



SCHOOL OF GLOBAL STUDIES

Call for Papers for Workshops

for the Nordic Environmental Social Science Conference (NESS), University of Gothenburg, Sweden, June 7-9, 2022. [Link to Conference site](#)

Workshop: Exploring grassroots initiatives for transitions

Workshop chairs:

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In the last years there has been an upsurge of different forms of grassroots initiatives for transitions to more sustainable societies. There are both established organisations as well as looser networks that are engaged with alternative systems of provision of *food*, *energy* and *housing*, like community supported agriculture, food sharing schemes, renewable energy cooperatives, co-housing and co-building, or in the field of *mobility* – Bike Kitchens, critical mass rides, other forms of *making and consuming goods* - DIY repair cafés, free shops, or other forms of sharing, reusing and making goods, *finance* – community currencies, peer to peer lending, etc.

These initiatives are less about campaigning and pushing for governments or corporations to change, and more about *altering practices*, building and engaging in alternative ways of living, and may be understood as “lifestyle movements” (Haenfler et al, 2012), as practicing and expanding “diverse economies” (Gibson-Graham, 2008), as “grassroots innovation” (Seyfang & Haxeltine, 2012), or in other sociopolitical terms. However, these “lifestyle movements” may well push for changes in policies and influence or support decision-makers and politicians as well as other citizens into more “radical” transitions. In this session we invite contributions that explore questions like:

- What are the motivations for engaging in grassroots initiatives like the abovementioned? And how may they this be conceptualized?
- What type of change do these initiatives and groupings contribute to? Whose practices do they alter? Who is included or excluded in these initiatives?
- When and how do they have a wider societal impact, beyond the engaged? How may or do already lifestyle movements like these influence decisions at a societal level?
- How can “success” or impact of these forms of initiatives be conceptualized? What are key enabling and inhibiting factors?
- What is the role of these initiatives in the overall societal transition, in cooperation and/or conflict with other actors such as governments, businesses, or other organisations?
- What strategies, or forms of organizing, cooperating, funding and communicating – are being used and how may these be theoretically conceptualized?
- What are the challenges and limitations of these forms of initiatives?

Instructions for Workshop Participants

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 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. Participants should only choose and attend one workshop for the duration of the conference, but you may send abstracts to more than one workshop. Workshop participants will be asked to comment on at least one other paper in the respective workshop, read the other papers and participate in the general discussion of the papers. 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.

Send your abstract of up to 300 words to all the workshop chairs no later than **December 15, 2021**. Chairs will respond to questions which relate to the workshop theme. For questions of a general nature (i.e. not workshop specific) they should be directed to ness@globalstudies.gu.se

The conference organizers will notify the participants of their acceptance to the workshops by **March 1, 2022**. Workshop papers are to be submitted to the workshop chairs and the other workshop participants at the latest **May 20**. May 20 is also the last day to register for the conference on the website. A workshop schedule including information on presentations, session chairs and discussants will be available on the conference website at the end of May. The workshop format only allows for very short paper presentations (ca. 5 min) and all workshop participants are expected to have read and be able to comment on the papers in the workshop.

References

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2008). Diverse economies: performative practices for 'other worlds'. *Progress in human geography*, 32(5), 613-632.

Haenfler, R., Johnson, B., & Jones, E. (2012). Lifestyle movements: Exploring the intersection of lifestyle and social movements. *Social Movement Studies*, 11(1), 1-20.

Seyfang, G., & Haxeltine, A. (2012). Growing grassroots innovations: exploring the role of community-based initiatives in governing sustainable energy transitions. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*. 30(3), 381-400.