



CALL FOR PAPERS (deadline 5 October 2011)

**WORKSHOP “BEYOND UTOPIA: CRISIS, VALUES AND THE
SOCIALITIES OF NATURE”
SANTA BARBARA, USA, 1-3 MARCH 2012**

**University of California Santa Barbara
Consortium RISC
University of Luxembourg**

The world is experiencing concurrent environmental and socio-economic crises that put dominant models of management and governance into question. A global economy organized around principles of market freedom and individual benefit drives accumulation by dismantling commons and public goods. The scale and complexity of the systems that support human life on the planet are growing and have already surpassed sustainable limits. In many areas of the world, surface and subsoil water resources are drastically overtaxed and the ecosystems which they support are on the verge of collapse. The destruction of our habitats is causing a massive wave of extinctions. Fishing grounds are depleted, some destroyed, and ocean acidification threatens to negatively affect many marine organisms. Overall fossil fuel dependence and carbon emissions continue to intensify, but even if they were to plateau at today's levels, planetary warming would continue to increase over the next century. Measures by governments and powerful transnational actors to address complex socio-environmental questions are often weak, contradictory and ineffective, and do not take into account the real impact of power relations within the economy and society. Clearly, the governance of nature is too important to be left to the market and the politicians, and should be revisited from a broader socio-cultural perspective.

This workshop explores alternative forms of human-environment interaction in specific regional spaces in an effort to rethink the foundations of the politics of nature, and gain some clarity about the possibilities of sustainable development in a time of profound ecological and socio-economic crises. The organizers have three goals in mind for this workshop. First, we wish to critically assess dominant political, economic and socio-cultural models in order to understand the ways in which they have caused, enabled or hindered environmental crises. Second, we want to identify alternate traditions and visions of environmental stewardship and citizenship, in an effort to chronicle the diversity of creative and sustainable environmental values, worldviews and social practices that exist in various parts of the world. Third, we choose to discuss the role of alternative cultures of nature, how they have been marginalized as impractical, naïve and utopian but also how this utopia has concretely contributed to sustainable nature-culture relations across the globe.



Faced with the urgent task of creating an environmentally, economically and socially just and sustainable society, communities and practices considered by many in power as utopian present themselves as laboratories of innovation in sustainable development.

The workshop will include a field trip in Santa Barbara to explore forms of sustainable environmental stewardship that work in practice.

The workshop will take place at the University of California Santa Barbara (USA) on March 1-3, 2012. This call is open to all scientists willing to discuss and exchange ideas about the socio-cultural dimensions of the environmental problematic hitherto neglected when compared with economic and political dimensions. The best contributions will be considered for publication in an edited journal volume or book.

Organizers

The workshop is organized by Casey Walsh (University of California Santa Barbara, local organizer) and Constanza Parra (University of Luxembourg). It is part of the ongoing activities of the Working group "Management of strategic resources, environment and society" of the Consortium for Comparative Research on Regional Integration and Social Cohesion (RISC) (www.risc.lu).

Scientific committee

Constance Carr, Laboratoire de Géographie et Aménagement du Territoire, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg.

Gert de Roo, Department of Planning, University of Groningen, The Netherlands.

James Greenberg, Anthropology Department, University of Arizona, USA.

Wendy Jepson, Geography Department, Texas A&M University, USA.

Carmen Maganda, Laboratoire de Sciences Politiques, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg.

Katherine Meehan, Department of Geography, University of Oregon, USA.

Abid Mehmood, Sustainable Places Research Institute, Cardiff University, UK.

Frank Moulaert, ASRO, Faculty of Engineering, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium.

Teresa Shewry, English Department, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA.

Manuel Tironi Rodó, Sociology Institute, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile.

Abstracts

A 400 word abstract should be sent to Constanza Parra (constanzaparra@yahoo.com)

Deadline: 5 October 2011. The abstract should explain the topic of the paper, the questions addressed and the methods that has been used in doing the research – including the theoretical perspective. It should mention the authors' names, affiliations, and title of the paper.

Important issues to keep in mind

- The workshop will take place at the University of California Santa Barbara (USA) on March 1-3, 2012. It will be in English.
- The workshop is free of charge for participants.
- Accommodation and meals will be covered by the organization. In the case of co-authoring we will only provide free participation, accommodation and subsistence for one of the authors.

	WORKSHOP ORGANIZATION PLANNING
22 July 2011	Call for papers
5 October 2011	Deadline for abstract submission
25 October 2011	Response to participants
1 February 2012	Full paper due
1-3 March 2012	Workshop
15 May 2012	Revised papers from authors
25 May 2012	Start of the publication process (we expect to produce an edited book, or an edited journal volume).

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