



## **Call for Papers**

**New** deadline for submitting a proposal (paper and poster): **September 30, 2024**

Since the 1980s, we have borne witness to a succession of crises caused by a dominant economic system that subjects both humans and nature to the dictates of endless growth. The international imposition and adoption of this economic system has resulted in the creation of new institutions and forms of coordination that have tended toward the liberalization of markets and the globalization of trade, coupled with the erosion of state power, the dismantling of deliberative and democratic spaces, and a growing disparity in the distribution of wealth. This exacerbation of the liberal model has heightened the disconnection of human societies from their ecological environments—a phenomenon that began in earnest in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the rise of industrial production. The growth of neoliberalism has also led to the development of an economy that is increasingly disembodied from society and the adoption of market processes that are released from their social functions and tend toward self-regulation (Polanyi, 1983). Today, anthropogenic processes have led us to an unprecedented environmental turning point and a cluster of interconnected social, economic, ecological and political crises. These crises have produced a type of collective inhibition and individual powerlessness that finds its natural outlet in contemporary forms of populism and authoritarianism.

Despite those forces, the severity of these crises and their consequences have also spurred new social actions and stimulated efforts toward renewed and innovative collective actions (Carrel *et al.*, 2020). More than ever, there is a need to identify the interstices through which social transformations founded on solidarity, emancipation and new ways of relating to the Earth can operate (Chateauraynaud and Debaz, 2017). The tradition of research on social innovations at CRISES is closely aligned with this perspective, with its focus on the trajectory of individuals, communities and organizations at the micro and meso levels, and of social transformations at the macro level. This research tradition provides the ideal starting point to reflect on social innovations as sites for resistance and social transformation during this period of overlapping crises. It also invites us to break down disciplinary silos and address the complexity of contemporary challenges with cross-cutting and intersectoral approaches that can offer a bridge between research and action. Ultimately, this tradition invites us to recognize the plurality of experiences and prioritize answers developed by embedded communities.



This call for papers draws inspiration from various approaches used to address complex issues in different fields, particularly as regards democratic participation, economics, ecology and technology. In the first of these, the work of Fraser (2011) invites us to adopt a democratic understanding of social justice by highlighting the economic, political and cultural conditions that must be met to achieve participatory parity for all communities. The interaction of these dimensions is a necessary precondition to the participation of individuals and groups experiencing injustice, allowing them to develop their own demands. This understanding is consistent with the idea of epistemic justice, which calls for the recognition and valorization of voices that are not individually recognized (Fricker, 2007), alongside voices and practices that are considered as inferior or simply rendered invisible (Fals Borda 1998; Piron *et al.* 2016). This body of work emphasizes the need to abandon a monocultural understanding of time, practices and the criteria of production to instead embrace an ecological model of knowledge (Godrie and Dos Santos, 2017; Juan, 2019). In the field of development studies, Escobar (2012) speaks against the claim that there is a single way of thinking, proposing instead a movement away from universalizing modernity toward an epistemic pluralism that values different ontologies and different cultural worlds. In so doing, his work focuses on relational ontologies—which have been excluded by Western capitalism and modern science—and the pluriverse, a whole set of worlds in varying degrees of contact with one another.

Similarly, Castro-Gómez (2007) pays specific attention to effects of the Western scientific tradition, rooted in objectivity and zero-point hubris, which lead to a detached understanding of the subjects it studies. However, our experiences of the modern world, now deeply transformed by various scientific, economic, industrial and political activities, pushes us to reflect on and work toward a new epistemological configuration. A great deal of academic research continues to prioritize and value objective knowledge as the primary means for experiencing reality (Frega, 2006). It is objectivity that counts, rather than discussion, doubt, reflection, invention and collective imagination, to the detriment of “other ways of relating, knowing, evaluating and interpreting” the world (Stengers, 2017: 134).

For their part, Gibson-Graham invite us to rethink another important field: economics. The authors encourage us to step outside of economic perspectives that focus solely on monetary and market considerations, and to expand our vision to include politics, geography and solidarity in order to, ultimately, recognize and value the full diversity of economic practices. Their research project is therefore focused on apprehending the economy as an ecology and transactions as a form of ethical negotiation allowing us to live together with both human and non-human others (Gibson-Graham and Miller, 2015). Within the field of the social and solidarity economy (SSE)—an important source of social innovations (Bouchard, 2013; Lévesque 2006)—Laville (2019) warns against the risk of over-valuing enterprises as the sole organizational form, reminding us that a broader perspective could help in bringing about a political compromise and significant transformations. He draws our attention to contemporary experiences that serve to enrich this field of study: short circuits, local social currencies, and informal, volunteer and associative components. Others, such as Dardot and Laval (2014), Bollier (2014) and Coriat (2015), have reflected on and sought to revitalize traditional forms of collective action rooted in “the commons” as a “political principle” and specific form of social organization and collective governance that can allow for the emergence of new ways to



contest, and even surpass, capitalism (Dardot and Laval, 2014). The commons call for community autonomy, self-governance and a re-appropriation of the means of subsistence through activities that create social relationships under many different forms, from informal collectives to more institutionalized organizations like cooperatives, associations or social utility trusts (Furukawa Marques et Durand Folco, 2023).

Within the field of ecology, faced as it is with a worsening crisis, the inaction of politicians and powerful industry lobbyists, more and more civil society organizations are creating initiatives to take action locally. A growing chorus of voices are making it clear that technocratic solutions are not sufficient, and researchers are working on points where this crisis intersects with other challenges (Van Neste *et al.*, 2023). For instance, Ferdinand (2019) addresses these issues through the link between environmental degradation and social inequalities, especially racial inequality. To that end, he returns to the period of colonization and highlights the subordination of land in the Americas to the needs and interests of colonizers—a type of land use that enriched a very small number of humans by contaminating the earth for centuries, to the detriment of millions of people and countless other species. He asks us to rethink our relationships to the land through a decolonial ecology developed in relation to practices within the Caribbean. Escobar (2018) proposes the concept of thinking-feeling with the Earth, addressing ecological questions and our relationships with the land as ontological issues. For her part, Bucolo (2023) insists on the tight links between environmental and epistemic justice. She pays specific attention to the production of ecological knowledge by groups and individuals in situations of poverty, noting how environmental problems become even more complex when a sense of urgency limits the involvement of voices from the margins and the participation of groups that need more time to become aware of the issues and take action. She advocates for methods that would allow us to shape and hear alternative narratives about the environment developed by those who directly experience environmental injustice.

Finally, we turn to the field of technology. Although often undervalued or left aside within critical research, it is a crucial part of thinking through contemporary crises. The deployment of technology, with state support, has accelerated interconnections, facilitated the improvement of various services and enabled greater economic performance. However, it is also at the root of many social, economic, political and environmental problems: labour casualization, pollution, disproportionate wealth accumulation, military conflicts, tensions between countries, etc. For example, despite enabling access to a remarkable sum of information and discussions, digital platforms simultaneously contribute toward the disintegration of autonomous public spheres (Habermas, 2022). Operating without any real external oversight and positioning themselves as champions of free speech and freedom of thought, they represent formidable tools of both mass communication and of hateful propaganda, disinformation and the division of public opinion. While their role as communicational tools should allow for a high level of participation in open and sweeping social debates, their reliance on algorithms rooted in the demands of the “attention economy” (Habermas, 2022) serves to transform these networks into echo chambers that fold conversations back in on themselves, all while attacking the legitimacy of traditional sources of information. In so doing, these platforms serve to weaken the institutional foundations of deliberative democracy while simultaneously calling traditional forms of wage relations into question. While not new, ongoing

reflections on how technology can be re-appropriated to serve society are essential. Within South America, the *tecnología social* (social technology, ST) movement has led people to think differently about technology for over thirty years. It proposes a new idea, ST, and a practice that encourages contextualized development (Herrera, 2010) in relationship with collective practices (Dagnino, 2010) that are a part of the solidarity economy movement (Singer and Portella Kruppa, 2004). Within the field of academic research, *tecnología social* has encouraged numerous researchers to question “imposed” forms of development and the hierarchization of “scientific” knowledge over localized historical and Indigenous knowledge (Pozzebon and Fontenelle, 2018).

Drawing inspiration from these currents and perspectives, as they address the problems facing our societies today, we have prepared this call for papers in the interest of reflecting collectively on social innovations as a fertile ground from which to create breaches, identify interstices and grow sites of resistance that could provide new answers to ongoing crises and envision social transformations. More specifically, we invite participants to cover one or more of the following elements—democratic participation, economics, ecology and technology—by locating themselves in one of the following themes:

- The plurality of organizational forms: What new or renewed forms of organization contribute toward social transformations? How do they respond to contemporary social, ecological and economic imperatives? What collective actions, transformative practices, interstices, sites of resistance, subversive initiatives?
- Mechanisms for influencing public policies: How does civil society organize itself to exert influence over public policies? How can we renew collective mobilization practices in a context in which public solidarity is eroding and people no longer believe in the state’s ability to fulfill its responsibilities toward populations in situations of social and economic vulnerability? What mechanisms could contribute toward deeper transformations from the interstices?
- Relationships to the land and living environments: How can we rethink relationships to the land and to non-humans? What mechanisms contribute toward local change? How can meso-level changes influence broader transformations?
- Transformations in the relationship to work: How can technological progress be put in service to the emancipation of workers, rather than the destruction and casualization of employment? What forms of collective action can respond to new realities in the workplace and contribute to their democratization?
- Methodological and epistemological considerations: How can we produce situated knowledge that is coherent with contemporary problems? How can we respect epistemological and ontological pluralism? What arrangements and sites of research and experimentation contribute to a social transformation perspective? How can we mobilize participatory methodologies that value different types of knowledge?



## **Submit a Proposal**

Proposals for papers must be submitted using the [electronic form](#) and must include the following:

- A title (maximum of 180 characters including spaces)
- An abstract in French or English (maximum of 3,000 characters including spaces, excluding bibliography)
- A list of authors, including their affiliation and contact information.

Proposals will be evaluated by a peer review committee.

Students are invited to submit a paper proposal if the research shows initial results. Otherwise, they may submit a proposal for the poster session. Dedicated student activities will also be organized to foster the professionalization of young researchers.

## **Important Dates**

- **New** deadline for submitting a proposal (paper and poster): **September 30, 2024**
- Response from the evaluation committee: **Late October 2024**
- Registration opens: **November 2024**

## **For more information**

### **Centre for Research on Social Innovations (CRISES)**

**Location** : Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Montréal, Québec, Canada

**Languages**: French and English

**Website**: [7th CRISES International Conference](#)

## **Bibliography**

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