# Polycrisis in the Anthropocene – *Global Sustainability* Webinar

**Wednesday May 7th 2025**
**3:30-4:30 pm BST (10:30-11:30 am EST)**

Join us for an interactive webinar presenting the first batch of articles from the *Global Sustainability* special issue "Polycrisis in the Anthropocene." The growing popularity of the term polycrisis reflects the widespread recognition that the world's problems are densely interconnected in ways that require new thinking and action. Yet the theorization, empirical application, and practical implications of a polycrisis approach remain nascent and contested. This webinar will explore several efforts to improve our understanding and response to polycrisis.

Key topics include:

- Systemic risk governance
- Capitalism as a deep driver of global polycrisis
- Obstacles to sustainable energy transition
- Decision-making in conditions of deep uncertainty
- Historical examples of polycrises and their lessons

## Presenters:

1. **Pia-Johanna Schweizer** leads the "Systemic Risks" research group at Research Institute for Sustainability (RIFS) Potsdam where she analyzes complex and cascading risks at the intersection of science, economics, and civil society. Her work on risk governance proposes new strategies for improved decision-making in a complex, uncertain, and ambiguous global risk landscape.

   Dr. Schweizer will present her paper (co-authored with Sirkku Juhola) "Navigating Systemic Risks: Governance of and for Systemic Risks."

2. **Michael J. Albert** is Lecturer in Global Environmental Politics at the University of Edinburgh. His work takes a trans-disciplinary approach to the global politics of climate, energy, and food system transformations applying Marxist and Neo-Gramscian perspectives. His book, Navigating the Polycrisis, examines possible futures of the world-system amidst multiple interacting global crises.

   Dr. Albert will present his paper "Capitalism, Complexity, and Polycrisis: Towards Neo-Gramscian Polycrisis Analysis."

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3. **Ajay Gambhir** is Director of Systemic Risk Assessment at the Accelerator for Systemic Risk Assessment (ASRA). His work focuses on climate change, energy transition, and their interplay with wider societal risks. He was an architect of the 2008 UK Climate Change Act and more recently spent four years on the UK Government's Just Transition Taskforce.

   Dr. Gambhir will present his paper (co-authored with Ashwin Seshadri and Ramit Debnath) "Navigating systemic risks in low-carbon energy transitions in an era of global polycrisis."

4. **Alexandre Giguère** is Assistant Professor of Chemistry at Royal Military College Saint-Jean, Canada. His research applies machine learning to molecular electronic device discovery. He also aims to merge deep learning with decision-making under deep uncertainty to better address the security impacts of climate change.

   Dr. Giguère will present his paper (co-authored with Bruno Charbonneau) "The Polycrisis and the Uncertainty Possibility Space."

5. **Rachel Ainsworth** is a historical researcher and social scientist with expertise in politics, law, social justice, and human rights. Her current research investigates the intersecting crises that contributed to political revolutions past and present. She is a researcher with Seshat: Global History Databank and is the Research Director of the Societal Dynamics (So-Dy) policy lab.

   Dr. Ainsworth will present her paper (co-authored with Daniel Hoyer) "Revolution in an age of polycrisis."

## Discussant:

**Johan Rockström** is Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) and Professor in Earth System Science at the University of Potsdam. He has led the development of the Planetary Boundaries framework and the study of tipping points in the Earth system, as well as numerous international climate change initiatives. He is an internationally renowned expert on global sustainability, Earth system resilience, and the future of the Anthropocene.

## Format:

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| 5 minutes (3:30) | Introduction by Michael Lawrence or Ortwin Renn |
| 25 minutes (3:35) | Five presentations. Each speaker has 5 minutes to summarize their paper and its contribution to the field of polycrisis research and practice. |
| 10 minutes (4:00) | Response by Johan Rockström |
| 20 minutes (4:10) | Questions from the audience |

**Register here**

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