



## **Uncertain times, unsettled lives? Complex risks and uncertainties in times of crises**

*With a special stream on rural risks in times of regional polarization, climate change and energy transition.*

26 & 27 October 2023

University of Southern Denmark Esbjerg, Denmark

We seem to live in times of never-ending crises – from the Covid-19 pandemic and climate crisis to the war in Ukraine, an energy crisis, and a broader economic crisis looming at the horizon. These developments have tremendous implications for European citizens, unsettling their everyday lives and futures. The insights offered by sociological approaches to risk, such as the risk society thesis, have for a long time suggested that late modern societies are characterized by the emergence of new dangers, uncertainties and risks and attempts to find new societal ways to manage them. New forms of risk are becoming intertwined with everyday lives of citizens, for instance in the form of pandemic policies, more frequent occurrence of heat waves, droughts, and floods due to climate change, or of energy shortages and rising energy prices and inflation due to war. For our midterm conference we welcome contributions on risk and uncertainty across these societal spheres and beyond, and how they influence the lives of citizens, or how they are communicated and dealt with at multiple societal levels.

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The conference includes a special stream focusing specifically on the role and relevance of the societal management of risk and uncertainty in rural areas, where, for example, climate change consequences are particularly noticeable (e.g., for farming and forestry). The energy transition, necessitated by climate change and accelerated by the war in Ukraine, is also characterized by a strong rural-urban divide: Whereas rural areas are usually the sites of sustainable energy production (e.g., wind farms, solar panel parks) and thus more strongly affected by its risks, sustainable energy consumption systems are mainly planned for urban areas. Thus, the management and planned mitigation of climate risks through energy transitions appear to reinforce rural-urban divides. Other rural risks are more directly related to the emergence of a stronger polarization between rural and urban populations in many societies, which has led to rural populations that are older, less educated, less affluent, and experiencing chronic illness at higher rates and who are thus “at risk” in several ways. There are also difficulties in accessing health, social and care services in rural areas due to centralized infrastructure and longer distances.

The ESA RN22 and ISA TG04 Midterm Conference 2023 invites contributions using sociological and interdisciplinary perspectives to explore risks and uncertainty in rural areas and across a broad range of empirical domains. These include but are not limited to familiarity and trust, health and well-being, risk governance and security, pandemic risk and resilience, climate change and energy transition, technology, and migration. There will also be an open stream.

Abstracts (max 300 words), including title, author’s name and affiliation, a maximum of five keywords, should be sent to the [soru2023@sociologi.dk](mailto:soru2023@sociologi.dk) by 30th April 2023. Notification of acceptance will take place no later than 30th June 2023.

There are possibilities for PhD students to have some of their conference cost covered. Please, state your eventual interest in such a possibility in your abstract submission letter.