

## The Sociological Science Accelerator: Experimental Sociology through a Collaborative Network

Experimental sociology has seen an increase in interest, as the demand for causal explanations and a deeper understanding of social mechanisms has increased. Sociologists have been drawn to experiments to address challenging sociological questions. Despite this growing enthusiasm, experimental sociology is still yet to catch up with experimental approaches in other social science disciplines in terms of prevalence and impact (Gereke & Gërxhani 2020). This can be attributed to several factors. First, there is limited effort to apply experimental research across diverse sociological topics and promote it across diverse sociological networks. Second, there are only few platforms (e.g., [Experimental Sociology Workshop](#) ESW; [Annual Conference of Experimental Sociology](#) ACES) that encourage engagement and collaboration among sociologists using experimental methods. Third, financial constraints hinder the advancement of large-scale experimental research, as the field often grapples with inadequate funding. Last, in the wider discipline there is a noticeable lack of engagement with open science practices, impeding the growth of well-powered and reproducible experimental research (Ferguson et al 2023).

Given these concerns, we have initiated the annual [Experimental Sociology Workshop](#) (ESW) that provides early career sociologists, as well as senior scholars, with a platform to discuss experimental research, to build a global network of experimental sociologists, and to develop seedcorn funds to run experimental studies. The ESW has already established a growing international network of experimental sociologists with a reputable programme committee. Hundreds of participants representing multiple continents have attended the workshop over the last three years.

We are now committed to *accelerate* the accumulation of reliable, rigorous, and reproducible evidence in experimental sociology, coordinating pre-registrations, study designs, data collection, data analysis, and dissemination for sociological studies *democratically* selected and overseen by committees elected by the members of the SSA. This challenge transcends the capacity of an individual researcher or a small team. Instead, we endeavour to address it through the establishment of a continuous and diverse experimental sociology network. Following the recent examples of *mega studies* (e.g. Voelkel et al 2023; Van Bavel et al 2022), we hope that this accelerator network is characterised by its perpetual nature, encompassing a wide array of research topics and participating researchers, and

embracing an inclusive ethos that invites insights, contributions, research proposals, and input from all those within the domain of sociology. To this end, we are currently conducting an [initial survey](#) that assesses areas of interest within this large-scale collaboration.

This new initiative, the Sociological Science Accelerator (SSA) adopts the Mertonian norms of science (*communality, universalism, disinterestedness, and organised scepticism*). Based on these norms, it is envisaged to endorse the following principles:

- The SSA advocates for the principles of *decentralized authority* and *receptivity to critique*: SSA policies and procedures are established through collaborative efforts involving committees and the broader SSA community. Members collectively steer the course of the SSA by endorsing policies and voting for projects.
- The SSA supports the principles of *methodological rigor* and *open science*: The SSA upholds the necessity for appropriately large and diverse samples, pre-registration of hypotheses and analyses, and scrutiny of methods by committees and individuals possessing expertise in measurement and estimation. Moreover, it mandates the sharing of open data, open-source code, open research materials, and the publication of empirical findings in open-access preprint formats.
- The SSA embraces the principle of *diversity and inclusivity*: The SSA is committed to fostering diversity and inclusivity at all levels of its operations. This commitment extends to striving for cultural, political, and geographic diversity among participants and researchers engaged in SSA-sponsored projects, as well as promoting a diverse range of sociological topics.