these fields often operate in isolation, leading to fragmented insights. With this module, the QDT aims to integrate insights from the diverse disciplines, thus paving the way for a more holistic understanding of social disconnectedness, with its multiple dimensions and sources. Understanding the cross-national differences in social disconnectedness is essential for designing effective policies and interventions aimed at enhancing social cohesion and democratic engagement. What follows details social, economic, and political implications of social (dis)connectedness by way of example.

*Social implications.* Studies in psychology and sociology underscore that experiences of social disconnectedness vary considerably across social groups, including by age (Rudert et al., 2020) and ethnicity (Auer et al., 2023; Visser & El Fakiri, 2016). Psychological factors, such as lower well-being, may predispose individuals to feel less connected (Sibley et al., 2020). Moreover, there is a bi-directional relationship between mental health and social disconnectedness, whereby poor mental health can reduce social connectedness, and feeling disconnected can increase the risk of developing mental health disorders (e.g., Reinhard et al., 2020; Rudert et al., 2021). Similarly, socially vulnerable individuals may have limited access to resources, such as digital technologies that facilitate social connectedness, placing them at a higher risk of marginalisation (Ragnedda et al., 2022). Fielding items on social disconnectedness as part of the ESS affords the unique opportunity to further identify at-risk groups within different societal contexts and expose the mechanisms that link these risk variables to disconnectedness. Intriguingly, while social disconnectedness is generally regarded as something negative, studies in psychology and sociology illustrate that individuals sometimes even seek and benefit from solitude (Weinstein et al., 2023). Thus, there can be benefits to (temporary) social disconnectedness, too. The proposed module will therefore also include specific questions targeting these positive aspects to create a holistic understanding of social implications and contribute to resolving the “paradox of solitude” (e.g., Coplan et al., 2019).

*Economic implications.* Social disconnectedness significantly impacts economic participation, influencing relative poverty, income inequality, and the vitality of economies and communities. Understanding the dynamics between social disconnectedness and economic outcomes at both individual and societal levels—including financial stability, employment trends, and overall economic growth—is crucial for developing effective and sustainable policies and interventions (e.g., D'Ambrosio & Frick, 2012). While disconnectedness affects all societal groups, coping strategies are highly heterogeneous and may depend on individuals' social and economic resources (Albath et al.,

2023; Caro et al., 2015). This proposal puts emphasis on how social disconnectedness is associated with individual-level financial variables across different countries. Understanding these associations in the European context is particularly important for fostering both individual and societal prosperity, especially given that economic dissatisfaction is rising in many European countries (Zoumpoulidis et al., 2020). The QDT anticipates gaining further insights by coupling ESS core data with country-level predictors, such as education level, GDP, the Gini coefficient, corruption level, democracy index, political parties classification, or national election results.

*Political implications.* Social disconnectedness also has profound political implications. One of Europe's key signatures is its commitment to democratic governance through collective institutions like the European Parliament. While this structure enables Europe to play a significant role in global politics, it also creates vulnerabilities when unity and trust are compromised. Rising populist movements and the spread of misinformation pose serious risks in this context (Ghebreyesus, 2020). Research demonstrates that social disconnectedness can increase support for extreme groups and ideologies and reduce trust in others (e.g., Hales & Williams, 2018; Hillebrandt et al., 2011; Pfundmair, 2019). Feeling disconnected can also erode trust in public institutions and political figures, as well as increase readiness for political violence (e.g., Ellis et al., 2021; Rotenberg, 1994). ESS data demonstrate significant variations in trust in politicians across European countries (European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure, ESS ERIC, 2023), highlighting the need to understand the drivers of mistrust through an examination of cross-national differences in social disconnectedness. Additionally, perceptions of disconnectedness in the political sphere may impact support for a united Europe and decrease emotional attachment to the European project. Understanding these dynamics is critical for predicting electoral behaviour and democratic participation (e.g., Jauch et al., 2023; Langenkamp, 2021). For instance, previous research by the QDT using CRONOS-2 data and multilevel Bayesian modelling revealed that frequent experiences of exclusion are associated with a lower likelihood of voting in national elections (Bogatyreva et al., in print). Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of the factors driving social disconnectedness across Europe to develop targeted strategies that enhance unity, trust, and democratic engagement within the European Union.

In sum, the proposed interdisciplinary module proposes a multidisciplinary transformative investigation of social (dis)connectedness. It responds to the pressing need to further understand the risks and challenges associated with a condition that, on average, one-third of individuals suffer from (referring to loneliness alone, EU-LS, 2022). Gaining cross-national insight into this threat is critical and of the highest importance to European societies. The QDT expects results to inform policy debates at all levels and help government bodies and organisations address the challenge of rising levels of social disconnectedness. At the same time the QDT anticipates the module to constitute an enormous hub for interdisciplinary collaboration, and analyses of the suggested items will significantly advance research across disciplines.

## **2 Theoretical/conceptual approach**

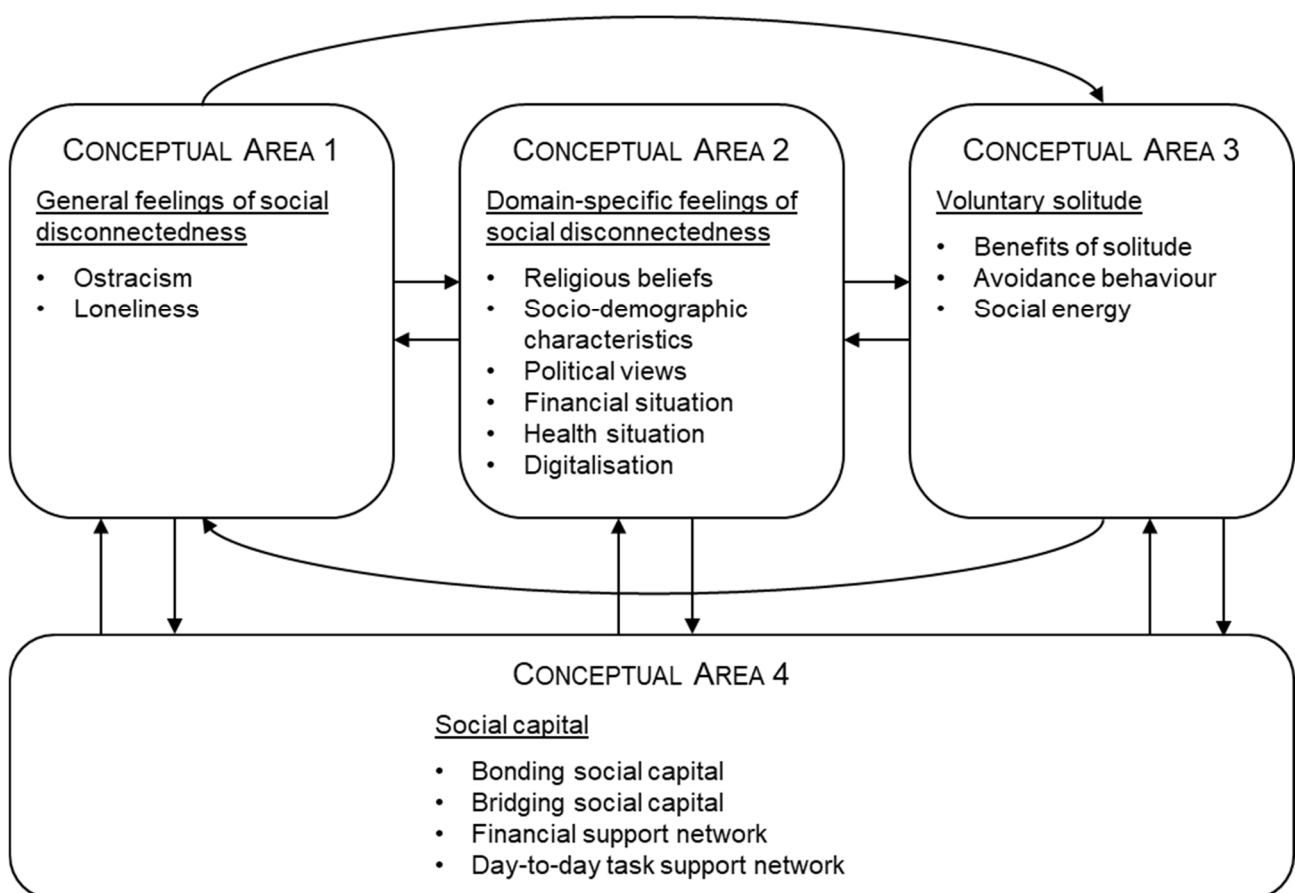
The proposed module is based on a strong interdisciplinary conceptual background that draws upon theories from different disciplines, including psychology, sociology, economics, communication, and political sciences. Although social (dis)connectedness is a central theme in all of these fields, a

unifying conceptual framework is missing. An ESS module dedicated to social (dis)connectedness therefore presents the unique opportunity for a joint, transformative approach, and for propelling interdisciplinary collaboration to the next level. By integrating different disciplinary perspectives, the present module fosters holistic theory building, promotes unified conceptual advancement, provides the empirical foundations for innovation, and yields meaningful real-world insights.

The QDT considers it key to extend existing theorising and empirical evidence needs across four conceptual areas, as illustrated in Figure 1. Each conceptual area is designed to lay the empirical foundation for pushing the fields' boundaries; together, the conceptual areas form the major building blocks of an integrative perspective on social (dis)connectedness.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual areas addressed in the proposed module.*



### **2.1 Conceptual Area 1: General feelings of social disconnectedness**

A substantial body of studies has explored interpersonal disconnectedness, particularly among individuals who experience feelings of ostracism or loneliness due to a perceived lack of interpersonal connections. While laboratory research has provided crucial insights into the underlying mechanisms of such experiences, it has significant limitations in terms of offering representative, population-based findings. To address this gap, members of our QDT have leveraged the potential of large-scale surveys, including the German Socio-Economic Panel (e.g., Rudert et al., 2020), the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Survey (e.g., Albath et al., 2023), and,

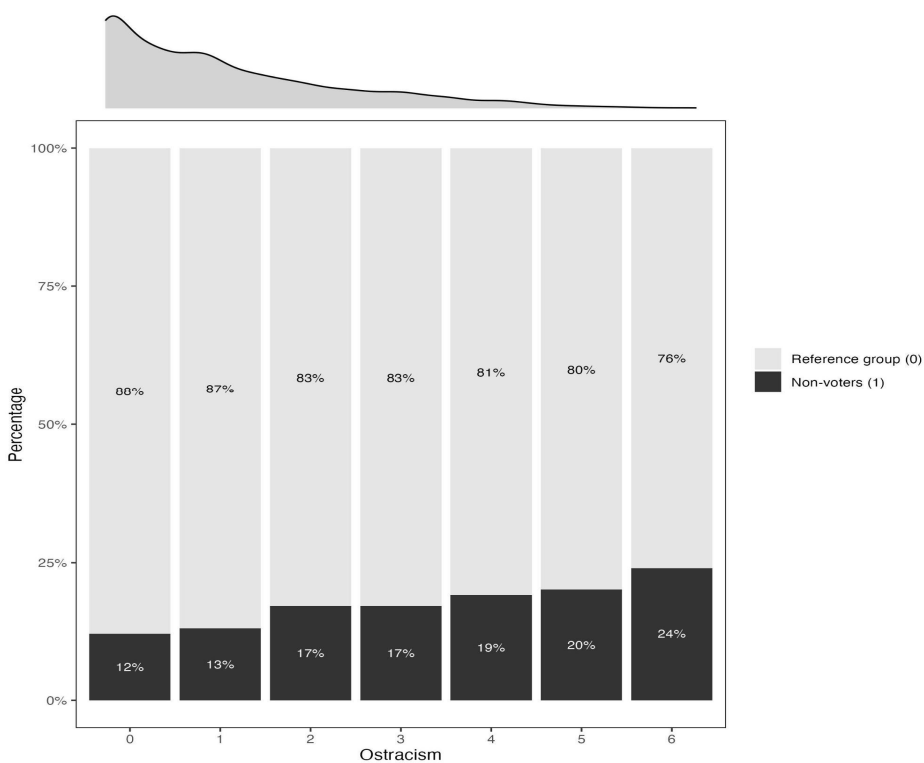
most recently, the CRONOS-2 (e.g., Bogatyreva et al., in print). For instance, data from CRONOS-2 provides the first opportunity to map feelings of social exclusion across multiple European countries.

The data vividly illustrate that social exclusion is a common experience across all eleven European countries. While most individuals may not encounter social exclusion frequently, the consequences for those who do are significant. The data allows for the creation of mean-level profiles that identify sociodemographic risk factors associated with social exclusion in different countries. These profiles highlight critical demographic patterns. For example, young people with low income who did not pursue tertiary education are among those with the highest risk of feeling frequently excluded (Bogatyreva et al., 2024). Moreover, people who frequently feel ostracised are less likely to vote in their national elections (see Figure 2). These examples underscore the importance of cross-national survey data in enhancing our understanding of social disconnectedness, identifying those most at risk, and enabling society to design more effective policy interventions.

Note that insights from the CRONOS-2 data have played an important role in designing the proposed module. The proposed module will therefore be compatible with the CRONOS-2 data assessed earlier, as further explained below.

**Figure 2**

*Predictions on how the proportion of non-voters changes given a scale point increase in ostracism frequency (lower panel) and ostracism distribution in CRONOS-2 (upper panel) (Bogatyreva et al., in print).*



*Note.* 0 - Voters for non-populist parties, 1 - Non-voters

## **2.2 Conceptual Area 2: Domain-specific social disconnectedness**

Existing CRONOS-2 items and similar items in other surveys focus on the general experience of interpersonal disconnectedness, such as whether individuals have felt excluded from conversations or social activities. These general experience items constitute an important foundation. However, they are silent about specific reasons for why people feel disconnected. Conceptual Area 2 fills this void with more granular assessments, so as to better identify the root causes of social disconnectedness. Such advancements are essential not only for academic theory-building but also for policymakers who seek to invest resources in interventions that have the greatest potential impact.

Key to Conceptual Area 2 are domain-specific factors associated with social disconnectedness. To date, these factors have been largely overlooked across research fields. Yet addressing these factors is essential to developing a more fine-grained and process-oriented conceptual understanding of social disconnectedness.

Among the many possible sources that likely contribute to social disconnectedness, the QDT suggests prioritising beliefs, socio-demographic characteristics, political views, financial limitations, health issues, and digitalization. For instance, feelings of social disconnectedness may arise from perceived mismatches between one's own and others' beliefs or characteristics. Social disconnectedness may also stem from the feeling that one's national government is ignoring one's needs, which can both result from and further contribute to political disengagement, including lower participation in elections. People may feel socially disconnected due to financial constraints that limit their ability to participate in social activities (Offer, 2012). Others may find themselves on the margins of social life due to physical or mental health challenges (e.g., Marinucci et al., 2023). Finally, the rapid pace of digitalization in contemporary life can also lead to feelings of disconnectedness for those who either cannot or choose not to engage fully with new technologies, thereby leaving them subjectively—or even objectively—behind.

## **2.3 Conceptual Area 3: Voluntary solitude**

While social disconnectedness is often considered a risk factor for various social and psychological issues, voluntary solitude can have beneficial effects by providing opportunities for reflection and personal growth (Coplan et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2021).

Recent studies highlight that the experience of solitude is not inherently negative and can be shaped by personality traits and mindsets. For instance, Weinstein et al. (2023) found that individuals with specific personality traits, such as a tendency for introspection, self-reflection, and optimism, were more likely to report positive experiences during solitude. These results indicate that the qualities and mindsets individuals bring into solitude—like a capacity for self-compassion, a present focus, and a perspective that views solitude as a beneficial state—can result in beneficial outcomes.

It is therefore important to understand not only the involuntary aspects of social disconnectedness but also the voluntary pursuit of solitude. Conceptual Area 3 consequently complements the first two areas by focusing on individuals' desire for solitude and their behavioural intentions to act on this desire. A key concept here is *social energy*, originating from communication sciences (Hall & Davis, 2017), which uses the metaphor of energy (e.g., charging, recharging) to understand when and why



individuals might intentionally seek social disconnectedness. Although social disconnectedness in Conceptual Areas 1 and 2 is generally considered a threat to one's need for control (i.e., individuals desire greater connectedness but feel powerless to achieve it), Conceptual Area 3 focuses on social disconnectedness as a voluntary, controlled choice. This distinction is crucial for theory development as it challenges the conventional view that social connectedness is universally beneficial and social disconnectedness is always dysfunctional. Rather, it holds that too much social engagement can be detrimental, and that the ability to regulate one's level of connectedness is important.

Further supporting this view, Adams and Weinstein (2024) show how solitude can meet certain psychological needs that are also fulfilled in social contexts, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. For example, solitude allows for autonomous self-reflection without external influences, which can be crucial for personal growth and self-understanding. This corroborates Weinstein et al. (2023), who show that individuals who voluntarily choose solitude often do so to gain clarity, focus, and emotional balance. By expanding our understanding of when and why individuals seek solitude, this conceptual area aims to provide a more nuanced perspective on how social disconnectedness impacts well-being, and proposes that the voluntary regulation of connectedness—knowing when to connect and when to disconnect—is essential.

#### **2.4 Conceptual Area 4: Social capital**

Conceptual Areas 1 to 3 primarily focus on the individual, their subjective experiences, desires, and needs. These individual-level variables have clear societal implications, especially when large numbers of individuals are affected. Conceptual Area 4 goes one step further and explicitly shifts the emphasis to the societal level by examining social capital. Social capital, understood as a network of connections between individuals, is essential for societies built on trust and reciprocity. The QDT proposes to concentrate on two types of social capital: bonding and bridging (Putnam, 2001). *Bonding social capital* refers to connections between individuals who are alike. This type of social capital often reinforces narrow identities and creates strong ties between members of groups typically based on ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation. While such bonds are essential, they can foster ingroup favouritism and outgroup hostility. *Bridging social capital*, in contrast, involves connections that span across diverse backgrounds. Both bonding and bridging social capital contribute to individuals' perceived social (dis)connectedness.

The critical importance of bridging social capital is best reflected in the fact that it helps to foster reciprocity between different social groups, allowing for resources and information to flow beyond narrow circles of homogeneous connections. This is especially beneficial for groups of low socioeconomic status, as it creates the opportunity for so-called upward reachability, that is, access to people with power, material resources, and valuable connections (Meanley et al., 2020). Such access could promote upward mobility and contribute to a more even distribution of resources in society.

Bridging social capital likely also plays a role in reducing prejudice. According to the contact hypothesis, positive interactions with members of different social groups can help diminish stereotypes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). This is especially relevant in modern Europe, which is increasingly diverse and comprises people from various ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Understanding the effects of bridging social capital is vital not only for its positive impacts but also

for the threats that emanate from a lack of social capital or an overemphasis on narrow bonding ties. Indeed, the rise of populist parties in many European nations may reflect a dangerous shortcoming in *bridging* social connections, underscoring the need to assess social capital to better understand social disconnectedness across Europe.

In addition to examining which kind of social connections Europeans have, the QDT proposes to investigate how individuals seek support from their networks in times of need. Support can ease the burdens of daily lives of individuals, while also providing a measure of the level of social capital within a society. High social capital fosters generalised reciprocity, where support is extended with the understanding that support will be available from others in the future (rather than the expectation of repayment, Putnam, 2001).

While support may manifest itself in various forms, the QDT suggests emphasising financial and day-to-day practical support, complementing existing items on social support available in the ESS core questionnaire (see Implementation). The availability of financial help appears key because cash transfers can reduce poverty (Dafermos & Papatheodorou, 2013), consistent with studies showing that such transfers are not used for temptation goods (Evans & Popova, 2017), but are spent consciously to change the situation. Financial help can thus prevent households falling below the poverty line, and thus avoid being trapped in poverty with no chance for upward mobility (Haushofer & Fehr, 2014). At the same time, non-monetary support, such as assistance in everyday tasks, is also important. This type of support often comes from those who may not have the material means for reciprocity but are still willing to offer their time and effort. Together, a focus on financial and day-to-day support helps understanding key types of support available to Europeans and afford important insights into the kinds of buffers against poverty and other risks.

## **2.5 Summary**

Overall, the proposed module will comprehensively address both negative and positive dimensions of social (dis)connectedness. On the negative side, it will explore feelings of isolation, loneliness, and ostracism, including an in-depth focus of domain-specific predictors. At the same time, the module recognizes that social disconnectedness is not universally detrimental. As recent research suggests, voluntary solitude can provide opportunities for self-reflection, personal growth, and emotional recharging (Coplan et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2021). Finally, with social capital, the module puts emphasis on the individual and societal consequences of being connected with or disconnected from others. By leveraging the comprehensive data collection capabilities of the ESS, this module will offer unprecedented insights into both the risks and potential benefits of social disconnectedness, filling crucial gaps in existing knowledge.

## **3 Implementation**

The QDT members have many years of experience with survey data collection. Based on their joint expertise and previous experiences in designing surveys, the QDT is confident that all proposed questions can be self-administered. Moreover, given that social life is usually captured with individuals' day-to-day vocabulary, the QDT is confident that expert translation will yield high levels of measurement equivalence across countries (Davidov et al., 2014). The proposed items in the

module assess experiences that are shared by people across countries and do not necessitate specialist sub-samples or longitudinal designs.

A subset of the suggested items has been successfully fielded in the CRONOS-2 Wave 5 (*Everyday experiences of ostracism*: w5q16-w5q20, w5q26, w5q29). These items have been carefully developed together with the ESS' CST, and various measures were taken to ensure measurement equivalence across countries. In preparation of the present proposal, the QDT carefully analysed response patterns as well as potential ceiling or floor effects of these items. Since all items easily passed this psychometric evaluation, the QDT recommends retaining these seven items in their current form to build on the strengths of an already carefully developed set of items fielded to 5765 people in the years 2022-2023. Maintaining these items will also afford meaningful comparisons over time (noting that the CRONOS-2 and the ESS-Round-13 populations differ). In what follows, these seven items are marked in **blue**, and will be explained with comparably less detail.

All other items in the proposed module have been developed to fill specific gaps in understanding social (dis)connectedness. These new items are informed by the latest theoretical insights and are designed to capture a wide spectrum of experiences relevant to social (dis)connectedness in Europe.

The entire set of items has been carefully developed against the background of the ESS core and previous ESS rotating modules. For instance, researchers can draw on both general demographic variables and specific items of the ESS core to augment and enrich the analysis of the here proposed module items. By way of example, some of these connections are illustrated below.

Again, we use the four conceptual areas (see Figure 1) as a guiding structure.

### **3.1 Implementation of Conceptual Area 1: General feelings of social disconnectedness**

To explore the frequency and severity of social disconnectedness within Europe, the QDT proposes re-fielding five items previously included in the CRONOS-2, which focus on *Everyday Experiences of Ostracism* (see Box 1, Items 1-5). These items were designed to capture the subjective frequency of ostracism experiences. Ostracism is a critical, yet still underexplored form of social disconnectedness with severe consequences for mental health, well-being, and societal engagement (e.g., Bogatyreva et al., in print; Büttner & Greifeneder, 2024; Rudert et al., 2021). The initial deployment of these items in CRONOS-2 has already afforded important cross-national comparisons, and illustrates how ostracism manifests differently across various cultural and political contexts (see also Figure 2). By re-fielding these items in the larger ESS framework, the QDT aims to build on this foundational work to better understand multidisciplinary risk factors associated with ostracism across Europe. The continued use of these validated measures will enable the QDT to track changes over time (noting that different samples are assessed), identify protective factors, and enhance our understanding of ostracism's role in the overarching challenge of social disconnectedness. Moreover, re-fielding these items will allow researchers to investigate the bidirectional relationships between ostracism and factors like political extremism, trust in institutions, and health outcomes, which are crucial for developing targeted interventions and policy recommendations.

While ostracism focuses on being actively excluded or ignored, *loneliness* is another critical source of interpersonal social disconnectedness. In contrast to ostracism, loneliness captures the internal, subjective state of feeling socially isolated despite the (potential) presence of others. Loneliness has been identified as a pressing issue (sometimes called *loneliness epidemic*) by several national governments and global organisations like the World Health Organization (Walker, 2018; WHO, 2023). Extensive work documents the detrimental effects of loneliness on both physical and mental health, including increased risks of cognitive decline, mental health disorders, and mortality (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010). Assessing both ostracism and loneliness is essential for understanding social disconnectedness because they reflect different pathways through which individuals can experience a lack of meaningful social connections. The QDT therefore proposes to include one loneliness item (Box 1, Item 6). Although loneliness will already be assessed in ESS Round 12, the QDT considers it crucial to include at least one item for loneliness again in the suggested Round 13 module, so as to examine the role of loneliness specifically in the broader context of social (dis)connectedness. By doing so, researchers will be able to differentiate between the subjective experience of loneliness and ostracism, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of how these distinct constructs interact and influence social functioning as well as individual and societal outcomes. For instance, reassessing loneliness alongside ostracism will allow for a more nuanced exploration of their individual and combined effects on social and political behaviours, thereby offering deeper insights into the mechanisms of social disconnectedness across Europe. At the same time, the field can benefit from loneliness being assessed in two consecutive ESS rounds, allowing for a quasi-longitudinal perspective on loneliness across European countries (again noting that different samples are assessed).

### **Box 1: Proposed items for general feelings of social disconnectedness**

In the last two months, how often have you experienced the following?

- 1) Other people have ignored me.
- 2) Other people have excluded me from conversations.
- 3) Other people have treated me as if I was not there.
- 4) Other people have excluded me from social activities.
- 5) I have felt like an outsider.
- 6) I have felt lonely.

Items 1-6 are rated on a 7-point Likert scale (0 = *Never*; 6 = *Always*).

*Note.* Items marked in blue have been fielded as is in CRONOS-2 Wave 5.

### **3.2 Implementation of Conceptual Area 2: Domain-specific social disconnectedness**

Conceptual Area 2 is designed to increase our understanding of the contexts in which individuals most often feel disconnected from others. The proposed items aim to capture the multifaceted nature of disconnectedness that arise from primary contextual factors generally investigated in political science, sociology, economics, and communication science (see Box 2, Items 7-20).

More specifically, Items 7-13 assess feelings of disconnectedness due to perceived mismatches in religious beliefs, job status, ethnic background, education, sexual orientation, gender identity, and political views. These items measure the extent to which individuals have felt disconnected from others over the past two months because of perceived differences in these specific areas. By including these items, researchers can better understand how social and demographic differences contribute to feelings of exclusion and disconnectedness in various social settings. Additionally, insights from these items will allow for the development of targeted, data-driven interventions that focus on specific at-risk groups, helping to reduce the likelihood of disconnectedness in these vulnerable populations.

Items 14 and 15 address feelings of disconnectedness stemming from perceptions of being ignored by the national government (Item 14, taken from CRONOS-2 module *Everyday Experiences of Ostracism*) or feeling that current political conversations are irrelevant to one's daily life (Item 15). These questions are critical for examining how political dynamics and perceived government neglect contribute to social disconnectedness. This approach allows to explore the intersection of subjective individual perceptions with broader political structures, helping to reveal how political institutions can contribute to social disconnectedness. Importantly, the combination of Items 14 and 15 allows to differentiate between feeling not heard by one's government and feeling disconnected from political discourse in general.

In addition to political and identity-based sources of disconnectedness, the proposed module assesses economic factors. Item 16 asks about the extent to which an individual's financial situation has limited their ability to participate in social activities, and Item 17 examines feeling avoided by others who are financially better off (taken from CRONOS-2 module *Everyday Experiences of Ostracism*). These items provide insight into how economic disparities can create barriers to social participation and foster feelings of disconnectedness.

Health and digitalization are further areas of focus within Conceptual Area 2. Item 18 assesses how often physical or mental health conditions have restricted social participation, thereby highlighting the significant but vastly underexplored role of health in fostering social disconnectedness. Additionally, Item 19 examines whether individuals feel disconnected due to the advancing digitalisation in society. This item captures the challenges faced by those who either lack the skills or resources to fully engage with digital technologies or choose not to engage, thus feeling left behind in an increasingly digital world.

Finally, Item 20 examines how often individuals use social media as a means to feel connected with others. Unlike the other items, this is a reverse-coded question, focusing on connectedness rather than disconnectedness. In an increasingly digitised world, social media often serves as a key avenue for maintaining social connections. This item highlights the role of digital platforms in counteracting feelings of disconnectedness and allows for an investigation into the extent to which social media fulfils or fails to fulfil this role. The QDT suggests including an answer option to identify non-users of social media, ensuring that those who do not engage with these platforms are accurately represented.

Overall, the suggested Items 7-20 (Box 2) capture social (dis)connectedness across various domains that are more specific than the general experiences assessed in Conceptual Area 1. This

design provides a comprehensive understanding of how domain-specific factors contribute to social (dis)connectedness and thus the necessary knowledge to develop preventive interventions (i.e., reduce the likelihood for disconnectedness in the first place).

### **Box 2: Proposed items for domain-specific social disconnectedness**

People might feel disconnected from others due to a variety of reasons. In the last two months, to what extent have you felt disconnected from others due to a mismatch between your own and others' ...

- 7) ... religious beliefs?
- 8) ... job status?
- 9) ... ethnic background?
- 10) ... education?
- 11) ... sexual orientation?
- 12) ... gender identity?
- 13) ... political views?

In the last two months, to what extent have you felt that...

- 14) ... the current [national] government has ignored the needs of people like you?
- 15) ... current political conversations are not relevant to your daily life?
- 16) ... your financial situation has limited your ability to participate in social activities?
- 17) ... other people have avoided you because they are financially better off than you?
- 18) ... your physical or mental health situation limited your ability to participate in social activities?

In general, to what extent ...

- 19) ... do you feel disconnected because daily life becomes more digital?
- 20) ... do you use social media in order to feel connected with others?

Filter: I don't use social media.

Items 7-20 are rated on a 7-point Likert scale (0 = *Not at all*; 6 = *Completely*).

*Note.* Items marked in blue have been fielded as is in CRONOS-2 Wave 5.

### **3.3 Implementation of Conceptual Area 3: Voluntary solitude**

Conceptual Area 3 examines the pursuit of solitude. While social disconnectedness is often viewed as a risk factor for various social and psychological maladies, choosing solitude can also provide beneficial opportunities for personal reflection, self-growth, and emotional balance (Coplan et al.,

2019; Nguyen et al., 2021). Conceptual Area 3 complements the Conceptual Areas 1 and 2 by examining individuals' attitudes toward solitude and their behaviours related to seeking time alone.

The proposed Items 21-24 (Box 3) are designed to capture different aspects of voluntary solitude, focusing on the positive aspects of solitude, the behaviours associated with social withdrawal, and social energy.

More specifically, Items 21-22 focus on the positive aspects of being alone. Item 21 explores the enjoyment of being alone, assessing individuals' positive attitudes toward solitude. Item 22 asks respondents to evaluate how much being alone helps them recharge, using the widely familiar metaphor of energy replenishment akin to a battery (Hall & Davis, 2017). This item measures the extent to which solitude is perceived as a restorative experience, contributing positively to one's well-being.

Items 23-24 address aspects related to social withdrawal. Item 23 assesses whether individuals have avoided social interactions over the past two months. This item provides insights into behaviours that *may lead to* social disconnectedness, exploring how and why people may choose to limit their social engagements. Item 24 examines the belief that interacting with others can drain one's energy, again making use of the widely familiar energy metaphor. This item gauges individuals' perceptions of social interactions and their preferences for solitude as a means of managing their social energy.

Together, the items in Box 3 are supposed to reveal the motivations and attitudes surrounding the pursuit of solitude. As such, the items add a different perspective to allow for a holistic understanding of social (dis)connectedness. By suggesting that both connectedness and periods of solitude are important for a balanced and healthy life, this approach challenges the traditional view of constant connectedness as an ideal state.

**Box 3: Proposed items for seeking social disconnectedness**

- 21) To what extent do you enjoy being alone?
- 22) In general, how much does being alone help you recharge\*?  
\*Recharging means to replenish your energy, similar to a battery.
- 23) In the last two months, to what extent have you avoided social interactions?
- 24) I believe that interacting with other people can drain my energy.

Items 21-24 are rated on a 7-point Likert scale (0 = *Not at all*; 6 = *Completely*).

### **3.4 Implementation of Conceptual Area 4: Social capital**

Over the years, various methods have been employed to measure social capital in sociology and adjacent fields. Several of them are too specific to be used in the context of the ESS, such as asking about membership in specific organisations or unions. To be fielded in the ESS, items need to be appropriate for the everyday life of Europeans across different countries. The QDT therefore adapted selected items from Villalonga-Olives et al. (2016) to assess how often a person socialises with

people from other social groups, based on nationality, ethnicity, educational levels, and religion (see Box 4, Items 25-28). Importantly, the QDT proposes to measure nationality (Item 25) and Ethnicity (Item 26) separately because these dimensions do not overlap for an increasing number of European residents due to migration (e.g., naturalised citizens can be ethnically different from the majority in the country, or expats from a geographically close country could be ethnically indistinguishable from locals). The proposed items are especially useful in the light of ESS core that include the following two questions: “How often do you meet socially” and “How often would you say you take part in social activities.” For example, bridging versus bonding social capital can be differentiated with the combined analysis of the newly proposed items (Box 4; Items 25-28) and the ESS core question “How often do you meet socially.” If respondents meet often socially but never meet with people from different backgrounds, this indicates bonding, but not bridging social capital. Leveraging items from the ESS core questionnaire allows to keep social capital questions concise, while assessing the diverse social groups with whom respondents most often socialise.

Support networks refer to the various forms of assistance people seek in times of need, including most prominently financial and everyday practical support. These networks are important because they can mitigate the challenges individuals face and provide insights into the levels of social capital and social connectedness within a society. To measure support networks, the QDT proposes to use wording and scaling similar to the ESS core questionnaire item “How many people ... with whom you can discuss intimate and personal matters?”. Since this ESS core item taps into social and psychological support a person can receive, the new items complement it by asking respondents how many people they have who could help them financially and practically. The QDT adapted items used by Villalonga-Olives et al. (2016), which asked who in the life of individuals could assist them with various tasks. To keep questions short and achieve comparability with the above-mentioned ESS item, the QDT proposes to ask merely how many sources can provide support (instead of who [e.g., family, friends, relatives, etc.] provides this support).



#### **Box 4: Proposed items for social capital**

How often do you socialise with people who are...

- 25) ... of a different nationality?
- 26) ... from a different ethnic background to you?
- 27) ... of different educational levels?
- 28) ... from a different religion?

Items 25-28 are rated on a 4-point scale (0 = *Never*; 1 = *Not often*; 2 = *Somewhat*; 3 = *Very often*).

How many people, if any, are there, who can...

- 29) ... provide financial support if you need it?
- 30) ... assist you in your day-to-day tasks if you need it?

Items 29-30 are rated on a 5-point scale (0 = *None*, 1 = 1, 2 = 2, 3 = 3, 4 = 4-6, 5 = 7-9, 6 = 10 or more).

#### **4 Team expertise and experience**

Rainer Greifeneder is Full Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Basel, Switzerland. Among other interests, his research investigates the causes and consequences of interpersonal social disconnectedness, including social exclusion and loneliness. He has extensive experience with developing items for large-scale surveys and publishing research based on survey data in high-impact journals. For instance, he led the QDT for the ostracism module in the ESS CRONOS-2 and contributed ostracism items fielded in representative surveys in Germany (Socio-Economic Panel, Innovation Sample 2015, 2018, 2022), Switzerland (MOSAICH 2023), Namibia, Kenya, and South Africa (Africa Long Life Study, 2022, 2023). In the roles of PI and Co-PI, Rainer Greifeneder has received funding from several national grant agencies to conduct research on social (dis)connectedness.

Daniel Auer is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the Collegio Carlo Alberto in Turin, Italy, and a Fellow at the University of Mannheim's Center for European Social Research, Germany. His research interests include how attitudes and preferences change in response to individual shocks and circumstances, including group identity and feelings of exclusion. He also has experience conducting large-scale, face-to-face surveys in challenging environments in West Africa, as well as extensive experience in survey item development.

Conchita d'Ambrosio is Full Professor of Economics at the University of Luxembourg. Her research interests include individual and social well-being and their determinants. Her work provides theory-based measures of various phenomena including economic insecurity, multidimensional poverty, relative deprivation, resilience, and social exclusion. She also has strong expertise in designing and

managing panel data, including her leadership as a member of the SOEP Survey Committee in Germany.

Danny Osborne is Associate Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. His research interests include diverse interdisciplinary topics, such as the causes and consequences of inequality. He has nearly 15 years of experience working with, and developing items for large-scale datasets including the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Survey (NZAVS), a nationwide longitudinal panel study of over 70,000 adults. He is also a methods expert with extensive experience analysing complex survey data.

Massimo Ragnedda is Associate Professor in Media and Communication at Northumbria University, United Kingdom. His research interests include digital media and digital inequalities, including how access and familiarity with digital tools affect people's well-being. Further, his research follows a cross-national approach and highlights how, for instance, digital inequalities depend on country-specific context variables.

Together, the QDT combines profound substantive knowledge with extensive survey expertise and a rich background in cross-national research, positioning the QDT ideally to implement a successful module on social (dis)connectedness. The team's collective experience spans diverse scientific disciplines and geographic contexts, ensuring that the module will benefit from a broad perspective which is critical for addressing social (dis)connectedness across different societies. The QDT will deliver a module that will resonate internationally and foster meaningful insights into social (dis)connectedness that afford unprecedented scientific insights and help European societies to grow closer together. Ultimately, the QDT combines all the necessary skills and expertise to deliver a set of insightful items that help scientists across the globe to push the scientific boundaries of our knowledge on social (dis)connectedness, and help policy makers to make empirically based sound decisions. The QDT will work closely together in all stages of further item development and all QDT members will contribute within and across their disciplines to the dissemination of insights to the scientific audience, policy makers, and the general public, as detailed next.

## **5 Dissemination**

Results from the proposed module on social (dis)connectedness will be disseminated through multiple channels to ensure maximum impact and reach across academic, policy-making, and public domains. The QDT's dissemination strategy encompasses a success-proven mix of academic publications, conference presentations, public outreach, and policy-oriented documents, as well as applications for competitive research funding.

### **5.1 Academic Publications**

The QDT's primary academic mode of dissemination will be through high-impact, peer-reviewed, international journal publications. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the proposed module, members of the QDT will publish in leading journals across applicable fields, including psychology, sociology, communication, political sciences, economics, and public health. The QDT anticipates generating a series of high-quality research papers, which will contribute to the academic discourse on social (dis)connectedness and fuel the development of an integrative perspective. Open access

options will be prioritised to ensure that results are accessible to a broad audience, including researchers, practitioners, and the general public.

## **5.2 Conference Presentations**

QDT members will present results at major international academic conferences, such as the European Social Survey Conference, and general meetings of the American Sociological Association, the European Association of Social Psychology, the European Sociological Association, the International Association for Research in Income and Wealth, the International Association Media and Communication Research, the International Communication Association, the International Society of Political Psychology, the Society of Australasian Social Psychologists, the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, and the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. Presenting at these influential conferences will allow the QDT to engage with a wide audience of scholars and practitioners, receive feedback, and foster collaborations, ultimately ensuring that other researchers learn about the ESS items and use them for their own work. Additionally, the QDT plans to organise interdisciplinary symposia dedicated to the topic of social (dis)connectedness by leveraging the multidisciplinary nature of our QDT to attract a diverse range of perspectives and discussions, as one member of the QDT previously did, for instance, for early-career researchers with a one week summer school on *Social connections and well-being in the digital era* (Como, 2023).

## **5.3 Public Outreach**

Because the QDT expects findings from this module to be of prime importance for individuals and societies, it will engage in public outreach through various media channels, including interviews with mainstream media, blog posts on widely read platforms, and contributions to institutional newsletters. The QDT also aims to collaborate with science communication outlets to create accessible content that highlights the societal implications of research findings on social (dis)connectedness, including its impact on mental health, politics, and community cohesion. The QDT has a strong track record of engaging with the public through press releases and popular science articles, and high levels of media and communication expertise (media coverage in, e.g., *BBC*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Times*, *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, *Washington Post*).

## **5.4 Policy-Oriented Dissemination**

Recognizing the importance of social disconnectedness in current policy making, the QDT will prepare a concise yet comprehensive white paper that includes evidence-based recommendations for addressing social disconnectedness. This document will synthesise key insights from research conducted with the proposed items and provide actionable guidelines for local, national, and European policymakers. The white paper will be made accessible to relevant government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and think tanks across Europe. The white paper will further be used for policy briefings and workshops to discuss findings with stakeholders directly involved in social policy and community development. In Switzerland, for instance, we will contact the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) to organise workshops, ideally maximising reach through their partnership with similar agencies in other countries.

### **5.5 Applications for Competitive Grant Funding**

To further extend the research initiated by this module, the QDT will apply for competitive grants with national grant agencies and on the European level. Potential funding bodies include the European Research Council (ERC), the Horizon Europe program, and national research councils such as the British Academy (BA), the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Fonds National de la Recherche Luxembourg (FNR), the Marsden Fund in New Zealand, and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). These applications aim to secure funding for doctoral and post-doctoral researchers to analyse ESS data, combining core and rotating module items. Moreover, these applications will suggest follow-up studies and fieldwork that build upon and extend the ESS data, so as to enable the in-depth analysis of causal process mechanisms and long-term effects, and the evidence-based development of, and effectiveness test for interventions.

### **5.6 Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange**

The QDT will foster collaboration and knowledge exchange with international research networks and institutions focusing on, for instance, social exclusion, mental health, and community resilience. These collaborations include participation in academic consortia and working groups that address similar topics. All members of the QDT have extensive networks and experience in interdisciplinary collaborations, which will be utilised to enhance the impact and reach of research findings. The QDT will also engage in exchange programs and joint research initiatives to promote the integration of research findings on social (dis)connectedness into broader social science frameworks, and will spur targeted training of junior scientists to work with the collected data and synthesise conclusions that can be put into action.

### **5.7 Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure the effectiveness of our dissemination efforts, the QDT will implement a monitoring and evaluation plan that tracks the impact of all the dissemination activities associated with the module. This will include metrics such as citation counts, media coverage, policy uptake, and feedback from academic and non-academic audiences. By continuously assessing the reach and influence of work associated with the proposed module, the QDT will be able to adapt dissemination strategies as needed to maximise impact.

In conclusion, the QDT's dissemination plan is designed to ensure that the findings from the proposed ESS module on social (dis)connectedness reach a wide and diverse audience, from academic researchers to policymakers and the general public. By employing a multi-channel approach, the QDT aims to foster meaningful dialogue, inform policy, and contribute to the broader understanding and mitigation of social disconnectedness across Europe.

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## Brief summary

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Rainer Greifeneder is Professor of **Social Psychology** at the University of Basel, **Switzerland**. His research focuses on how individuals make sense of the social world in which they live, and how this social world influences their thinking and feeling. He is particularly interested in individuals' experience and perception of **ostracism**, that is, being socially excluded or ignored.

Rainer Greifeneder has extensive experience with developing items for **large-scale surveys** and publishing research based on survey data in high-impact journals. For instance, the social psychology team in Basel has contributed items on ostracism to the ESS Cross National Online Survey 2 (ESS-CRONOS), the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Survey (NZAVS), and the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP).

## Academic positions (selection)

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08/2012 - present	<i>Professor</i> Head of division Social Psychology, University of Basel, Switzerland
04/2022 - 06/2022	<i>Visiting Scientist</i> Mind and Society Center, University of Southern California, CA, USA
10/2008 - 03/2010	<i>Visiting Scientist</i> Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, The Netherlands

## Education (selection)

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10/2011	<i>Habilitation/Venia Legendi Psychology</i> , University of Mannheim, Germany
06/2007	<i>PhD in Social Psychology</i> , University of Mannheim, Germany
11/2003	<i>Diplom in Psychologie</i> (equivalent to Master's Degree), University of Mannheim, Germany
2001-2002	Graduate Studies, Social Psychology, University of Virginia, USA

## Third-party funding (selection)

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2023 - 2025	<i>Integrating loneliness mitigation measures in pandemic management plans: an interdisciplinary in-depth exploration of psychologically and ethically suitable interventions to decrease social isolation</i> , Swiss National Science Foundation, CHF 391.029/~ € 395.000, Co-PI (PI Bernice Elger)
2022 - 2025	<i>Everyday ostracism in twelve European countries</i> , Swiss National Science Foundation, CHF 756.071/~ € 740.000, PI (Co-PI Elianne Albath)
2020	Open Access Funding for <i>The psychology of fake news: Accepting, sharing, and correcting misinformation</i> , Swiss National Science Foundation, CHF 15.000 / ~ € 13.600, PI

## Academic service (selection)

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University of Basel	Dean of the Faculty of Psychology (since 02/2024)
Reviewing/Editing	Consulting editor for several journals; Panel member with several grant agencies Ad-hoc reviewer for all major journals in Social Psychology, several conferences, and several scientific publishers

## **Awards, Recognitions, and Fellowships (selection)**

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2022	Fellow, Society for Personality and Social Psychology
2019	Teaching Excellence Award, University of Basel
2017	Fellow, Society of Experimental Social Psychology
2008 - 2010	Post-Doc-Fellowship, German Research Council
2004 - 2006	Ph.D.-Scholarship, German National Academic Foundation
2001 - 2002	Fulbright Scholarship

## **Media coverage and outreach (selection)**

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In the news	American Psychological Association Monitor; British Broadcasting Cooperation; Die ZEIT; Financial Times; Neue Zürcher Zeitung; New York Times; Psychology Today; Schweizer Fernsehen und Radio; Scientific American; The Chronicle of Higher Education; The Economist; The Times; The Wall Street Journal
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## **Key publications of interest to the project \* supervised students**

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- \* Bogatyreva, N., \* Albath, E., & Greifeneder, R. (in press). Ostracism As a Threat to Modern Democracies: Evidence From Eleven European Countries. *Political Psychology*.
- \* Büttner, C., Ren, D., Stavrova, O., Rudert, S. C., Williams, K. D., & Greifeneder, R. (in press). Ostracism in Everyday Life: A Framework of Threat and Behavioral Responses in Real Life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- \* Büttner, C., \* Lalot, F., Rudert, S. C., & Greifeneder, R. (in press). Ostracism experiences are associated with more frequent doctor visits over time. *European Journal of Health Psychology*.
- \* Albath, E., \* Büttner, C., Rudert, S. C., Sibley, C., & Greifeneder, R. (in press). Young, unemployed, excluded: Unemployed young adults report more ostracism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*.
- \* Jauch, M., \* Albath, E., \* Büttner, C., & Greifeneder, R. (in press). Unvaccinated and Left Out: The Mismatch of Vaccine Supply and Demand During COVID-19 as Source of Interpersonal and Societal Exclusion. *Analyses of social issues and public policy*.
- \* Albath, E., \* Büttner, C., Rudert, S. C., Sibley, C., & Greifeneder, R. (2023). Young, Unemployed, Excluded: Unemployed Young Adults Report More Ostracism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 53, 1078-1097.
- Rudert, S. C., Janke, S., & Greifeneder, R. (2021). Ostracism breeds depression: Longitudinal associations between ostracism and depression over a three-year-period. *Journal of Affective Disorders Reports*, 4, 100118.
- Rudert, S. C., Janke, S., & Greifeneder, R. (2020). The experience of ostracism over the adult life span. *Developmental Psychology*, 56, 1999-2012.
- Rudert, S. C., \* Keller, M. D., Hales, A. H., Walker, M., & Greifeneder, R. (2020). Who gets ostracized? A personality perspective on risk and protective factors of ostracism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 118, 1247–1268.
- \* Eck, J., Schoel, C., Reinhard, M. A., & Greifeneder, R. (2020). When and why being ostracized affects veracity judgments. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 46, 454-468.
- \* Rudert, S. C., Sutter, D., Corrodi, V. C., & Greifeneder, R. (2018). Who's to Blame? Dissimilarity as a Cue in Moral Judgments of Observed Ostracism Episodes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 115, 31-53.
- \* Rudert, S. C., Greifeneder, R., & Williams, K. D. (Eds.). (2019). *Current Directions in Ostracism, Social Exclusion and Rejection Research*. Hove: Routledge.
- \* Rudert, S. C., Janke, S., & Greifeneder, R. (2017). Under threat by popular vote: German-speaking immigrants' affect and cognitions following the Swiss vote against mass immigration. *PLoS ONE*, 12, e0175896.

# Daniel Auer

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## Brief summary

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Daniel Auer is Assistant Professor of **Sociology** at the Collegio Carlo Alberto in Turin, **Italy** and Fellow at the University of Mannheim's Center for European Social Research, **Germany**. His research focuses on societal and individual attitudes and norms. He is particularly interested in societal dynamics shaping stereotypes and exclusion of minorities and other social groups. Moreover, he seeks to understand how attitudes and preferences change in response to individual shocks and circumstances, including group identity and feelings of exclusion. Not least, he also researches the effect of depressive symptoms, ostracism, and individual experiences of exclusion on individual social and political attitudes.

Daniel Auer has conducted six **large-scale face-to-face surveys** in challenging environments in West Africa. In addition, he has extensive experience in survey item development based on more than a dozen online surveys and survey experiments that he designed and successfully fielded over the last years.

## Academic positions (selection)

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02/2023 - present	Assistant Professor of Sociology, Collegio Carlo Alberto, Turin, Italy
01/2021 - present	Fellow, Mannheim Center for European Social Research (MZES), Germany
01/2022 - 01/2023	Senior Researcher in Political Science, University of Bern, Switzerland
06/2018 - 12/2021	Senior Researcher in Sociology, Berlin Social Science Center, Germany

## Education (selection)

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05/2018	<i>PhD in Public Administration</i> , University of Lausanne, Switzerland
2012 – 2015	M.A. in Political Science & Economics, University of Zurich, Switzerland
2006 – 2012	<i>B.Sc. in Economics</i> , Vienna University of Economics & Business, Austria
2008 – 2011	<i>B.A. in Political Science</i> , University of Vienna, Austria

## Third-party funding (selection)

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2022 - 2024	<i>Regional Variation in anti-Muslim racism: linking a large-scale survey among the German resident population (N=19.000) with a survey experiment among N=4.000 firms attitudes towards and perceptions of immigrants</i> , Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Germany. €420.000, Co-PI
2020 - 2023	<i>Transnational perspectives on migration and integration: conducting several representative face-to-face surveys in Lebanon, Nigeria, Senegal, The Gambia, Turkey, and Germany to assess cross-country patterns of individual characteristics and emotional states [...]</i> . Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Germany. €2.917.000, Co-PI
2021	<i>Seed funding: Cross-border development projects within Horizon Europe</i> , Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany. €48.000, Co-PI

## Academic service (selection)

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Advisor/Referee	European Commission; Swiss National Science Foundation; IOM – GMDAC Impact Evaluation Program
Reviewing/Editing	Refereeing for leading journals in Sociology, Political Science, Economics.
Supervision	Head of Thematic Area, Berlin Social Science Center PhD-Program

## **Awards, Recognitions, and Fellowships (selection)**

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2018	Award: Faculty prize for outstanding dissertation quality
2018	Scholarship: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), Oxford, United Kingdom
2016	Scholarship: Malmoe Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare (MIM), Sweden
2012	Scholarship: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, United States

## **Media coverage and outreach (selection)**

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In the news	The Guardian; New York Times, Washington Post; Associated Press; The Times; The Independent; El Pais; The China Post; Outlook India; Tagesanzeiger; Deutschlandfunk; Süddeutsche; Bloomberg; Radio SRF; Radio ORF OE1; SRF News; SRF 10vor10; Tagesschau; NTV; France TV
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## **Key publications of interest for the project**

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- Auer, D., Freitag, M. & Herren, N. (under review) Mad Men, Sad Women? Depressive Symptoms and their Gendered Consequences for Democracy. *American Political Science Review*.
- Auer, D., Martiniello, B. & Ruedin, D. (under review) Explaining Discrimination. *American Sociological Review*.
- Auer, D. & Kunz, J. (forthcoming) Communication Barriers and Infant Health: Intergenerational Effects of Randomly Allocating Refugees Across Language Regions. *American Economic Journal: Applied Policy*
- Auer, D. & Freitag, M. (forthcoming). Populism and the Erosion of Political Support during Hard Times. *Public Opinion Quarterly*.
- Auer, D., Portmann, L. and Tichelbaecker, T. (2024), Electoral Discrimination, Party Rationale, and the Underrepresentation of Immigrant-Origin Politicians. *American Journal of Political Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12817>
- Auer, D. & Schaub, M. (2024) Mass emigration and the erosion of liberal democracy. *International Studies Quarterly*.
- Auer, D., van Belle, E. & Ruedin, D. (2023) No sign of increased ethnic discrimination during a crisis: evidence from the Covid-19 pandemic. *Socio-Economic Review*.
- Auer, D. & Ruedin, D. (2023) Experimental evidence on how implicit racial bias affects risk preferences. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.
- Auer, D., Gereke, J. & Schaub, M. (2023). Spiritual beliefs predict high-risk migration behavior. *Nature Scientific Reports*.
- Auer, D. & Ruedin, D. (2022). How one gesture curbed ethnic discrimination. *European Journal of Political Research*.
- Auer, D. & Tetlow, D. (2022) Brexit, uncertainty, and migration decisions. *International Migration*.
- Auer, D., Ruedin, D. (2019). Who Feels Disadvantaged? Reporting Discrimination in Surveys. In: Steiner, I., Wanner, P. (eds) *Migrants and Expats: The Swiss Migration and Mobility Nexus*. IMISCOE Research Series. Springer, Cham.
- Auer, D., Fossati, F. & Liechti, F. (2019) Can signaling assimilation mitigate hiring discrimination? Evidence from a survey experiment. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*.
- Auer, D. & Fossati, F. (2018) The absent rewards of assimilation: how ethnic penalties persist in the Swiss labour market. *The Journal of Economic Inequality*.
- Auer, D., Liechti, F., Fossati, F. & Bonoli, G. (2017) The signalling value of labour market programmes. *European Sociological Review*.

# Conchita D'Ambrosio

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## Brief summary

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Conchita D'Ambrosio is Full Professor of **Economics** at the **University of Luxembourg**. Her research interests revolve around the analysis and measurement of individual wellbeing, both theoretically and empirically. In this respect, she has proposed a number of different axiomatically-characterised wellbeing indices, including measures of multidimensional poverty, insecurity, deprivation, material deprivation, social exclusion and poverty over time, which disentangle the effects of chronic and persistent poverty. Over the past 15 years she has also worked on the empirical analysis of these indices using data from a variety of different countries.

Her research group has been collecting a unique dataset since April 2020, COME-HERE, repeatedly carrying **out on-line interviews** with the **same individuals** in **six countries**: Luxembourg, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Sweden. The data covers over 5000 individuals, who are asked about many different aspects of their lives.

## Academic positions (selection)

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04/2013 - present      *Professor of Economics*, FNR PEARL Chair on Socioeconomic Inequality, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg

## Education (selection)

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09/1994 - 01/2000      *PhD in Economics*, New York University, USA  
*M.Phil. in Economics*, New York University, USA  
*M.A. in Economics*, New York University, USA  
09/1988 - 03/1993      *BA in Economics*, Università Bocconi, Italy

## Third-party funding (selection)

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2020 - 2023      *PANDEMIC – Pandora's box: the Demographic, Economic, Social and Psychological Impact of COVID-19*, Losch Foundation, € 300k, PI  
2013 - 2018      *A Research Programme on Social Inequality within the National, European and International Context*, Luxembourg National Research Fund, € 2M, co-PI

## Academic service (selection)

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2013 - present      Senior Scholar, Luxembourg Income Study  
2008 - 2024      Editor, Review of Income and Wealth

## Awards, Recognitions, and Fellowships (selection)

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2023 - present      Vice-president of the Scientific Council of the Fondazione Luigi Einaudi  
2019 - present      Member of the Scientific Council of the Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg  
2018      Nominated Knight of the Ordine della Stella d'Italia from the President of the Republic of Italy  
2015 - present      Research Fellow, DIW Berlin

## Media coverage and outreach (selection)

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Outreach Established the lecture series “Inequality and...?” in collaboration with the Chambre des Salariés, the European Investment Bank (EIB) Institute, LIS, LISER and STATEC. More than 55 lectures were hosted, each with an audience of around 100 people. The videos of the lectures are available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWePPVNHbID6mOEHmsV3z0R2l9kQpqibw>

## Key publications of interest for the project

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- Rebechi, A., A. Lepinteur, A.E., Clark, A.E., N. Rohde, C. Vögele & C. D’Ambrosio (forthcoming) Loneliness during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from five European Countries, *Economics & Human Biology*.
- Clark, A.E., C. D’Ambrosio, A. Ferrer-I-Carbonell, A. Lepinteur, A. Piper & C. Schröder (2022) Gender, Loneliness and Happiness during COVID-19, *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics*, 101, 101952.
- Caro, J.C., A.E. Clark, C. Vögele & C. D’Ambrosio (2022) The Impact of COVID-19 Lockdown Stringency on Loneliness in Five European Countries, *Social Science and Medicine*, 314, 115492.
- Rohde, N., K.K. Tang, C. D’Ambrosio & P. Rao (2016) Estimating the Mental Health Effects of Social Isolation, *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 11, 853-869.
- Clark, A.E. & C. D’Ambrosio (2015) Attitudes to Income Inequality: Experimental and Survey Evidence, in *Handbook of Income Distribution*, Volume 2A, edited by A.B. Atkinson and F. Bourguignon, North-Holland, 1147-1208.
- Bossert, W. & C. D’Ambrosio (2012) Poverty and Time. *Journal of Economic Inequality*, 10, 145-162.
- D’Ambrosio C. & J.R. Frick (2012) Individual Well-Being in a Dynamic Perspective, *Economica*, 79, 284-302.
- Bellani, L. & C. D’Ambrosio (2011) Deprivation, Social Exclusion and Subjective Well-Being, *Social Indicators Research*, 104, 67-86.
- Bossert, W., C. D’Ambrosio and V. Peragine (2007) Deprivation and Social Exclusion, *Economica*, 74, 777-803.
- D’Ambrosio C. & J.R. Frick (2007) Income Satisfaction and Relative Deprivation: An Empirical Link, *Social Indicators Research*, 81, 497-519.
- Bossert, W. & C. D’Ambrosio (2007) Dynamic Measures of Individual Deprivation, *Social Choice and Welfare*, 28, 77-88.
- Chakravarty, S.R. & C. D’Ambrosio (2006) The Measurement of Social Exclusion, *Review of Income and Wealth*, 52, 377-398.

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## Brief summary

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Danny Osborne is an Associate Professor (AP) of **Social Psychology** at the University of Auckland, **New Zealand**. His research examines the causes and consequences of inequality, with a focus on ideologies and collective action. To date, AP Osborne has published over 175 peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and government reports. He is also the lead editor of the *Cambridge Handbook of Political Psychology*.

Danny Osborne has nearly 15 years' experience working with, and developing items for, **large-scale datasets** including the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Survey. He is also a methods expert and has published chapters and review papers on **advanced survey methods** including random intercept cross-lagged panel models (RI-CLPMs) and latent profile analyses (LPAs).

## Academic positions (selection)

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07/2011 - present      *Associate Professor*  
Team leader for Social Psychology, University of Auckland, New Zealand

## Education (selection)

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06/2011      *PhD in Social Psychology*, University of California, Los Angeles, USA  
Joint Minors in Political Psychology and Quantitative Methods  
07/2008      Summer Institute in Political Psychology, Stanford University, USA  
06/2007      *MA in Social Psychology*, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

## Third-party funding (selection)

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2021      *Social, psychosocial and employment impacts of COVID-19 in New Zealand: Insights from the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study 2020/2021*, Ministry of Social Development, \$101.751 NZD/~ €56.358, Co-PI (PI Chris Sibley)  
2019 - 2022      *How utopian thinking influences political engagement*, Australian Research Council Discovery Grant, \$350.000 AUD/~ €210.976, AI (PI E. Thomas)

## Academic service (selection)

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Council Member      Governing board for the International Society of Political Psychology (since 07/2024); Portfolio includes Scholars Under Threat & Initiatives Committee  
University of Auckland      Faculty of Science Postgraduate Student Wellbeing Coordinator (since 06/2022)  
Reviewing/Editing      Associate Editor for *Social Psychological and Personality Science*; Consulting editor for several journals; International grant reviewer; ad-hoc reviewer for most major journals in Social Psychology and Political Science

## Awards, Recognitions, and Fellowships (selection)

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2021      CABLE Research Impact Award, University of Auckland  
2017      Royal Society Te Apārangi Early Career Research Excellence Award  
2017      Research Excellence Award (Team), University of Auckland  
2016      Sustained Excellence in Teaching, University of Auckland  
2015      Early Career Research Award, Society of Australasian Social Psychologists

## Media coverage and outreach (selection)

In the news Washington Post; The Guardian; PSPConnection; The Conversation; Listener; News Room; RNZ; Newstalk ZB; Vote Compass New Zealand

## Key publications of interest for the project (out of 178 publications) \* supervised students

- \* Bahamondes, J., Sengupta, N. K., Sibley, C. G., & Osborne, D. (2021). Examining the relational underpinnings and consequences of system-justifying beliefs: Explaining the palliative effects of system justification. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 60(3), 1027-1050. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12440>
- \* Bertenshaw, Z., Sibley, C. G., & Osborne, D. (in press). Barriers to biculturalism: Historical negation and symbolic exclusion predict longitudinal increases in bicultural policy opposition. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.
- Bracegirdle, C., Reimer, N. K., Osborne, D., Sibley, C. G., Wölfer, R., & Sengupta, N. K. (2023). The socialization of perceived discrimination in ethnic minority groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 125(3), 571-589.
- \* Lilly, K. J., Sibley, C. G., & Osborne, D. (2024). Asymmetries in responses to group-based relative deprivation: The moderating effects of group status on endorsement of right-wing ideology. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 27(4), 823-844.
- Osborne, D., Costello, T., Duckitt, J., & Sibley, C. G. (2023). The psychological causes and societal consequences of authoritarianism. *Nature Reviews Psychology*, 2, 220-232.
- Osborne, D., Huang, Y., Overall, N. C., Sutton, R. M., Petterson, A., Douglas, K. M., Davies, P. G., & Sibley, C. G. (2022). Abortion attitudes: An overview of demographic and ideological differences. *Advances in Political Psychology*, 43(S1), 29-76.
- Osborne, D., \* Lilly, K. J., Kunst, J. R., Obaidi, M., & van den Bos, K. (in press). The role of relative deprivation in the process of radicalization into violent extremism. In J. R. Kunst & M. Obaidi (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook on the Psychology of Violent Extremism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Osborne, D., & Sibley, C. G. (2020). Does Openness to Experience predict changes in conservatism? A nine-wave longitudinal investigation into the personality roots to ideology. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 87, 103979.
- Osborne, D., Jost, J. T., Becker, J. C., Badaan, V., & Sibley, C. G. (2019). Protesting to challenge or defend the system? A system justification perspective on collective action. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 49(2), 244-269.
- Osborne, D., & Sibley, C. G. (2013). Through rose-colored glasses: System-justifying beliefs dampen the effects of relative deprivation on well-being and political mobilization. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 39(8), 991-1004.
- \* Satherley, N., Osborne, D., & Sibley, C. G. (2023). The political system through a partisan lens: Within-person changes in support for political parties precede political system attitudes. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 62, 72-83.
- Schumann, S., Osborne, D., Gill, P., Fell, B., & Hewstone, M. (2021). Radical news? Immigrants' television use, acculturation challenges, and support for terrorism. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 13(4), 320-336.
- Shanaah, S., Yogeewaran, K., Greaves, L., Bulbulia, J., Osborne, D., Afzali, M. U., & Sibley, C. G. (2023). Hate begets warmth? The impact of an anti-Muslim terrorist attack on public attitudes toward Muslims. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 35(1), 156-174.
- Thomas, E. F., Bird, L. H., O'Donnell, A., Osborne, D., Buonaiuto, E., Yip, L., Lizzio-Wilson, M., Wenzel, M., & Skitka, L. J. (in press). Do conspiracy beliefs fuel support for reactionary social movements? Effects of misbeliefs on actions to oppose lockdown and to 'Stop the Steal'. *British Journal of Social Psychology*.
- Verkuyten, M., Yogeewaran, K., Zubielevitch, E., \* Lilly, K. J., Vanderklei, M., Osborne, D., & Sibley, C. G. (in press). Ethnic identity centrality across the adult lifespan: Aging, cohort and period effects among majority and minority group members. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.



# Massimo Ragnedda

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## Brief summary

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Massimo Ragnedda (PhD) is an Associate Professor in **Digital Media and Communications** at Northumbria University, **UK** where he conducts research on the digital divide, exclusion and inequalities. He also holds a professorship at Sharjah University and Honorary Professorship at Lomonosov Moscow State University.

Massimo Ragnedda possesses considerable expertise in crafting items for **large-scale surveys** and publishing research derived from survey data in high-impact journals. For example, the Digital Capital Index, which he proposed and coordinated, was funded by The British Academy and has led to the publication of a book and numerous articles in Q1 journals. This index is now being utilized by various research teams to assess Digital Capital within their respective national contexts.

## Academic positions (selection)

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01/2024 - present	Associate Professor, Sharjah University (UAE)
12/2022 - present	Honorary Professor, Faculty of Journalism, Lomonosov Moscow State University
09/2021 - present	Associate Professor/Reader Northumbria University (UK)
03/2019 - 12/2022	Visiting Professor Faculty of Journalism, Lomonosov Moscow State University
04/2014 - 08/2021	Senior Lecturer in Mass Communication, Northumbria University (UK)
09/2012 - 04/2014	Lecturer in Mass Communication, Northumbria University (UK)
2006 - 2012	Associate Lecturer Sociology of Media, Culture and Communication, University of Sassari (Italy)

## Education (selection)

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2006	<i>PhD in Theory and Practice of Communication and Intercultural Studies</i> , University of Sassari, Italy.
2001	<i>Laurea</i> (summa cum laude), University of Sassari, Italy.

## Third-party funding (selection)

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2024	<i>Investigating Digital Capital in the UAE: Refining the Model and Exploring a New Context</i> , Sharjah University, UAE
2022	<i>Digital Poverty in the UK</i> , British Academy, PI
2018	<i>Measuring Digital Capital in the UK</i> , British Academy/Leverhulme Research Grants, PI

## Academic service (selection)

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Membership	Co-chair of Digital Divide Working Group within IAMCR (the preeminent worldwide professional organisation in the field of media and communication research).
Editor	Palgrave Studies in Digital Inequalities book series

## **Awards, Recognitions, and Fellowships (selection)**

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2022 - present	<i>Honorary Professor</i> , Faculty of Journalism, Lomonosov Moscow State University
2018 - present	Research Fellow of the University College London Centre for Blockchain Technologies (CBT)
2021	Awarded as Choice Outstanding Academic Title 2020 (Ragnedda, M. and Destefanis G. (eds). <i>Blockchain and Web 3.0: Social, Economic, and Technological Challenges</i> , Routledge, 2019
2022 - 2026	Elected Co-chair of the Digital Divide Working Group for the IAMCR
2022	Ambassador for the Digital Poverty Alliance UK
2022	Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA)
2021	Member of the UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab

Nominated for Best Lecturer, Northumbria University, 2020/2021 / 2019-2020 / 2018-2019 / 2017-2018 / 2016-2017 / 2014-2015

## **Media coverage and outreach (selection)**

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Political Columnist      Tiscali News, authored over 120 editorials during this period.

## **Key publications of interest for the project**

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- Ruiu, ML. and Ragnedda, M. (2024), *Digital-Environmental Poverty. Digital and environmental inequalities in the post-covid era*, Palgrave.
- Ragnedda, M., Addeo, F., & Laura Ruiu, M. (2024). How offline backgrounds interact with digital capital. *New Media & Society*, 26, 2023-2045.
- Ragnedda, M., Ruiu, M.L., and Calderón-Gómez, D., (2024), Examining the Interplay of Sociodemographic and Sociotechnical Factors on Users' Perceived Digital Skills, *Media and Communication*, Vol. 12, Article 8167.
- Ruiu, M.L., Ruiu, G., Ragnedda, M. and Addeo, F. (2024), Exploring Digital-Environment Habitus in Italy—How Digital Practices Reflect Users' Environmental Orientations? *Sustainability*, 16, 4880
- Ruiu, M. L., Ragnedda, M., Addeo, F., & Ruiu, G. (2023). Investigating how the interaction between individual and circumstantial determinants influence the emergence of digital poverty: a post-pandemic survey among families with children in England. *Information, Communication & Society*, 26, 1023-1044.
- Ragnedda, M., Ruiu, M.L., Addeo, F., (2022). The self-reinforcing effect of digital and social exclusion: The inequality loop. *Telematics and Informatics*, 72, 101852.
- Calderon, D, Ragnedda, M. and Ruiu, ML (2021), Digital practices across the UK population: The influence of socio-demographic and techno-social variables in the use of the Internet, *European Journal of Communication*.
- Ragnedda, M., Ruiu, M., Addeo, F., & Delli Paoli, A. (2022). Converting digital capital in five key life realms. *Italian Sociological Review*, 12, 19-40.
- Gladkova, A., Elena, V., & Ragnedda, M. (2020), Digital divide and digital capital in multiethnic Russian society, *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*.
- Ruiu, ML, and Ragnedda, M. (2020), Examining the second level of the digital divide through the lens of Digital Capital. *First Monday*.
- Gladkova, A., and Ragnedda, M. (2020), Exploring Digital Inequalities in Russia: an interregional comparative analysis. *Online Information Review*.
- Robinson, L., Schulz, J. Ragnedda, M. et al. (2020), Digital Inequalities 2.0: Legacy Inequalities in the Information Age. *First Monday*.