

Trees, Governance, and the Making of Urban Natures



11-14
May
2026

Lugano
Villa Saroli



Istituto
di studi urbani
e del
paesaggio

Trees, Governance, and the Making of Urban Natures

International Workshop
organised by

Mosè Cometta

(Università della
Svizzera italiana) and

Miguel Kanai

(University of Sheffield)

www.

arc.usi.ch/isup

Trees constitute an integral component of the urban fabric. As urban environmental history has demonstrated (Horta Duarte, 2009), tracing the evolution of urban green governance offers valuable insights into shifting socio-political arrangements and the emergence of hegemonic values, as well as into the formation of new coalitions that underpin processes of socio-environmental reproduction (Kanai and Cometta, 2025). The management of trees in particular—embedded within the metabolic flows that have long shaped cities (Heynen et al., 2006)—acquires heightened significance in an era marked by climate emergency and accelerating biodiversity loss. Increasingly, trees are positioned as key agents in the pursuit of sustainable urban transformation and peri-urban transitions, contributing not only to environmental resilience but also to livability (Maurer, 2024; Dobbs et al., 2018). Yet historical and contemporary examples alike remind us that policies of greenification across the urban-rural continuum may also conceal processes of displacement and exclusion, reinforcing spatial segregation and deepening existing inequalities (Anguelovski and Connolly, 2024). Tree-centred interventions in the urban realm also present a productive entry point for examining the complex entanglements between cities and the rural operational landscapes upon which they depend (Akiwumi, 2006; Hurducaş, 2018).

These relations are evident not only in pre-industrial contexts—when timber was indispensable to construction, economic expansion, and the material growth of urban areas (Cronon, 1991)—but also today, as forestry economies experience renewed attention and restructuring.



Monday 11 May

09:00-09:30

Institutional welcome

09:30-10:15

Personal Introductions

10:15-10:30

Coffee break

10:30-12:00

Brainstorming session: collective purpose of the book
(proposal draft – sections description)

12:00-13:30

Lunch

13:30-16:00

Urban greening session 1

Mariya Shcheglovitova

Governing Through Ambiguity: Counting Baltimore's Urban Forest

Raphaël Lauret

*Eco-Power and the Labor of Non-Human Life: the Case of Tree
Planting Policies in Tucson, Arizona*

Luca Battisti, Federico Cuomo & Alessandra Manganelli

*Trees as Co-decisional Actors: Governance and Vegetal Agency
in Turin's proG!reg Urban Living Lab*

16:00-16:30

Pause

16:30-17:15

First day reflections

17:15-18:30

Apero

Tuesday 12 May

09:00-09:30

Arrival

09:30-12:00

Urban walking workshop (Parco Ciani)

With Fabio Crivelli, Servizio Verde Pubblico Città di Lugano

12:00-13:30

Lunch

13:30-15:00

Urban greening session 2

Rémi Jenvrin

When trees shape cities: between ordinary nature and territorial emblem. Urban trees as heritage in West African context: the case of Porto-Novo and Osogbo

(Online) Yao Yuting, Linda Westman & Zhang Shizhi

Living with green: Urban nature and environmental justice in Shenzhen

15:00-15:15

Pause

15:15-16:45

Urban greening session 3

Jorgelina Hardoy, Daniel Kozak & Florencia Almansi

Greening Informality: Trees, Knowledge Co-production, and Climate Justice in Urban Upgrading

Veronica Fabio, Miguel Kanai, Guillermo Tella & Alonso Solana

Strategic Planning Tools Applied to Urban Tree Management in Climate Crisis Scenarios

16:30-17:00

Second day reflections

17:00-18:30

Apero

Wednesday 13 May

09:00-09:30

Arrival

09:30-12:00

Trees governance session 1

(Online) Nikolaos Olma

Aftertrees: Tree Felling and Post-Socialist Urban Natures in Tashkent

Nesh Yuan

From forests to architectures

Amber Rose Caine

Contested Care: Governance, Distrust, and the Politics of Tree Felling in Karura Forest, Nairobi

12:00-13:30

Lunch

13:30-16:00

Trees governance session 2

Ellen White

The Perception of Trees as Malevolent Actors in US Transport Policy and Practice

Mosè Cometta

Palms, Power, and Landscape: Tourism, Identity, and Ecological Governance in Ticino

Matthew Fry & Ashley Coles

Digital tools, co-production, and the governance of urban forests

16:00-16:30

Third day reflections

16:30-18:30

Apero

Thursday 14 May

09:00-09:30

Arrival

09:30-12:00

Mixed session 1

Aurora Ruggeri

Urban mental health through environmental justice

Marie Rosenkranz

Grieving Trees

Emilie Guitard

Benevolent or Plotting Trees: Plant Agency and Urban Governance in Ìbàdàn (Nigeria)

12:00-13:30

Lunch

13:30-15:00

Mixed session 2

Sheere Brooks

Examining the intersection between 'planetary urbanisation' and the growing elimination of Trees in the urban and rural hinterlands regions of Jamaica

(Online) Elizabeth Straughan, Jennifer Atchison & Catherine Phillips

Fear and trauma in the urban forest

15:00-15:15

Pause

15:15-17:00

Writing workshop
(individual chapters, group brainstorming and linkages)

17:00-17:30

Closing and plans moving forward

17:30-18:30

Apero

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