

Disregarded epistemologies in education? Critical approaches to sociologies and histories of education in Central and Eastern Europe

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Call for Papers: Special Issue of the Journal of Educational Sciences Vol. 2 (xx), December 2025

Deadline for expression of interest (title, abstract, author's names): 7th September 2025 (inquiry and abstract submission at leyla.safta@e-uvv.ro).

Deadline for full papers: 1st October 2025 (submit to resjournal@e-uvv.ro)

Full call for papers

Psychologically and pedagogically informed approaches to the study of education have gained prominence over sociologically, as well as historically and genealogically informed approaches in Central and Eastern Europe and elsewhere over the past three decades. At the same time, sociologies and histories of education (continue to) produce insightful accounts of inequality, (de)segregation, hierarchization practices, youth, childhood and educational policy and practice, among many other topics.

This special issue seeks to productively engage with these research traditions and practices by offering an open platform to sociological, as well as ethnographic, genealogical and historical work on educational practices, policies and settings in Central and Eastern Europe. We invite authors to contribute with empirical research, as well as theoretically informed auto-ethnographic and personal reflection on the, but not limited to, the following questions:

1. Conceptualizing the social in education

- How is 'the' social conceptualized in educational settings in Central and Eastern Europe today? How do these conceptualizations relate to past and present conceptualizations from other regions (e.g. Latin or North America, Western Europe, the Middle East, etc.)? How are diverse conceptualizations of 'the' social circulating within national

and/or local contexts in the CEE region? How do they relate to conceptualizations in pedagogy and psychology, considering the psychologization of educational sciences?

- How do educational curricula, policies, and practices in CEE shape both individual subjectivities and collective identities, as well as ethical and political orientations?
- How can sociological research critically explore the tension between instrumentalist approaches to education and the formation of subjectivities and ethical and political responsibilities?

2. Epistemologies in educational research

- How are the multiple epistemological legacies shaping the educational research agenda today? How have the multiple 'pasts' of educational ideas, policies and practices from state socialist to post-socialist, from functionalists to postmodern thinking shaped how both education and educational research are practiced and understood today?
- How is data understood in educational research in CEE today? How are processes of data availability, (co-)production and collection shaping educational research agendas (e.g. PISA, TALIS, Eurostat etc.)? What are the merits of in-depth qualitative approaches in a context shaped by the big-datafication of educational research? How does large data help shape and challenge educational research agendas? What are the silences and omissions of data practices in education and educational research in CEE today? What can a data feminist perspective bring to the study of large scale data in education?

3. Social Reproduction and Social Justice in Education

- How are processes of social and cultural reproduction through education shaped by multiple crisis and the (dis)ruptions to individual and collective aspirational. in the context of large scale processes and events (e.g. the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, the end of state socialism, the accession to the European Union etc.) in CEE? How do austerity policies challenge and shape the possibilities for disrupting social reproduction?
- How has the distribution of power in education evolved and what ideas are/were governing educational policies presently and in the past? How are changing educational

policies being interpreted, translated, and responded to in different social settings? Who, why and how are different actors accommodating and resisting these policies? How can powerful agenda setters in educational policies be understood from a critical perspective? How are educational settings, policies and practices being shaped by the revival of authoritarian and fascist discourses? How can sociologies of education contribute to understanding present waves of protest and discontent?

- How can the sociology of education contribute to advancing a social justice informed research agenda in relation to inequalities and inequities in education?

Special issue editors' bios

Leyla Safta-Zecheria is a pedagogist and an anthropologist. She is a senior lecturer at the Educational Sciences Department, West University of Timișoara and a postdoctoral researcher with the project "Philosophy in Late Socialist Europe: Theoretical Practices in the Face of Polycrisis" at the Babeș-Bolyai University (Romania), as well as a research affiliate to the Democracy Institute Inequalities and Democracy Workgroup, Central European University. She holds a PhD in Political Science from Central European University Budapest and an MA in European Ethnology from Humboldt University Berlin. She uses qualitative, visual and participatory methods to understand the ways in which instances of social, economic and educational inequality are lived through and described by marginalized people, as well as how these instances come to be constructed socially and epistemologically. From October 2025, she is the principal investigator of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Staff Exchange project "Ecosystems for Higher Education Inclusion" funded by the European Commission.

Octavia Mihaela Borș-Georgescu is an educational researcher with a PhD in Educational Sciences from the University of Bucharest, and a strong focus on educational inequalities and the experiences of students at risk of exclusion. Currently a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bucharest, her work explores civic competences and education. With over a decade of experience in NGO-led educational projects, she has worked extensively on teacher training, community-school initiatives, and the development of educational resources. She also served as an adviser to the Romanian Minister of Education for two years, contributing to civic and inclusive education reforms.

Elena Ungureanu is a lecturer at Transilvania University of Brașov and a qualitative researcher whose work explores posthumanist perspectives in education. Her research is grounded in

participatory methodologies, but also discourse analysis, often incorporating elements of ethnographic inquiry. She also engages in dialogic teaching practices. She holds a PhD in Educational Sciences from the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Bucharest.

Please submit full papers by the **1st of October 2025** via the Journal of Educational Sciences email address (resjournal@e-uvt.ro). **Please also inform the editors of your intention to submit a contribution by sending in a brief abstract (and names of authors) by September 7th to the special issue editors** (via leyla.safta@e-uvt.ro), after a brief editorial review and if the proposed paper is in line with the special issue proposal, you will receive a short confirmation and invitation to submit a full paper within a few days of your submission. Small extensions to the 1st of October 2025 deadline for full paper submission are possible but should be discussed with the special issue editorial team.

All submissions will undergo a double anonymous (so-called double-blind) peer review process before publication. The results of this process will be communicated to the authors within no more than six weeks after submission. Every article submitted to the Journal of Educational Sciences must be original research or manuscripts not previously published, either in full or preliminary form, in other publications and are not the subject of another peer review process in any other context.

The full issue (including all accepted manuscripts) is intended for publication at the end of December 2025.

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