

# Swiss Geoscience Meeting 2025 Human Geography Program

The Swiss Association for Geography (ASG) invites you to join the Swiss Geoscience Meeting on the 5th and 6th December in Bern. In the following document, you will find the abstracts for the ASG workshop and the Geographica Helvetica keynote lecture, and the six human geography symposia. Please submit abstracts (max. 300 words) for the symposia directly to the symposium organisers and via the [conference website](#).

The submission deadline is **29 August 2025**.

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## **ASG-Workshop on Collective Action for Better Science**

*Friday, 5.12., 11:00 to 12:30, organized by Nora Komposch and Carolin Schurr*

Many academics, including Swiss geoscientists, move from one temporary position to the next. In times of budget cuts to education and research funding, the prospect of a stable job is becoming increasingly difficult for many to envisage. How can we address these challenges as a scientific community? How can professors, postdoctoral researchers, PhD students and undergraduates collaborate — acknowledging our intersectional identities and privileges — to foster stable employment and a healthy academic culture for all?

In this workshop, we will facilitate a discussion about the role that unions can play in improving working conditions at Swiss universities and consider what we can learn from union struggles in other contexts. Representatives of the VPOD union and the actionuni intermediate staff organisation will open the discussion with contributions, followed by short commentaries from geographers Karin Schwiter, Mosè Cometta and Zali Fung, who have been involved in critical discussions about the future of academic work in Swiss geoscience. The workshop will then open the floor to all participants, who will engage in small-group discussions on organizing within and beyond universities.

*This workshop is part of the Swiss Geographical Association's (ASG) broader aim to strengthen support for mid-level faculty in Swiss geography. The organizers are available for any further questions or suggestions. <https://swissgeography.ch/en/>*

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## **Geographica Helvetica Keynote Lecture with Maddalena Gretel Cammelli**

*Saturday, 6.12, 11:00 to 12:15, organized by Hanna Hilbrandt and Jevgeniy Bluwstein*

In 2025, we live in a world where fascism is an increasingly common term, used by political parties and electoral candidates in different geographical areas and in both political and common sense. What does this evidence tell us about the very meaning of this concept? If 1945 was not really the year that marked the end of fascism in history, what can a reinterpretation of history and current events tell us about these meanings and their spread? Is there something we can define as fascism or multiple fascisms manifest in different social forms? Or can a capitalist society with a desire for progress, technological and economic growth even exist without its own fascism?

In this lecture, I will attempt to contribute to these questions, drawing on long-term ethnographic research ranging from third-millennium fascist activists in Italy, state-level racism and immigration control, to the ERC F-WORD project, which studies the spread and manifestations of fascist performances and symbols in contemporary Europe.

## Symposia

### **25. Human Geographies: Collective governance and maintenance of urban resources**

Deniz Ay, Leandra Choffat, Samuel Agyekum, Adrien Guisan, Pambana Basset, Jean-David Gerber (contact person: deniz.ay@unibe.ch)

Urban as a condition and as a process sits at the core of resource consumption that challenges the planetary boundaries as well as social capacities for survival in cities. Social movements at various scales mobilize to reclaim access to basic urban resources including green space, affordable and quality housing, and sustainable access to food. Therefore, collective governance and maintenance of basic urban resources constitute a key form of day-to-day urban struggles, especially for communities disadvantaged in access to market-based or state-based provisions.

This symposium aims to bring together researchers working on collectively organized bottom-up initiatives that develop capacities to reclaim and maintain access to basic urban resources including but not limited to housing, urban green space, food, and care. We welcome research from various geographical areas to capture the institutional and political windows of opportunities that communities use to build and maintain collective capacities to resist and transform exclusionary provision mechanisms mediated by market exchanges or public sector. A key concern we put forward is to adopt a critical lens on these collective capacities as well as the emancipatory potential of these initiatives such as social movements, urban commons, or support groups, especially regarding embedded power imbalances within.

We welcome research raising crosscutting questions including, but not limited to the following:

- How are collective initiatives (re)defining access to essential urban resources such as housing, green spaces, and sustainable food provision in mutually supportive social-ecological systems for all urban inhabitants?
- How collective governance of basic resources is negotiated with the interests of capital and policy regulations in saturated urban spaces?
- Which power asymmetries and hierarchies are potentially reproduced within such initiatives in their provisioning of essential urban resources?

## **26. Human Geographies: Feminist Political Geographies and Socially Engaged Research**

Christiane Meyer-Habighorst, Devran Koray Öcal, Karine Duplan, Morgane Rudaz, Rosa Philipp, Micaela Lois (contact person: devran.ocal@unibe.ch)

### *ASG Feminist Geographies Thematic Group*

This symposium explores feminist political geographies as a space for socially engaged research, emphasizing how feminist and queer perspectives reshape understandings of power, place, and everyday life. The event will highlight research on domestic care work, labor precarity, migration, feminist and queer activisms, and the occupation and (re)appropriation of public space. It also considers the role of bodies, emotions, and materiality in shaping political geographies. A key focus of the symposium is on activism and collaboration, examining how research can both engage with and be shaped by feminist and queer movements, community struggles, and creative forms of resistance. Through intersectional and transdisciplinary discussions, the symposium seeks to rethink knowledge production as a collective and politically engaged practice, fostering dialogue between scholars, activists, and community organizers.

The symposium will be centered around the following questions:

- How can feminist political geographies inform and transform socially engaged research?
- What methodological innovations emerge from feminist and queer approaches to studying space and power?
- How do feminist geographies shape our understanding of activism, care labor, migration, and urban life?
- What are the ethical and political responsibilities of researchers working with activist groups and communities?
- How can academic research better support feminist and queer struggles for justice and equity?

The symposium will consist of the following sessions:

1. Feminist Political Geographies: Socially Engaged Research  
(Organized by: Karine Duplan, Micaela Lois, Devran Koray Öcal and Rosa Philipp)
2. Whose Space Is It Anyway? Perspectives from Marginalized Communities on Occupation and (Re)appropriation of Public Space  
(Organized by: Cosima Cloquet and Morgane Rudaz)
3. Making the Private Political: Feminist Geographies of Domestic Care Work  
(Organized by: Christiane Meyer-Habighorst and Christina Mittmasser)

## **27. Human Geographies: Housing Dynamics across Diverse Territorial Contexts in Switzerland and Beyond**

Hannah Widmer, Deniz Ay, Johannes Herburger (contact person: widmer@arch.ethz.ch)

The current policy debates on the housing crisis as well as academic literature's focus on global metropolises overlooks regional/local specificities. Hence housing issues in diverse territorial contexts often pass unnoticed. With this symposium we aim to explore the multifaceted but interrelated characteristics of housing challenges across various territorial settings in Switzerland, with comparative insights from regions beyond its borders.

Going beyond core cities, similar issues, driven by the commodification and financialisation of housing (Aalbers 2017), manifest themselves in different forms such as in Alpine regions (Gerber and Bandi Tanner 2018), border regions, large agglomerations, and small and medium-sized towns and cities both within and outside agglomerations (Felder et al. 2024). By examining these diverse contexts, we seek to come to a more nuanced understanding of patterns and divergences in housing dynamics, policy and planning implications.

We welcome contributions addressing housing issues in any type of territorial context. Cross-cutting questions of interest include, but are not limited to:

- How do public, private and community actors shape housing outcomes in these territories?
- What are policy responses to address housing issues?
- Which territorial specificities of housing markets exist?
- How do demographic changes including but not limited to population growth, shrinkage, and ageing play into the planning, provision and regulation of housing.

## 28. Human Geographies: Thinking through incompleteness

Nitin Bathla, Jon Schubert, Sabrina Stallone (contact person: [nitin.bathla@geo.uzh.ch](mailto:nitin.bathla@geo.uzh.ch))

Incomplete projects and artifacts abound, from unfinished buildings and infrastructures, creative, or academic projects in development limbo, to technological access impeded by sanctions. Such incompleteness is often depicted as an obstacle to overcome, and analytically approached as manifesting capitalist debris or collapsed futures. Going against the grain of these depictions, this session seeks to explore how incompleteness harbours political and analytical potential, not least to overcome Western-centric notions of failure and dysfunction. Embracing incompleteness as a method directs our attention to potentiality and the productive nature of gaps, cracks, and ragged edges, vacant lots that are not yet fully overdetermined but leave space for speculating on yet-to-be-built futures. Thinking through incompleteness as method, we are interested in shedding light on how things, relations and narratives are “held together” even in scenes of material interruption and uncertainty.

Specifically, we invite papers that seek to understand material incompleteness along the lines of *speculation*, *futurity*, and the *otherwise*. Speculation points to capitalism’s ‘spatial fix’ and the need to enclose ever-receding ‘frontiers’: How does incompleteness open to futures beyond the techno-managerial imaginaries that initiate speculation? Our second keyword gestures towards the tyranny of completion, the increasingly authoritarian domination of the future through planning that entails the aim to dominate bodies and lives. Finally, the *otherwise* directs our attention to the kinds of ‘creation’ incompleteness requires: the many hands that dig in the soil, scavenge copper cables, connect ‘illegally’ to power grids and tinker with molecules and materials to work with and around incomplete things.

## 29. Human Geographies: Border politics and economies

Carolin Schurr, Juliet Fall, Amanda Schmid-Scott (contact person: carolin.schurr@unibe.ch)

Until the turn of the millennium, the dismantling of national borders was seen as an expression of a globalised, modern and cosmopolitan worldview. In recent years, however, border politics has undergone a rapid transformation: an unprecedented populist right-wing backlash has curtailed the right to free movement, and borders have become increasingly fortified and militarised in different national contexts. Focusing on the border as a contested discursive, material and embodied space, this session aims to discuss the performative processes of de- and re-bordering. In the sense of van Houtum's concept of "b/ordering", it seeks to understand how borders produce insiders and outsiders who use difference "to constitute different spatial practices" (Burridge et al., 2017, page 241). It invites papers on both the formal politics of borders, which emerge from international negotiations, treaties, diplomatic spaces, state bureaucracies and violent border disputes, and the everyday politics of borders (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Ehrkamp, 2017; Hyndman, 2012; Sundberg, 2017), which focus on how the everyday practices of people living, working and crossing the border (re)produce and contest the border. In order to capture the current politics and economies of de/rebordering, we invite papers that engage with the border from different (sub)disciplinary perspectives (e.g. economic, political, social, cultural, urban, feminist, black, indigenous geographies, political ecology, border studies, anthropology of borders, etc.) and focus on the following topics (including but not limited to):

- Border infrastructures, materiality of the border, technologization of borders, smart borders
- Bodies that guard, surveil, maintain, and govern the border
- Border im/mobilities including transnational work, migration, asylum, detention, carcerality
- Borders and nationalism, racism, colonialism
- Borderlands as economic zones
- Political ecologies of borders
- State violence and borders
- Borderlands as utopias and dystopias
- Theoretisation of borders, borderscapes, border regimes, borderlands etc.
- Methodological contributions to study processes of bordering, de- and rebordering

The symposium will consist of the following sessions:

1. Author meets critiques book review forum of Juliet Fall's comic book "*Along the Line: Writing with comics and graphic narrative in Geography*" (EPFL Press 2025) (*In French: "Bornées: une histoire illustrée de la frontière"*)
2. Political geographies of borders/ Intimate borders
3. Economies of borders

### **31. Climate Change Education and Communication**

Moritz Gubler, Christina Colberg, Johanna Paschen, Petra Bättig-Frey, Andreas Linsbauer, Matthias Probst (contact person: johanna.paschen@unibe.ch)

Despite high levels of public awareness about anthropogenic climate change and increasing pressure on the political sphere, climate action among large parts of the general public still remains relatively low. So, what are the individual and societal preconditions, factors, and mechanisms that facilitate or prevent action on climate change among different segments of the population? And what are the potentials and limitations for climate change education and communication efforts? Here, various disciplines within the educational, psychological, social and climate sciences, as well as humanities can provide the theoretical and practical instruments to understand public engagement with climate change.

This session aims to provide multiple perspectives into the challenges and opportunities of climate change communication and education. Inviting contributions from a broad range of disciplines (e.g., education, psychology, communication, public understanding of science, humanities, social and natural sciences, arts, artistic research), this session focuses on the perception, processing, communication, application, learning, and education of climate information and knowledge. Talks or posters may relate to all approaches (e.g., theoretical and practical, quantitative and qualitative), scales (e.g., local, national, global), and age levels (e.g., children, adolescents, adults). We encourage contributions from young scientists (Master- or PhD-projects), while interdisciplinary projects are especially welcomed too.