

The 2021 Congress of the Swiss Sociological
Association (SSA)



Book of session proposals and call for abstracts

Organizers :

The University of Geneva and the Haute École de Travail Social de Genève
HES-SO,
with the participation of the Graduate Institute of International and
Development Studies

Introducing the congress

Social Justice in Times of Uncertainty takes as a starting point the health pandemic that erupted in 2020, which led societies across the world to cope with disruptions in the provisioning of goods and services, means of livelihood, and fundamental freedom – not least, that of movement. The crisis also revealed global and local inequalities, translated into who has the right to live or not, and raised new questions around (in)justice in the contemporary world. In light of the turmoil experienced, as a globalized society and within our communities, this congress emphasizes the relevance of social and environmental justice in the making of a fair society, asking the question: in times of uncertainty, what does it mean to live a good life in a just society?

For the first time, the Congress of the Swiss Sociological Association will be hosted in Geneva, through a partnership between the University of Geneva and the Haute Ecole de Travail Social de Genève (HETS GE/HES-SO), and with the participation of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

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Impacts of Finance & Financing of Impacts

Lena Ajdacic University of Lausanne, Felix Bühlmann University of Lausanne; Fabien Foureault University of Lausanne, Noé Kabouche, University of Neuchatel & Sciences Po, Paris; François Schoenberger University of Lausanne.

Since the 1970s, financialization of economic life has turned finance, financial behaviors and financial mechanisms into omnipresent companions of our everyday life. Financialization is defined by Krippner (2005) as a “pattern of accumulation in which profits accrue primarily through financial channels rather than through trade and commodity production”. This evolution goes along with a massive spread of investment activities into social life, involving citizens in financial schemes (Boussard, 2017; Carruthers & Arriovich, 2010) and granting financial institutions a growing influence in domains such as politics, culture or health alike. In this workshop, we would like to discuss the concept of financialization and the impact finance has on governments, firms and individuals.

On the one hand, we shall examine the impacts of financial activities on our societies (Arrighi, 1994; Tregenna, 2009; Godechot, 2012; Lazarus, 2020). What influence does finance have on politics and policy making, for instance in the domains of taxation, housing or welfare? How does financialization transform business, corporate governance and organization of the economic processes (Davis, 2009; Baker & Smith, 1998)? How does financialization influence the distribution of wealth, risks and income? How does finance affect social justice and social equality (Lin & Tobias Neely, 2020)? From the aftermaths of financial crises on households to the inequalities of remuneration within financial institutions, we are interested how finance impacts our lives.

On the other hand, we would like to examine the concept of impact, but backwards, by focusing on a movement of finance that aims at investing in positive social impacts. Sustainable finance denotes practices that link social and environmental justice to financial activities, through authority of state and regulation (Chiapello, 2015; Knoll, 2015, 2019), as well as through action of NGOs (Soule, 2009) or private initiatives, with responsible investments (Sparkes & Cowton, 2004). Today, the actors of this sector claim that the financial sector has a major role to play in the main social challenges of our time, advocating for the spread of social and ecological investments, for instance known as microfinance, ESG investing or impact investing (Barman, 2015; Gregory, 2016; Höchstädter & Scheck, 2015).

For this workshop we welcome contributions from all theoretical and methodological approaches. Our aim is to create a dialogue between research papers that focus on one or both aspects of this proposal. This discussion shall enable us to think about the place and the role of finance in the current issues related to social justice in Switzerland and beyond.

Please submit your proposal to Noé Kabouche, noe.kabouche@unine.ch

Deadline for submissions: January 29, 2021

Abstracts length: maximum ~500 words