The Political Ecology of Development

Instructor: Giorgos Kallis (ICREA-Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

Date: June 25 - 28
Time: 3.00 pm - 5.30 pm
Room: 24.133 Fred Halliday - Mercè Rodoreda Building 24 (Floor 1)

The course is an examination of the Political Ecology of Development. We will look at the interdisciplinary field of Political Ecology, the study of ecological distribution conflicts and the ways in which power affects access over resources as well as opportunities for human-centred development. Drawing from a range of approaches in Political Ecology—particularly, ecological economics, post-structuralism and neo-Marxism—we will introduce and discuss key concepts and theoretical frameworks that underlie the contemporary critique of development and growth.

Session 1. Introduction to Political Ecology: Ecological Distribution conflicts

This class introduces what Political Ecology is, distinguishing it from other related fields. It explains how political ecologists study ecological distribution conflicts, that is conflicts over the distribution of environmental goods and bads. We focus on core analytical categories, such as social metabolism, languages of valuation, cost-shifting and environmental justice.
Required reading:


Further reading:


Session 2. Construction of nature

Here we focus on post-structuralist approaches to political ecology and approach environmental conflicts as ‘truth wars’ and conflicts over whose knowledge counts.

Required reading:


Further reading:

Foucault, M. Governmentality. From The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality.

Session 3. Accumulation by dispossession and the enclosure of the commons

This class focuses on (neo) Marxist theories of environmental change, and the way conflicts over access to resources are conflicts related to the enclosure of the commons.

**Required reading:**


**Further reading:**


Session 4. Post-development and degrowth

Here we look at how political ecologists have critiqued the development process and discuss a recent discourse on degrowth, which claims that environmental sustainability is not compatible with continuous economic growth. The class will focus also on alternative models that rethink human wellbeing beyond growth-based development.

**Required reading**


Kallis, G. Degrowth, chapters 1 and 4. Newcastle: Agenda Publishing

**Further reading:**

Kallis, G. Degrowth, chapters 2, 3 and 5. Newcastle: Agenda Publishing


