

CLAS Events - Lent Term 2025

Wednesday 12 February - 12:30pm | Lunchtime Seminar

Room S1 - First Floor, Alison Richard Building

Green colonialism and racist dispossession in the climate emergency

[Josefa Sánchez Contreras](#) & [Alberto Matarán Ruiz](#) (Universidad de Granada)

Chair: [Mónica Moreno Figueroa](#) (University of Cambridge)

Abstract:

In order to achieve socio-ecological transitions that aim to overcome this global crisis, it is necessary to build bridges of solidarity between indigenous, peasant and urban territories and movements in the Global South with the ecological movements of the Global North, as the challenge of our century warrants it. But to generate symmetrical relationships, it is necessary to start from the differences of each context, and it is essential to assume that we are also going through the climate emergency and the multiple crises in a differentiated way. Our thesis is that colonialism as a relationship of domination is still very present despite the fact that many countries formally proclaimed their independence in the 19th century. In the South of the World and in particular in Latin America, unequal relationships, racism and dispossession still survive and even become more acute supported by the so-called green transitions. The elites, corporations and nations that dominate our planet intend to confront the enormous environmental challenges we are facing in the 21st century through disastrous business-as-usual or more accurately colonial-as-usual solutions. This corporate power aims to maintain global capitalism and its local versions, adapting to the ecological crisis the same recipes that have brought us to the brink of the abyss.

Josefa Sánchez Contreras

I belong to the Zoque people of Chimalapas, Oaxaca, Mexico. PhD in Social Sciences, University of Granada. Master in Latin American Studies from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Sociologist from the Autonomous Metropolitan University of Mexico. My research interest is centred in energy colonialism, communalism, and indigenous movements in Latin America. I am co-author of three books, several research papers, and has published in the Washington Post, La Jornada, EstePaís, and Revista de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. I collaborate in various research projects on energy transition and indigenous peoples.

Alberto Matarán Ruiz

I was born in the south of Spain in a family of constant migration between Europe and Latin America. I hold a BSc and a PhD in Environmental Science (University of Granada). I am professor in several graduate and postgraduate programs including Environmental Sciences, Urban and Regional Planning, Agroecology, and International Cooperation. My research interest is centred on the conflicts related to energy and green colonialism, and on local self-sustainability including the importance of periurban areas and local food systems. According to this his methodological approach is based on decolonial, bioregional and agroecological perspectives always considering the importance of participation for the transition processes in Europe and Latin America.

