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MATTHEW GANDY (Cambridge, UK) Urban political ecology: critical reflections and future directions

Abstract: The contemporary theorization of the urban biosphere has reached something of an impasse between the perceived limitations of urban political ecology, the neo-Lefebvrian emphasis on global patterns of urbanization, and the rise of “new materialisms”. Since its emergence in the mid-1990s urban political ecology has made a series of distinctive contributions to the study of urban environmental issues yet in recent years a series of conceptual tensions and empirical lacunae have become apparent. In this presentation I reflect on the legacy of the “first wave” of urban political ecology before turning to the current status of the field, where I consider a series of contemporary challenges including more complex interpretations of agency, scale, and subjectivity.

Bio: *Matthew Gandy* is a geographer, urban field ecologist, and award-winning documentary filmmaker. He is Professor of Geography and Fellow of King’s College at the University of Cambridge and while at UCL he founded the UCL Urban Laboratory. He is the PI on the ERC Advanced Grant *Rethinking Urban Nature*. His research ranges from aspects of environmental history, including epidemiology, to contemporary intersections between nature and culture including the visual arts. He is the author of *Concrete and clay: reworking nature in New York City* (MIT Press, 2002), *The fabric of space: water, modernity, and the urban imagination* (The MIT Press, 2014), *Moth* (Reaktion, 2016) and with Sandra Jasper, *The botanical city* (Jovis, 2020).



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