Panel for Pollen Conference in Lund 2024

**Exploring transitions for marine environmental governance: the potential of communities and bottom-up processes as alternative pathways to sustainability**

Facilitating the potential of communities and bottom-up governance for transitions to sustainability (T2S) sparks key questions of political ecology. Marine environmental governance exposes such challenges relating to environmental changes like ecosystem degradation or fish stock depletion and socio-economic problems of marginalization, injustice, and conflicts of interest around declining resources or spaces. Existing ocean and coastal governance does not deliver on established sustainability goals, neither ecologically, economically nor socially. Policy agendas for fisheries and marine governance expose antagonisms for T2S between increased exploration and exploitation relating to blue growth and blue economy paradigms and a focus on blue justice, degrowth, environmental (convivial) conservation and socio-economic wellbeing. As a result, the notion of sustainability becomes entrenched and challenged on a structural level, hence depicted as a “flawed concept” for fisheries management due to misdirected objectives like Maximum Sustainable Yield.

This panel explores these challenges and opportunities for T2S in fisheries and marine governance by focusing on institutions, objectives and practices relating to existing unsustainability and addressing new imaginaries for T2S. We therefore draw on theories and concepts like co-management, community or diverse economies research and degrowth as well as on empirical cases that underline existing problems and showcase possible alternatives.

*198 words*