Blue Degrowth and Environmental Justice: Rethinking the Blue Economy

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Outline

- **Introduction**: Insights into the Blue Growth / Blue Economy discourses and policies
- Why Blue Degrowth?
- Theorizing Blue Degrowth
- Links with Environmental Justice
“Talk of the ocean as a new economic frontier of a new phase of industrialisation of the seas will become widespread in 2016.” (The Economist, 2015 in Barbesgaard, 2018)

- **Seas and the oceans**: a new exciting element in the illusion of economic growth

- ‘Blue Growth’ / ‘Blue Economy’:
  - new **expectations** regarding how the ocean should be used
  - a will for **further exploration** of new markets and the **exploitation** of the oceans, seas, and coasts
  - a perspective of the sea as a **new commodity frontier** for further **capital accumulation and political power** of both state and private actors (Campling 2012; Saquin 2016, Ertör &
Asia and the Pacific's Blue Growth Initiative (2014): “endorsement of regional initiative on sustainable intensification of aquaculture for blue growth – improving fish supply for food and nutrition, increasing livelihood opportunities and contributing to blue growth of economy through more efficient and sustainable use of aquaculture resources”.

By 2025, Australia’s marine industries will contribute around $100 billion each year to our economy, with our oceans and coasts providing a further $25 billion worth of ecosystem services, such as carbon dioxide absorption, nutrient cycling and coastal protection. This marine economy is projected to grow three times faster than Australia’s gross domestic product over the next decade, more than doubling its 2012 contribution of $47.2 billion.

European Commission: “the long term strategy to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole” and the “seas and oceans as drivers for the European economy with great potential for innovation and growth”.

African Union's 'Agenda 2063': Blue Economy strongly on the agenda - included as a key policy framework for the continent's future socio-economic development.

Beyond fish and ships, our oceans provide...

**CLIMATE REGULATION**
- 70% of the earth’s surface
- RecapTURES 50% of the CO2 we breathe
- The oceans produce over 50% of the world’s oxygen
- store 50 times more carbon than our atmosphere.

**THE AIR WE BREATHE**
- Mangroves, seagrass and salt marshes remove CO2 from the atmosphere 10 times more than a tropical rainforest
- and store 3 to 5 times more carbon, thus decreasing the impacts of climate change.

**OCEAN ENERGY**
- The ocean can produce thermal energy from the sun, heat, and mechanical energy from the tides and waves. It is estimated that 3% of the energy in ocean waves could be capable of supplying the entire world’s energy requirements five times over.

**BLUE CARBON**
- Mangroves, seagrass and coral reefs are coastal barriers... saving money and reducing impacts of storm surge, erosion and flooding.
  - Coral reefs reduce 97% of wave energy.
  - Mangroves reduce 66% of wave height.

**OFFSHORE WIND POWER**
- Higher wind speeds are available offshore compared to on land.

**SUSTAINABILITY**
- Fauna are protected by marine reserves.
- The East Asian Seas issue as conduit of 30% of world trade through shipping.

**SHIPBUILDING & SHIP REPAIR**
- 71% of the earth’s surface is WATER
- Five sectors with high potential for sustainable Blue Growth to be further developed.

**TURBINES**
- 90% of the world’s population relies on fish
- 80% of the world’s aquaculture
- 40% of the world’s spice fisheries
- 35 B
- 100 B

**INCOME AND JOBS**
- The ocean economy contributes 3% - 28% of the GDP of five countries in the EAS region.
- Many small products come from the ocean, including ingredients that help fight infections, cancer, arthritis, heart disease, and Alzheimer’s disease.

**TOURISM AND RECREATION**
- Biofuel
- Capture Fisheries
- Aquaculture
- Ecosystem services contributing to livelihoods, and
- Trade/markets/post harvest and social support

**FAO Blue Growth Initiative**
- Enable sustainable ocean governance.
- Convert ocean ecosystems into a source of economic activity.
- Enhance ocean governance for sustainable development.

**14-15 November 2017**
Miracle Grand Convention Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

**BLUE ECONOMY**
- Principles for a Sustainable BLUE ECONOMY
- 10-YEAR STEPS TO SUCCESS
- Decisions - support tools
- Markets & Forecasts
- Industry & government partnerships
- Cross-disciplinary skills
- Research vessels
- Microtechnologies
- Networks & collaborations
Why Blue Degrowth?

- What are the material and political dynamics behind the Blue Growth agenda and why?

- How do different actors push for or resist Blue Growth initiatives?

- How can we use degrowth ideas and the global movement for environmental justice to engage with the politics of the sea?
### Theorizing Blue Degrowth

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**Reactions / Resistance**

- Conflicts
- Cooperatives
- Social movements
Theorizing Blue Degrowth

- Ecological Economics / Social Metabolism
- Critical Political Economy
- Critical Geopolitics
- Political Ecology/Critical Geography
- Technological Fixes / Ecomodernism
- Spatial Fixes
- Spatial Theory
- Colonial Relations
- Socio-environmental conflicts
- Environmental Justice
- Food sovereignty
- Ocean grabbing
- Food sovereignty
- Ocean grabbing
Links with Environmental Justice

- Socio-environmental conflicts and the global movement of small-scale fisher folks:
  - Impacts of the ‘rush to the sea’
  - 91 fisheries and aquaculture conflicts documented in the EJ Atlas (https://ejatlas.org)
  - Small-scale fisher movements: WFFP and WFF
  - Cases of ocean grabbing: industrial fisheries, aquaculture, energy projects, coastal construction, deep sea mining

- Environmental and Fisheries Justice
Limits to Blue Growth

Joint NGO Position Paper

October 2012

ESEC
European Seas Environmental Cooperation

SEAS AT RISK
Coalition Clean Baltic
MYO: ECOFILE
Friends of the Earth Europe

OCEANA
BirdLife International

MEDITERRANIA
MEDASSET

The North Sea Foundation

SEA FIRST
EQUITAE

STOP OCEAN CRIME
SAY NO TO EXPERIMENTAL SEABED MINING IN THE PACIFIC
SIGN THE PETITION www.actnowpng.org

World fisheries crisis and Extractive Industry in Coastal and Small Islands.
Thanks for listening!

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