

Environmental Communication >

Volume 10, 2016 - [Issue 4](#)

2,032 Views | 31 CrossRef citations to date | 12 Altmetric

Original Articles

The Green Economy: Reconceptualizing the Natural Commons as Natural Capital

Joanna Boehnert ✉

Pages 395-417 | Published online: 13 Mar 2015

🗨️ Cite this article 🔗 <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2015.1018296>



Sample our
Environment and Sustainability
Journals
>> **Sign in here** to start your access
to the latest two volumes for 14 days

📄 Full Article 📊 Figures & data 📖 References 🗨️ Citations 📊 Metrics

🖨️ Reprints & Permissions

Read this article

🔗 Share

Abstract

The green economy is an emergent approach to sustainable development launched at Rio+20. Herein environmental decision-making is increasingly achieved through economic processes and logic. The natural commons are quantified and managed as natural capital. This paper summarizes the trajectory of the project and its ideological framework. It examines various conceptualizations of economic approaches to the environment and considers philosophical, methodological, and political problems associated with the green economy project. In the face of very different definitions of what constitutes a green economy, environmental communicators face a situation characterized by discursive confusion as the complexity of natural capital accounting processes conceal new political configurations. Counter movements argue that the green economy program is performing ideological work that uses language of

environmentalism to obscure an intensified agenda of neoliberal governance and capital accumulation. The concept now has contradictory meanings. Environmental communicators have an important role to play in exposing the contested nature of the project and in helping to define the emerging green economy.

Keywords:

green economy commons ecological economics natural capital neoliberalism

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to James Beecher, Luke Devlin, Rebecca Wasil, Max Boykoff, and the anonymous reviewers for constructive feedback.

Additional information

Funding

I thank the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences at University of Colorado Boulder for financial support.



Related research 

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by
31

Information for

Authors
R&D professionals
Editors
Librarians
Societies

Opportunities

Reprints and e-prints
Advertising solutions
Accelerated publication
Corporate access solutions

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email



Sign me up



Copyright © 2026 Informa UK Limited [Privacy policy](#)

[Cookies](#) [Terms & conditions](#) [Accessibility](#)


Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG

Open access

Overview
Open journals
Open Select
Dove Medical Press
F1000Research

Help and information

Help and contact
Newsroom
All journals
Books

 Taylor and Francis
Group