

Ecological Crises & Organization (ECO)

Call for Ideas, Papers and Community Building

Deadline extended: 4 April 2024

The Ecological Crises & Organization (ECO) network is inviting contributions to address the multiple, interconnected ecological crises affecting the World. The online event will take place across different time zones on 13-14 May 2024. The aim of the event is to bring together scholars interested in discussing ideas, developing papers and building a community for addressing the degradation of the planet and developing alternative ways to organize sustainably. The workshop is part of a series of activities in light of the upcoming *Organization Journal Conference*, taking place in December 2024. The online workshop is open to participants at any stage of their career – doctoral students and junior and senior faculty – interested in working on *ecological crises & organizations*. Below, we provide further details about the online workshop as well as the ECO network that is organizing the event.

Workshop

Multiple and interconnected ecological crises are experienced across the planet. Symptoms of these crises include wildfires, droughts, floods, melting poles and glaciers, species extinctions, plastics pollution, deforestation, climate change, soil degradation, air pollution, to mention just a few. Modern organizations — from profit-maximizing businesses to state-owned enterprises — are intricately linked to the ecological crises on this planet. Underlying this is a dominant economic system, with slight variations, that is characterized by private ownership of the means of production, market-based allocation of resources, and the pursuit of profit. Capitalist organizing has been marked by extractivism, exploitation, colonialism, imperialism, overconsumption, wastefulness and injustice, which has had grave impacts on Planet Earth.

This is not a new realization. For many decades now, environmental consciousness has grown throughout society. It is difficult to look away when rivers become toxic, forests are cut down, mountain tops are removed for resource extraction, and air in cities becomes unbreathable. The foolish focus on short-term profits and economic growth has hence given way to renewed discourses and approaches such as ‘green growth’ and ‘stakeholder capitalism’. Organizations, both small and large, are now promoting their agendas for net-zero, carbon neutrality, biodiversity net-gain, nature-based solutions, carbon capture, circular economy, and all the other mantras that have recently emerged to address corporations’ social and environmental responsibilities. However, there are new and old dangers around these recent developments. For example, green projects in the Global North can be based on purchases of carbon or biodiversity offsets that allow polluting organizations to continue with business-as-usual. Further, these types of schemes may have consequences for local communities, foremost in the Global South, negatively impacting land rights and transforming existing human–non-human relationships. Thus, there are historical and continuing imbalances of responsibilities and impacts of these crises.

The focus of this workshop is the intersection of ecological crises and organizations. We see this workshop as a space to create formal and informal conversations on multiple topics such as:

- The political and critical aspects of sustainability and climate change
- Material and extractive dimensions of climate/green/sustainability work
- Environmental and climate justice
- Degrowth / post-growth and alternative models of production and consumption
- Transformative alternatives (e.g., repairing and revitalising ecosystems and watersheds)
- Human–non-human relationships
- Social movements and activism in the context of environmental crises
- Alternative forms of organizing
- New social and ecological imaginaries
- Embodied and gendered violence experienced by environmental defenders and protesters

- Pedagogical approaches related to ecological crises and organizations

Submissions can be theoretical, empirical, or activist-oriented. We are open to multiple methodologies (historical accounts, qualitative approaches, experiments, quantitative methods) and theoretical approaches that help us better understand, approach and contribute to solving environmental crises.

The workshop will be held on 13-14 May 2024 and is part of a series of activities in light of the upcoming *Organization Journal* Conference, taking place in December 2024. To facilitate access at a global scale, the event will take place online. The precise format will be determined by the submissions, but we will accommodate different time zones. The workshop will start with a brief introduction to the background and aims of the event by the organizers and introductions of mentors and participants. The papers will be presented in small sub-groups and the workshop will offer informal spaces for interactive community building.

To include scholars from the non-English speaking world, depending on the submissions, we will create a buddy system organised by topic and language (for example climate imaginaries in Spanish). The discussions would be held in that language (fostering language inclusivity) and links would be created among researchers that cross geographical and English barriers. We will encourage scholars who speak other languages apart from English, to participate in these non-English buddy groups.

Deadline and submission details: We accept all kinds of work in progress dealing with the above-mentioned topics – ideas, papers and projects – and welcome academic and non-academic submissions. This can include traditional short/full papers, but also other formats (e.g., panels, poetry, photography, fiction, teaching cases, etc.). **To be considered for the workshop, please submit abstracts and other activity proposals (up to 1,500 words) to the following email: eco.crisis.and.organization@gmail.com by ~~24 March 2024~~ 4 April 2024 (deadline extended).** Please include full details of authors—name, affiliation, email address—and a synopsis of the paper, idea or project you would like to discuss.

About the ECO Network

A number of us created a group to work on these ecological crises. The network is a space of both formal and informal conversations about the ecological crises, mainly from an organisational perspective, broadly from a social science perspective, and in particular from a critical perspective. We plan to use our expertise as organisational scholars to deepen knowledge about the organisational aspects of the ecological crises, organise for it and ultimately support practice and policy-making in support of much-needed change. We see this group as a way to strengthen the focus on the ecological crises and take responsibility in our research by collaborating with practice and supporting environmental activism. This group will also support pedagogy by developing teaching material that challenges the status quo, creating teaching spaces that care for the planet. To change our own institutions and address the ecological crises, we think there is a need for a strong and inclusive community. The workshop outlined above is our call for you to join us in developing this community.

Founding members of ECO:

Pilar Acosta, Ecole Polytechnique, France.

Steffen Böhm, University of Exeter, UK.

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