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RETHINKING NETWORKS IN TIMES OF TRANSITION: ECOLOGICAL, ENERGY AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Submission: a one-page abstract in English by May 31, 2024
Response on submission by June 17

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Our planet and society are governed by networks, whether biological, ecological, related to energy, transportation, climate, or technology. We are continually engaged in interactions with these networks. In the context of energetic or ecological and societal transitions, it is essential to examine the positive or negative effects of these interactions. Additionally, it is crucial to explore the influence of the growing role that networks will play and the futures they will shape, open or close.

To address these issues, a multidisciplinary approach is essential, particularly between the technological sciences, the humanities and life sciences. The symposium will be organized around five major themes, alternating between discussions, plenary lectures and roundtables:

- Ecological Networks: Biodiversity and Ecological Transition
- Social networks: what dynamics are transforming lifestyles, representations and modes of action?
- Energy Networks: What socio-technical changes for what futures?
- Networks of universities in transition: role, impact, difficulties, drivers?
- Controversy Networks: Are multiple transitions/transformations at play?

Focus 1: Ecological networks: biodiversity and ecological transition

Ecosystems are facing global changes, which is a major challenge for our future. These ecosystems have intrinsic dynamics that we need to integrate into the functioning of our society. It is therefore important to adapt our behaviours in order to preserve biodiversity. Ecosystems function through a multitude of connections between living organisms and their environment. Their protection thus requires a heuristic understanding of how these ecological networks work.

Our knowledge and awareness of the impacts of anthropogenic activities is growing. The objective of this axis is to encourage the exchange of knowledge and dialogue around these themes.

The issues addressed are:

- Preservation and adaptation of ecosystems in the context of climate change.
- Evolution and dynamics of ecosystems: how do humans impact these dynamics? What are the impacts of these dynamics on humans? How to manage them?
- Socio-ecosystem and environmental transition: ecosystems strongly influenced by humans, such as agricultural and urban environments, are important issues for biodiversity but also for the eco-systemic services biodiversity provides. How does the environmental transition of our society take these ecosystems into account? How does their functioning concern societal issues?
- How does the concept of network constitute a resource for thinking about recent ecological changes?

What dynamics and examples allow us to revisit this concept in order to understand it better and act?

Focus 2: Social networks: what dynamics are transforming lifestyles, representations and modes of action?

Whether out of concern for the environment, financial opportunism or even restriction, consumer practices are changing, with ever greater consideration being given to the effects of lifestyle choices in terms of environmental impact and greenhouse gas emissions. Representations, attitudes and practices have also evolved as a result of awareness-raising campaigns, notably towards sufficiency. The semantic shift in France and elsewhere from militant to political discourse has, at the same time as it has entered the political agenda, emptied the term of its radical symbolic and political significance. What representations, practices and dynamics of change are behind the calls for and practices of «simplicity» or «sufficiency»? What distinctions (social, symbolic, political) need to be made between these terms and what they cover? What are the favorable factors or necessary conditions for anyone to embark on the path of lifestyle change? What sociological profiles are to be found in the different degrees of belief and commitment?

The networks here are essentially interpersonal in nature, and take several forms: individuals influencing and recommending to other individuals / collectives that are more or less geographically close, but which have a common project and on which they exchange, etc. And since micro and macro dimensions influence each other, we must not underestimate the impact of diplomatic networks, civil society and international economic players (multinationals), which play a strategic and geopolitical role, exerting their influence on major environmental decisions and projects. In this axis, our aim is to encourage multidisciplinary debate among researchers, who will examine the role of networks in current processes of transition, while analyzing the social metamorphoses, resistance mechanisms and justifications they generate.

Focus 3: Energy networks: What socio-technical changes for what futures?

The objective of this theme is to question, from a transdisciplinary perspective, the evolution and futures of energy networks. Through the increase in local renewable energy production, legislative changes (e.g., energy communities), the growing electrification of consumption (e.g., electric vehicles), and new technological possibilities (smart grids), these networks are moving towards decentralization, with increasing involvement of all stakeholders to enable more flexibility in both production and consumption. These changes cannot occur without considering the role of the user in these networks and the interactions between them. Indeed, by initiating long-term developments, these networks contribute to the (re)construction of social and spatial relationships as well as the representations related to energy. In particular, we will examine how these networks influence choices between alternatives, thus contributing to shaping possible futures.

In order to address both the technical and social challenges of the energy transition, the development of transdisciplinary approaches and indicators is therefore fundamental to make the transition sustainable both environmentally and socially and to chart directions for the future of these networks.

Focus 4: Networks of universities in transition: role, impact, difficulties, drivers?

One of the missions of the university is to train students for the socio-ecological transition, and to help them reflect on possible technological and social solutions to respond to the climate and environmental crisis. Many questions can be addressed within the framework of this theme including:

- what institutional approaches may be defined to integrate sustainable development priorities, especially in the field of climate action (and...?);
- what are the current issues and trends in fostering transformative education for sustainable development".

Focus 5: Controversy networks: are several transitions/ transformations at work?

There is no real consensus about the solutions to environmental issues within societies. While the effects of climate change are increasingly attested and noticeable, climate skepticism has never been so widespread. From promoting sufficiency and low tech to encouraging geoengineering and "techno-solutionism", the paths envisaged to meet the challenges are divergent, as are the models of society on which they work. How, for example, can we analyse the growing mistrust of science and governments (climate scepticism, COVID, conspiracy theories, and so on)?
What do these changes tell us about the transformations that are taking place and possible futures? Are controversies and mistrust obstacles to the necessary changes or, on the contrary, do they open up alternative avenues that lead to democratic debates? The aim of this section is to understand the controversies and antagonistic positions underpinning current and future transformations.

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https://ecoposs2024enviro.sciencesconf.org/
Response on submission by June 30.
Registration conditions informed on
https://ecoposs2024enviro.sciencesconf.org/
The language of the conference is English.
Possibility of publishing an extended paper in a book after the conference.

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