

Congress of the Swiss Sociological Association 2024
University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, Basel (MuttENZ),
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Call for Papers

Workshop Session: Vulnerabilities in transition: conceptual approaches for grappling with the complexity of social change

Organizers:

Nicolas Baya-Laffite (University of Geneva), Marlyne Sahakian (University of Geneva)

Building on the theme of the conference, this workshop invites papers from contributors who are keen on critically exploring the links between sustainability transitions and vulnerabilities. How can sociologists grapple with complex systems, how can our understanding of the social inform a more just transition in a context of climate adaptation and mitigation, and what new vulnerabilities must be accounted for in any process of social change? In today's world, understanding the interconnections between human and non-human actants is essential, as is reckoning with the socio-material and sociotechnical arrangements that underpin complex systems and 'lock-in' certain forms of production and consumption over others. The material dimension is a common point between two epistemic communities in sociological research: scholars engaging in Science and Technology Studies (STS), and those working with Social Practice Theory approaches (SPA). While STS provides a deep understanding of interdependencies between actors (through the analysis of e.g. co-production processes, controversies and accidents), some variants of SPA place attention on the collective dimension of everyday life, and how such dynamics are embedded in norms and expectations that may be less visible in practice, but nonetheless have agency when it comes to how practices play out. While both approaches separately allow for a rich descriptive and analytical quality, we are particularly interested in contributions that focus on how STS and SPA contribute to theories of social change. We welcome papers that wish to explore how the STS scholarship understands and grapples with an analysis of social practices, and conversely, how different theories of practice challenge or complement approaches in STS, in the context of sustainability transitions. More generally, we welcome papers that use either of the two approaches to reflect on social change and vulnerabilities in a complex world.

Please submit your abstract of maximum 2000 characters by 5 January 2024 to nicolas.bayalaffite@unige.ch and marlyne.sahakian@unige.ch