

13th International Conference of Sociocybernetics

**Sociocybernetics Facing Turbulent Times:  
Media, Politics and Societies**

Zaragoza, Spain, June 29-July 3, 2015

Call for proposals

*“Society can only be understood through a study of the messages and the communication facilities which belong to it; and that in the future development of these messages and communication facilities, messages between man and machines, between machines and man, and between machine and machine, are destined to play an ever-increasing part”.*

Norbert Wiener. *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society* (1950).

Reading these words in 2015, it's hard not to recognize the vision of the founding father of Cybernetics as a defining feature of contemporary society. The interplay between mass media, algorithms and digital technologies is deeply affecting what we know about the world around us and, in turn, our everyday life choices (from what brand to buy to what party to vote). Understanding “media effects”, as clearly pointed out by the tradition of media studies, requires a combination of different approaches and disciplines. At the same time, these effects are always complex and non-linear. The contemporary scenario is further complicated by the presence of multiple feedback loops: we are not simply a target of the contents produced by the media system. We share and create our own contents becoming part of the media ourselves. The system affecting our choices is thus, in turn, affected by our choices. Empowering technologies are, at the same time, new subtle and powerful means of control. Participation, self-organization, hierarchies and benevolent dictatorships, once mutually exclusive, happily co-exist in modern communities such as Wikipedia or Linux developers.

Complexity, self-organizations, non-linearity, control and feedback loops are core concepts in cybernetics and general systems theory. Furthermore, both approaches are intrinsically interdisciplinary. A Conference of Sociocybernetics is therefore a unique and ideal academic forum in which to discuss this topic, one that goes beyond the boundaries of traditional disciplines.

The goal of this conference is therefore to bring researchers from different disciplines together (media studies, sociology, psychology, political science, computer science, etc.) to explore, within a sociocybernetic approach, the opportunities and challenges related to the complex new relationships between media, politics and contemporary society.

Following our previous conference topics related to complex social systems (Portugal 2012), social networks (Mexico 2013) and our participation in the ISA World Congress to discuss challenges for global society (Japan 2014), we invite the submission of paper proposals to discuss media, politics and societies from a sociocybernetic perspective. Topics can include:

Media and political systems issues:

- Political movements, and new forms of social organization
- Media, protests and political action
- Privacy, control and surveillance
- News production, circulation and consumption
- Culture clash and systemic change

Sociocybernetics and digital technologies:

- Technology and citizen science
- Reflexivity and digital technologies
- Computational social science and Big Data.
- Cybercultur@ and knowledge communities

Proposals with a strong sociocybernetics orientation addressing other topics (conceptual, methodological, practical) and/or reporting the empirical findings of research studies that apply sociocybernetics are also welcomed.

There are no parallel sessions, thus we encourage all participants to contribute to and profit from the full stream of discussion during the conference, which, as a developing conversation, usually embraces all of the presentations, systemically and over-archingly.

## Paper submission

Abstracts should be sent in English. Please submit a regular abstract of 200-300 word together with an extended abstract of 750-1000 words (including references) for review purposes. The former will be published in the RC51 Newsletter, included in the abstracts booklet made available to conference participants and published as part of the conference programme on the RC51 website.

The regular abstract only should include information about the author(s): names, affiliations, email addresses and three keywords. Both abstracts should be sent to the Head of the Abstracts Committee José A. Amozurrutia ([j.amoz@yahoo.com](mailto:j.amoz@yahoo.com)), with copy to the RC51 Secretary Patricia E. Almaguer Kalixto ([endeu.research@gmail.com](mailto:endeu.research@gmail.com)). Selected papers will be published in a special issue of the Journal of Sociocybernetics (<https://papiro.unizar.es/ojs/index.php/rc51-jos/index>), guest edited by Toru Takahashi.

## Important dates

- 15th March 2015 Deadline for submission of abstracts
- 29th March 2015 Notification of acceptance, with possible request for revisions
- 1st June 2015 Deadline for submission of full papers
- 7th June 2015 Deadline for registration

## Venue

University of Zaragoza. Facultad de Economía y Empresa. Doctor Cerrada, 1-3. 50005 Zaragoza, Spain. Founded in 1542, the University of Zaragoza is one of the oldest universities in Spain. The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration constitutes an important centre of the university to enhance communication between the university and society.

## Participation fees

- RC51 Non members: 100 EUR
- Student fee (RC51 Non members): 50 EUR
- RC51 regular members in good standing (ISA and RC51): No fee.

Interested in becoming an ISA RC51 member? [Click here](#)

The registration fee includes: conference pack, coffee breaks, and tourism information.

Academic register/student ID is needed to grant the discount.

## Accommodation

Concerning your accommodation in Zaragoza, the organizers have blocked several rooms at the 3\* hotel Zaragoza Royal, located right at the center of the city and near to the venue, at very attractive prices. More information and booking instructions can be found in the "Accommodation" section of the Conference webpage.

## Conference Language

The official language of the conference is English.

## About ISA RC51 on Sociocybernetics

Research Committee 51 (RC51) of the International Sociological Association (ISA) is one of the Research Committees which, along with a large number of national sociological associations, constitute the ISA. The aim of the RC51 is to promote the development of sociocybernetic theory and research within the social sciences. Sociocybernetics is broadly defined as applications within the social sciences of first- and second-order cybernetics, general systems theory and the various combinations and variations of these that can be subsumed under the term “the emerging science of complexity”. Members of the group study all aspects of social dynamics and social interaction with particular attention to the observer-dependence of knowledge and the reflective, self-referential and self-organizing capacities of social systems and social networks. See our website for more information: <https://sociocybernetics.wordpress.com/>

## Contacts and information

For Conference information and updates please check the official website:

<https://sociocybernetics.wordpress.com/conferences/>.

For specific questions you may directly contact the **Chair of the Local Organizing Committee** Pedro J. Escriche Bueno ([pescrich@unizar.es](mailto:pescrich@unizar.es)) and/or the **RC51 President** Chaime Marcuello Servós ([chaime@unizar.es](mailto:chaime@unizar.es)).

### LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Pedro J. Escriche Bueno (Chair)  
Chaime Marcuello  
Santiago Boira

Juan David Quintero  
Edith Carvajal Triano

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