



21.5.2024 at 14.00 – 16.00, Helsinki Central Library Oodi (Room: Kuutio)

Sustainability transitions shaped by wars and crises

Open seminar

Finnish Environment Institute (Suomen ympäristökeskus Syke) welcomes you to join to an open seminar as part of Research Council of Finland funded project *IDEALE - Interplay between National Defence, Security and Low-Carbon Energy Policies: a Sustainability Transitions Perspective*.

This open seminar delves into the intricate interplay between sustainability transitions and global crises, focusing on the impact of wars and emergencies on the trajectory of sustainability initiatives. The seminar presentations examine how these disruptions influence policy responses, technological innovations, and societal transformations, considering factors such as power dynamics, equity considerations, and governance structures. By fostering dialogue and collaboration, the seminar allows thinking towards a more resilient and sustainable future amidst the complexities of global crises. Join us in navigating this dynamic terrain and investigating the discourses on sustainability transitions.

More information about the speakers and the abstracts outlining their presentations can be found below.

Registration by Friday 3.5.2024

Link: <https://link.webropol.com/s/HelsinkiSeminar2024>

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Welcome!

Schedule

14:00 Welcoming words

14:10 Dr. Phil Johnstone, University of Sussex, UK:

“World wars and socio-technical change: A deep transitions perspective”

The Deep Transitions perspective (DT) focusses on the unfolding of industrial modernity as a process of multi-system sociotechnical change. Within this, a focus has been on the role of wars and the military in influencing sociotechnical transitions in multiple systems including energy, food, mobility and communications. Research on the World Wars in DT unpacks the exogenous landscape to understand the particular dynamics and mechanisms of total war and how these fundamentally shaped the long-term directionality of multi-system change through sociotechnical imprinting. During the World Wars, systems such as food, energy, and mobility became tightly coordinated with the imperatives of the defence system producing a condition of mass mobilisation which did not recede after World War II but continued to influence sociotechnical change in the institutions of the Cold War. This presentation explores the mechanisms and imprints of war and through several illustrative case studies from DT research - including oil transitions, centralised electricity grids, intensified & mechanised food production, automotive infrastructure and digitalisation - discusses the ways in which our contemporary sustainability challenge is in many ways grappling with the historical legacies of mass mobilisation. The presentation reflects on how the concepts introduced in this talk may be useful in navigating the current increasingly perilous geopolitical moment to work towards more peaceful and sustainable futures.

14:40 Dr. Caroline Kuzemko, University of Warwick, UK:

“Russia's war on Ukraine, European energy policy responses & implications for sustainable transformations”

Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine sent shockwaves throughout Europe and painfully exposed the continent's dependence on a geopolitical adversary - whilst energy is closely tied into the ongoing battle. Given historical tensions between delivering energy supply security and other important social goals we analyse what energy policy responses to the crisis mean for: environmental sustainability, energy equity and social justice. In doing so, we reveal: an acceleration of clean energy supply across Europe; a relative lack of demand-side action; complications for fossil fuel phase out; negative knock-on effects for sustainable transitions in the Global South; significant implications for energy equity within and beyond Europe; and a relative return of the state as an energy actor. Reframing energy as a geopolitical security concern has, in this acute crisis, tended to obfuscate and/or downplay other energy policy goals, raising a number of difficult questions for policymakers seeking to pursue lasting sustainable and equitable transitions.

15:10 Research professor Paula Kivimaa, Finnish Environment Institute:

“Interplay between energy transition and security and defence policies pre and post 2022”

Drawing from security, geopolitics and sustainability transition studies, this presentation briefly introduces selected insights from a forthcoming book that uncovers how zero-carbon energy transitions connect to security and defence policy in four Northern European Countries. It presents an analysis policy coherence and integration between energy, security and defence policies, before and after 2022, and analyzes the impacts of such policy interplay on the energy transition. The security aspects discussed range from national defence and geopolitics related to Russia via questions of energy security to positive security and just transitions.

15:30 Questions and discussion

Dr. Phil Johnstone is a Senior Research Fellow at the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU), University of Sussex, UK. He is part of the Deep Transitions Lab project which works with financial investors in building approaches for system change to sustainability. Phil has worked on a number of topics over the years spanning energy transitions, phase out and discontinuation, industrial policy, disruptive innovation, theories of the state, the role of shocks including warfare and militaries in sociotechnical change, and nuclear policy.



Dr. Caroline Kuzemko is Reader in International Political Economy at the University of Warwick. Her work explores the various roles of politics, and policy, in enabling, constraining, and shaping sustainable energy transformations at international, national, and local scales. Her publications include books on The Global Energy Challenge: Environment, Development and Security, and The Energy Security-Climate Nexus: Institutional Change in the UK and Beyond. She previously worked at UBS in Latin American equities.



Dr. Paula Kivimaa is Research Professor in Climate and Society in the Finnish Environment Institute and Associate at SPRU, University of Sussex. During 2019-2024, she has led the Research Council Finland funded Academy Fellowship project on the interconnections between energy transitions, energy policy and security and defence policies. She has extensive experience in research on public policy and sustainability transitions, and is frequently involved in working groups aiming for policy advice.



The event is open and free of charge; however, registration is mandatory. Maximum capacity of the event is 50 participants in person. Seats will be reserved on first-come-first-served basis. Internal and external events organised by Syke follow the principles of a safer space. Our aim is to make events as safe and equal as possible for all participants. The principles help us ensure that everyone can participate in our events without fear of discrimination or sexual, physical, or verbal harassment. If you experience or observe inappropriate behaviour at an event, please raise the issue and intervene where possible.