



WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

28.04.2022 (Donnerstag), 17:00 Uhr, HS-C
IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock

Ståle Knudsen (University of Bergen)

How to Account for Patterns, Trends and Shifts in Political Ecology? Mobilizing Critical Realism to Enable Analysis beyond Diffuse Actor-Networks.



Ståle Knudsen's recent work has concentrated on Norwegian corporations' engagement with corporate social responsibility when they operate abroad. Earlier work has been based on long-term

fieldwork in Turkey and has covered issues such as knowledge, technology, science, seafood and consumption, introduced species, state policies, poverty, environmentalism, and common pool resources. Running through all this work is the vexing issue of identities. Planned research will address aquaculture in Norway and Turkey with a focus on financial logics and sustainability as this is negotiated at the interface between corporations, states, international institutions, civil society, and local communities.

kommende Termine

04.05.2022 **Jessica Greenberg**
Culture Goes to Court. Reproducing
"East" and "West" at the European Court
of Human Rights.

11.05.2022 **Grazyna Kubica-Heller**
Intersubjectivity of Siberian Ethnography
of Maria Czaplicka (1916) and Its Recent
Artistic Representation.

This theoretical paper takes issue with how new materialisms (ANT, material semiotics, posthumanism, etc.) have been employed in political ecology and explores the depth ontology of critical realism (Bhaskar) as an alternative to the flat ontologies of these positions.

While political ecology was initially informed by political economy, the field has become much more heterogenous and includes various post-structuralist, socio-constructivist, and new materialist approaches. Most, though not all, of these approaches typically destabilize science, try to break with problematic dichotomies (esp. Nature-Society), distributes agency, and sometimes entertain the idea that multiple realities may exist. Here I focus especially on new materialism and how it has been confronted by Marxist-leaning scholars, who particularly focus on new materialisms' failure to address structures and power. Synthesis between these positions is difficult at a theoretical level but combinations regularly take place in actual research. This contribution aims to elucidate the ontological and epistemological differences between the positions, and specifically argues that new materialism, in Bhaskar's language, may be characterized as 'actualism'.

While critical realism has occasionally been invoked in political ecology to give credibility to the external reality of nature, I will here argue that the full potential of critical realism for political ecology has not been explored. Holding that the world is stratified, with the 'real' not limited to events and interaction, opens the possibility to explore 'unseen' mechanisms and trends. This has implications both for our theories and research practices.
