Master in Political Ecology
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SOCIAL MULTI-CRITERIA EVALUATION

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Objectives
The course will introduce social multicriteria evaluation framework for public decision making, paying attention to theoretical, methodological and empirical issues. It will familiarize you with the foundations of SMCE, basic concepts, methods and case studies. By the end of the course you should be able to structure a decision-making process in a multicriteria structure; defining alternatives and criteria to support participatory processes and decision making.

Structure
The course has 9, 2-hours classes. Most of classes will involve a mixing of teaching, discussion and group work, and will be divided in two: theoretical and practical. Students will split in groups to develop a case study to apply the knowledge acquired during the theoretical part of the class.

Evaluation
The class will develop a case study proposed by the professor. Groups of 4-5 people will choose a role in a case study to apply a social multicriteria evaluation. Each group will describe their interests and objectives, propose alternatives and define evaluation criteria.

Program outline
The following outlines presents the course divided in 4 parts. Classes will follow this structure and their content will depend on the advances in the case study.

Part 1. Introduction to SMCE. Theoretical foundations and practical applications
Part 2. The multicriteria structure in SMCE: Alternatives and criteria


Part 3. Combining participatory processes and multicriteria evaluation


Part 4. Multicriteria methods in a SMCE context


**Case study**

In the village of Santa Pau, a number of small organic vegetable farms have sprung up in recent years. The majority of producers offer baskets of vegetables, but production exceeds demand and producers have come together to find market for their products. Small farmers are planning to organize a weekly organic vegetable market, which has generated different views on the subject. Some actors in the village support the idea of a weekly market, and for others it raises certain questions.

The village is small and very touristy on weekends. It is known by its natural environment and tranquility. Some actors see the market as an opportunity to boost economic development and others see the market as an affectation on quietness.

There are 3 restaurants and 3 bars, an hostel and some rural tourism houses. As well, there are 2 grocery stores and 2 souvenir shops. There is also a primary school: 150 students, most of whom eat each day in the school canteen.

The city council would like to promote a participatory process to define and evaluate some alternatives to the weekly market, and has decided to carry out a social multicriteria evaluation process. To do so, it has contracted a cooperative of social dynamization to carry out the process, which has made a call for a public meeting to define and validate the participatory process.

In the first call, the following social actors have been called:

- Hotels and restaurants
- Commerce association (souvenirs and grocery stores)
- School parents association
- City council
- Small organic farmers
- Big farmers (mainly cereals and forage)
- Cattle rangers (milk and meat)
- Craft association (handicrafts and canned goods)
- Village festival committee
- ...

**Assignment**

Groups of 4-5 have to choose one of the roles mentioned above (it is fine if additional groups, with different roles, are created).

Each group will have to perform the following activities along the course (submission date):
- Define the objectives of the group (17/04)
- Propose alternatives to the organic vegetable market (24/04)
- Define attributes and indicators to evaluate the alternatives (01/05)
- Evaluate the alternatives from the point of view of actors, to identify potential coalitions with other actors (08/05)

These activities will be developed along the course. Groups will send the information indicated above and the professor will put it together to be discussed in the following class.

At the end, we have to be able to structure the problem in a multicriteria framework including the viewpoints of all social actors involved, and arrive to a compromise decision.