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[Patrick Heidkamp](#) (Environment, Geography & Marine Sciences, Southern Connecticut State University)

**Realizing Economic Rights in the Blue Economy: Challenges and Opportunities**

**Abstract:**

The ideas and narratives surrounding the Blue Economy have increased significantly over the past few years. As the discourse has grown, local, regional, and national governments have pushed for policies focused on fostering the Blue Economy. In parallel, investment and funding opportunities in the business sector and in academia, respectively, multiplied substantially. While the Blue Economy discourse can be described as overwhelmingly positive and in favor of Blue Economy focused development initiatives, critics have called attention to important issues such as a deliberate emphasis on economic growth as opposed to environmental sustainability, an often-missing acknowledgement of equity and justice considerations, as well as a general lack of geographical sensitivity. On the premise of these important critiques, this paper explores the status of economic rights in the Blue Economy discourse and argues that to make a meaningful contribution, we must address these criticisms by actively engaging and shaping a just and sustainable Blue Economy. To do so, we must embrace critical pragmatism and emerging transdisciplinary action research frameworks.

**Bio:**

Patrick Heidkamp is a native of Germany, who has lived in the United States since 1993. He is a Professor in the Department of the Environment, Geography and Marine Sciences at Southern Connecticut State University and a visiting lecturer in the School of Natural Sciences and Psychology at Liverpool John Moores University in the UK. He is the co-director of the Connecticut State University System Center for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability Education and an affiliate of the Economic Rights Research Group at the University of Connecticut. He is a broadly trained geographer with research interests in environmental economic geography, just sustainability transitions, the geography of human rights (specifically economic rights), and the history and philosophy of geographic thought.

[www.patrickheidkamp.com/](http://www.patrickheidkamp.com/)