Special Issue Proposal for the Swiss Journal of Sociology

"Organizations and Society in Switzerland: Revisiting the Swiss Organizational Landscape"

Guest Editors

- Roman Gibel, University of Zurich (lead)
- Nadine Arnold, University of Lucerne
- Mathilde Bourrier, University of Geneve
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Over the past two decades, organizational sociology has experienced a renewed intellectual dynamism. While earlier debates diagnosed a fragmentation of the field, a weakening of its connections to broader societal debates, and a declining ability to critically engage with contemporary forms of organizing (Grothe-Hammer & Jungmann 2023), recent scholarship has reasserted the centrality of organizations for understanding social, political, and economic transformations.

As organizations increasingly mediate economic production, governance, technological innovation, sustainability transitions, and collective action, they have become indispensable sites for analyzing societal change (Arnold et al., 2022; Bergeron & Castel, 2024; Borraz, 2022; Bourrier, 2024). Rather than disappearing through decentralization, digitalization, or network-based governance, organizations appear to have multiplied and expanded their societal reach, contributing to societies characterized by growing organizational saturation and complexity (Bergeron & Castel, 2024).

Emerging scholarship already demonstrates the analytical potential of studying organizations from and within the Swiss context. Research on international organizations and multilateralism has shown how organizational sociology can enrich the understanding of global governance processes and institutional ecosystems (Kimber, 2025). Methodological innovations developed by Swiss-based scholars have further contributed to new ways of studying organizations and multilateral negotiations (Badache, Kimber & Maertens, 2023). Other work has examined organizational responses to institutional complexity, authoritarian pressures, risk governance, flexible production systems, and sustainability challenges (Gibel et al., 2024; Jarzabkowski et al., 2023; Nyfeler, 2024).

This special issue builds on these developments by focusing specifically on the organizational landscape in Switzerland. Switzerland constitutes a particularly rich and underexplored empirical terrain for organizational sociology. The country hosts a remarkable diversity of globally influential organizations, including international organizations and diplomatic institutions concentrated in Geneva, multinational corporations such as Nestlé, Novartis, Roche, and Sandoz, international sport federations, globally significant banking and insurance actors such as Swiss Re, commodity trading firms, philanthropic foundations, NGOs, and highly specialized SMEs. At the same time, Switzerland's federalist political system, corporatist traditions, multilingualism, and deep integration into transnational governance structures generate organizational configurations and institutional arrangements that deserve closer sociological attention.

The special issue aims to deepen sociological understanding of how organizations shape, mediate, and respond to major societal transformations in Switzerland and beyond. We are particularly interested in contributions that investigate how (Swiss-based) organizations engage with contemporary challenges such as geopolitical instability, sustainability transitions, technological change, digitalization, demographic shifts, transformations of work, and new forms of governance and coordination. We also welcome contributions that critically examine organizational power, legitimacy, inequality, access, and forms of collective action.

The issue invites both empirical and conceptual contributions from across the broad field of organizational sociology. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Organizations and societal change in Switzerland

- Swiss-based international organizations and multilateral governance
- Swiss financial institutions, capitalism, and economic coordination
- NGOs, philanthropy, and civil society organizations in Switzerland
- Comparative perspectives on Swiss organizations and institutions (e.g. cultures, creativity, innovation)
- Swiss peculiarities with SMEs, industrial clusters, and regional economies

For the Swiss Journal of Sociology in particular, this topic is especially relevant because it directly engages with the journal's role as a platform for theoretically informed and empirically grounded analyses of Swiss society. By bringing together contributions from different sociological traditions and methodological approaches, the special issue aims to foster dialogue across linguistic regions, institutions, and disciplinary boundaries while positioning Swiss organizational sociology more visibly within international debates.

Submission Guidelines

Authors are invited to submit extended abstracts of approximately 1,000 words outlining the paper's research question, theoretical framing, methodology, and expected contribution. Selected authors will subsequently be invited to submit full manuscripts.

Timeline

- Extended abstract submission: October 20th, 2026
- Invitation for full papers: October 30th, 2026
- Full paper submission: March 15th, 2027
- Publication of the special issue: July 1st, 2028

Submissions and inquiries should be sent to: organizations@sgs-sss.ch

We particularly encourage submissions from early-career researchers and welcome contributions from all linguistic regions of Switzerland as well as international scholars working on Swiss organizations and institutions.

References

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