

NESS Workshop:

Imagining transformation: Urgency, emergency and hope in a time of multiple crises

Workshop chairs:

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Living in an era of multiple ongoing crises – climate change, mass species extinction, pandemics, economic instability to name a few – requires that the imagining of alternative futures is encouraged, to enable a perception of how actions in the present can shape the world to come. There are a range of ways in which such transformations can be imagined, for example as scenarios, creative design, fiction, participatory performances, or experimentation. While diverse in their aims, they all invite us into a world that is different to the one we experience today, and help us rethink the crises that unfold in the present. But how can such imaginations of transformation catalyse the forms of political, economic and cultural responses required to move beyond, and out of, these crises? Which are the techniques of imagination that become most effective for certain audiences, in certain contexts? How do different narratives, and the techniques by which they are employed become engaging? What are the dangers and advantages with a multiplicity of stories and hegemonic visions? Papers that reflect on these and similar questions are invited to this workshop. Both theoretical/conceptual contributions and reflections on empirical cases of specific interventions are welcome.

We invite papers including, but not limited to, the following themes:

- Exploration of different techniques of imagination (as well as comparisons between them)
- Personal stories of grief and loss
- Narrating the Covid-19 pandemic – a portal to transformation?
- Participatory future-making
- New forms of engagement through narratives of transformation

The NESS workshops follow a standing session format (similar to ECPR), which allows for substantive discussions on research in progress. The conference invites scholars from multiple disciplinary backgrounds in environmental social science. The overall objective of the workshop is to facilitate and encourage participation, equality and collaboration between younger and more established scholars. Each paper is expected to relate to the theme of the workshop, and the participant submits and presents a paper (or work in progress) for the discussion. Workshop participants will be asked to comment on at least one other paper in the respective workshop and participate in the general discussion of the other papers presented. Participants should only choose and attend one workshop for the duration of the conference. The ambition with this format is that the workshops allow for in-depth and coherent discussions of the respective themes and provide opportunity for potential joint publications or other continuing collaborations between the participants.