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Type: Roundtable

Blue Justice: What research agenda for a sustainable and inclusive ocean

Thursday 4 June 2026 09:00 (1h 30m)

This roundtable will explore how International Relations and Politics can, or should, approach emerging global challenges in the ocean and advance blue justice in the context of growing blue economy developments and “blue acceleration” (Jouffray et al, 2020). While International Relations and environmental politics have only recently begun to engage with the ocean space, this neglect largely reflects dominant Western imaginaries, which have historically overlooked the ocean from a social science perspective. In contrast, other regions and cultural traditions have long recognized the ocean as a vital site of social, political, and epistemological significance. An increased interest in the past 15 years has resulted in further research and academic publications on the human geography on the marine environment and on ocean governance and policy. Yet, judging by the limited number of publications on the ocean in the main academic journals dedicated to environmental politics, further work is critically needed to address the interplay between blue development, power asymmetries and access to marine resources, sovereignty claims, global ocean sustainability, and the role and recognition of coastal communities in these processes. In other words, it is crucial to deepen our understanding of how future ocean developments can be just and fair (Germond-Duret et al., 2023) and to shape a “new politics for the ocean” (Armstrong, 2022). The roundtable will explore:

- ☒ how International Relations and Politics can approach emerging global challenges in the ocean
- ☒ how it can provide alternative knowledge on the very concept of ocean justice; not just why it matters and what it means, but who it matters to and what it means for whom
- ☒ barriers to enable different stakeholders, particularly ocean dependent communities to have fair access to the ocean and have their say in research and ocean policy
- ☒ creative approaches to bring ocean-dependent communities’ voices into research and decision-making processes
- ☒ actionable recommendations for scholarly agendas, funding priorities, and policy engagement

In addition to insights from the panellists, the roundtable discussion will incorporate visual material from around the globe (e.g. photographs, short video clips) offering diverse perspectives and grounding the conversation in lived experiences and global contexts.

Track Classification: Environment and Climate Politics Working Group