

Political Ecology at University of Copenhagen

This note describes the Political Ecology course at the University of Copenhagen, based on the 2018 version of the course. The note sets out:

- The course description incl. intended learning outcomes
- Description of learning activities and preparations for the four modules of the course

Course description	2
1. Environmental degradation and environmental narratives	5
2. The political economy of nature and natural resources	9
3. Environmental conflict and resistance	15
4. Gender and Social Difference	20

The descriptions of the four modules set out the learning activities and preparations for the teaching days in the course. They follow the so-called block structure at the University of Copenhagen whereby courses of 7.5 ECTS are allocated one morning (9-12 am) and one full day (9 am – 3 pm) every week for 8 weeks. In the case of this course, Tuesday morning and all of Thursday. The descriptions thus reflect this structure. The course runs with ~40 participants who are divided into 8 groups named after PE scholars, which is also reflected in the description.

The course is taught by [Christian Pilegaard Hansen](#), [Jens Friis Lund](#) and [Mattias Borg Rasmussen](#). We are all happy to answer any questions you might have about the course.

Course description (as it appears on the UCPH course portal)

Environmental problems such as land degradation and deforestation are complex processes and often cannot be understood in isolation from broader processes of economic and social development, struggles over access and rights to resources, or conflicts originating from historical grievances. Yet, their complexity is not always acknowledged by researchers, governments, and development interventions seeking to identify, measure, and correct or alleviate them. Scientific measurements of the extent of environmental degradation are often inaccurate and/or highly uncertain, and knowledge of the underlying drivers is framed in ways that put direct blame on some actors, for instance farmers practicing subsistence farming, while leaving others out, such as large-scale investments in mining.

Political Ecology asserts that the way we know environmental problems affects the solutions we identify, which implies that science and knowledge of environmental problems are inherently political and intrinsically linked to economic and social context. Further, Political Ecology is keenly invested in understanding how local processes of environmental change are linked to past and present wider regulatory frameworks and market processes.

Political Ecology draws on various disciplines to frame studies on resource and management challenges in fields such as environment and development, climate change, land-use, and conservation. This course illustrates how Political Ecology is useful to understand processes of natural resource management, use, and contestations around these. Participants in this course will be challenged to re-think and reconsider mainstream understandings of environmental problems and how they are produced.

The course is primarily (but not exclusively) concerned with and draws its examples and cases from environmental problems in developing countries (Global South) including those concerned with forests, agricultural lands, water, wildlife and range lands.

The course is structured in four themes each of a duration of approximately two weeks. The four themes are briefly described below. During the course you will be presented with ways of viewing that appear critical towards much of mainstream practice in development and environmental policy. In the last week of the course we will discuss the dilemma of having to navigate as an expert in a professional context of institutions with aims, logics, and narratives that may be subject to critique from a political ecology perspective.

Environmental degradation

This theme concerns environmental change (degradation). We will look into questions such as: By whom and how is environmental degradation defined? How can we know/ascertain/measure environmental change? How is environmental knowledge produced and used? Who drives degradation? How and why have environmental crisis narratives emerged and persisted? What functions have they served? And what are the environmental and socio-economic consequences?

The political economy of natural resource management and use

Political ecology may be defined as “the concerns of ecology and a broadly defined political economy” (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987, p. 17). In this theme we in particular discuss Marxist political economy which has formed a central element in political ecology as a critique of capitalism and neo-liberalism. We also broaden the view to other orientations of political economy. Focus throughout the theme is on the analysis of cases and situations in relation to use of natural resources and conservation, on questions such as “who gains?”, “who loses?”, “how?” and “why?”

Environmental conflict and resistance

Environmental conflicts have multiple causes and forms. Conflicts arise when people living in rural areas of the ‘Global South’ experience restrictions on access to land and livelihood as a consequence of multiple processes of extraction, infrastructure development, or conservation. These are often both exacerbated by and contributing to local processes of social stratification and elite formation. They are often accompanied by competing claims

seeking to legitimate a certain development in the area and about the histories, identities and capabilities of people living there. At times, conflicts erupt into open acts of defiance and violence, whereas at other times it takes shape as hidden forms of resistance. In 'Environmental conflict and resistance' we will seek to understand the causes and forms of environmental conflicts and resistance.

Gender and social difference

Environments are located in socially uneven terrains. Gender, caste, class, ethnicity, and indigeneity are some of the kinds of social difference that shape resource access. In this module we look at perspectives from poststructuralist and feminist political ecology to understand some of the subtle, everyday dynamics that create environmental inclusions and exclusions. Feminist political ecology considers gender a critical variable in shaping resource access and control, and conceptualizes its intersections with other forms of social difference. And more than that, it deconstructs the very idea of gender. Also relying on post-structuralist critiques, we discuss how subjectivities are shaped through interactions with the environment and ask how to denaturalize power, categories, and social hierarchies in our analysis of resource access and control.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Knowledge:

1. Explain various methods to assert environmental change and its causes;
2. Describe what is understood by environmental orthodoxies/environmental crisis narratives;
3. Discuss major strains of political economy of relevance to Political Ecology;
4. Discuss strands of feminist thinking in relation to analyses of environmental issues;
5. Describe how social categories shape resource access and control;
6. Describe different causes and forms of environmental conflict and resistance.

Skills:

1. Identify and assess underlying assumptions and empirical evidence supporting environmental crisis narratives;
2. Apply political economy to analyze concrete cases of policies, uses and practices pertaining to nature and natural resources;
3. Analyze situations where social difference influence political ecologies through a focus on subjectivity, intersectionality and/or embodied practices;
4. Analyze dynamics of environmental conflict and resistance.

Competencies:

1. Reflect on what constitutes environmental change/degradation;
2. Reflect on how environmental crisis narratives have emerged and what functions they serve;
3. Reflect on the role of gender and other forms of social difference in political ecology;
4. Reflect on the role of claim making about environments, economies and identities in environmental conflict and resistance.

Learning activities

The course makes limited use of traditional lectures. The key teaching and learning activities are group discussions and exercises, student presentations, student peer-to-peer feedback, and short written assignments (article reviews). The learning activities draw on scientific articles and book chapters, but also on other media, such as podcasts and films. For each week of the course, there is an introduction and guidance note presenting the topic of the week, the intended learning objectives and the learning activities. The course requires students' timely preparation and active participation in order to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The indicated readings for each week must be read prior to class. Students who are unable to meet this requirement should not enroll in the course.

Credit

7,5 ECTS

Type of assessment

20 minutes oral examination with point of departure in one of the course themes of student's own choice followed by questions in the broader course curriculum.

The four modules

1. Environmental degradation and environmental narratives

Introduction to module and reading guide

Intended learning outcomes

Discussions on degradation of the environment, that is changes to the environment (e.g. a forest, a grass land, soils, water resources, a sea or the atmosphere...) as a result of human activity, the cause, or causes for the change, and related hereto, who are to be blamed for the degradation, constitute a key pillar, if not the central pillar, in Political Ecology. We will start this module by addressing questions such as: What is environmental degradation? What methods are available, and have been used, to make claims about environmental degradation? Using the platform established by the responses to these questions, we will start investigating a phenomenon called environmental narratives (also called environmental orthodoxies), that is “generalized statements referring to environmental degradation or causes of environmental change that are often accepted as fact, but have been shown by field research to be both biophysically inaccurate and also leading to environmental policies that restrict socio-economic activities of people living in affected zones” (Forsyth 2003: 38). We will read and discuss various examples of what may be considered as environmental narratives and look into how political ecologists have countered the narrative (with a counter-narrative) and what implications the prominence of the narrative have had on environmental policies and management, and with what socio-economic consequences, in particular the consequences for rural dwellers relying on access to environmental resources. Finally, we will look into how such environmental orthodoxies emerge and persist, despite that research has shown that they are inaccurate. This latter part brings into focus the use of science as a means of politics by various political actors, i.e. how science and politics are co-produced. So, in a sense the module will start with the ecology in Political Ecology and end at the more political end.

The module relates to the following learning outcomes mentioned in the course description:

Knowledge:

- Describe what is understood by environmental orthodoxies/environmental crisis narratives;

Skills:

- Identify and assess underlying assumptions and empirical evidence supporting environmental crisis narratives;

Competencies:

- Reflect on what constitutes environmental change/degradation;
- Reflect on how environmental crisis narratives have emerged and what functions they serve.

Learning activities and how to prepare for class

Thursday 6 September

A detailed understanding of the biophysical processes underlying environmental change and the causes of such changes, whether human-induced or caused by natural factors (climatic variability, natural fire) is a prime theme in political ecology. Contemporary political ecology is sometimes accused of having diverged from its original aim of undertaking a careful examination of environmental change and the biophysical state of the environment and combining these findings with a more political and economic one, into being “politics without ecology” (Walker 2005: 76). To stay true to the original of political ecology, and because it is fundamental for the discussions that will follow in the rest of the course, we will spend today on the ecological aspects and biophysical processes of environmental change. We will focus on two central questions: i) What constitutes environmental degradation? and ii) how can we make claims on environmental degradation, i.e. what methods can be applied in measuring, quantifying and asserting environmental degradation (or not).

In the morning of this day there will be an initial group exercise to set the scene, followed by a lecture that attempts to give (some) answers to the two questions raised above. There are two texts that relate to the exercise and the lecture: First, Chapter 5 of Robbins (2012) which gives some basics for defining and measuring environmental degradation, and second, Sprugel (1991). The latter text is intended to give you some understanding of the concept of equilibrium/non-equilibrium ecology which, as you will realize in this module, plays an important role in claims of environmental degradation and a concept which you will encounter repeatedly throughout this module and beyond. You should have read the two papers prior to class. In the last part of the morning, we will start a group exercise that will be continued in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, we will build and expand on the knowledge we have gained in the morning on degradation through two case studies. First, we will discuss a paper by Benjaminsen et al. (2010) on soil fertility and soil degradation in connection with cotton production in Mali, again focusing on the methods used to investigate environmental degradation. This paper you will need to read before class! After the discussion, we will also give some advice on how to read scientific texts in this course (because now you tried and maybe you found it difficult). Finally, we will watch and do a class discussion of the documentary *Second Nature* on a famous and classical study in Political Ecology: the study of apparent deforestation in Kissidougou (Guinea, West Africa) by Fairhead and Leach (1996). The study is famous because it is an example of Political Ecology when it is at its best; that is, providing a detailed and solid investigation of the case in question drawing on multiple methods crossing the natural/social science divide (inter-disciplinary). There is an associated book chapter. This is not compulsory reading, but you are of course welcome to do so! (see under supplementary readings). We will end the day with a brief recapitulation of the day’s key points.

Literature and links

Compulsory readings:

Robbins, P. 2012. Challenges in ecology. Ch. 5 in *Political Ecology*, pp. 103-121. [found in literature folder in Absalon].

Sprugel, D.G. 1991. Disturbance, equilibrium, and environmental variability: What is 'natural' vegetation in a changing environment? *Biological Conservation* 58: 1-18.

Benjaminsen, T.A., Aune, J.B. and Sidibé, D. 2010. A critical political ecology of cotton and soil fertility in Mali. *Geoforum* 41: 647-656.

Supplementary readings:

Fairhead, J., Leach, M. 1996. Forest gain: historical evidence of vegetation change. Chapter 2 in *Misreading the African Landscape* (pp. 55-85). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Tuesday 11 September

This morning will focus on environmental narratives (environmental orthodoxies). In preparation for class you should read two texts: Chapter 2 of Forsyth (2003) and Davis (2005). The first text gives a general introduction to the concept and provides many examples. The second is a concrete case study on desertification in North Africa (Morocco). We will commence with a group exercise and discussion of the Davis (2005) paper interrogating the narrative in question, that is desertification, the counter-narrative suggested by Davis and what implications the prevailing narrative has had for policy, and ultimately for the livelihood of local camel herders. It will be followed by a lecture commenting, and expanding, on the same issues that we have discussed in the exercise. We will conclude the morning by watching, and discussing the documentary *The Timbuktu documentaries (part 2) – Where water is life and milk is food* by Tor Benjaminsen. The documentary also addresses the desertification narrative, this time around in Mali.

Literature and links

Compulsory readings:

Forsyth, T. 2003. Environmental science and myths. Ch. 2 in *Critical Political Ecology*, pp. 24-51.

Davis, D.K. 2005. Indigenous knowledge and the desertification debate: problematizing expert knowledge in North Africa. *Geoforum* 36: 509-524.

Thursday 13 September

Today we will continue the investigation of environmental narratives we started on Tuesday. The specific focus of today is the question: How (and why) do environmental narratives (explanations) emerge and persist even in cases where they have been shown by research to be inaccurate? From there we will move to the larger question on how science influences policy, and the other way around.

In the morning, we will discuss two texts that attempt to give answers to this question – Leach and Mearns (1996) and Ribot (1999). So you need to read those two texts prior to class. Leach and Mearns (1996) commence by discussing what environmental narratives are (or environmental orthodoxies as they prefer to name them), so this part will serve as a kind of repetition of what we discussed on Tuesday. In the latter part of the text, they discuss the emergence and persistence of the narratives. You may find this text somewhat difficult to grasp, but do not despair, and keep on reading! If not before, the issues will become clearer once we have discussed them in class! The Ribot (1999) text is a case study on the emergence of two related narratives in Senegal: deforestation caused by fuelwood consumption and a forthcoming severe shortcoming of fuelwood caused by the overexploitation of the resource. When reading the two texts, try to identify the various explanations that the texts give for the emergence (and persistence) of the narratives, and compare between the two texts, i.e. do they point at the same explanations?

In the afternoon, we will continue the discussion on the emergence and persistence of environmental narratives (explanations) by opening the “box” (or introducing you) to aspects of how science is produced, applied and re-produced, including how environmental knowledge and politics co-evolve, bringing to the fore aspects of Science and Technology studies. We will do this through discussing what science is and what sets it aside from other activities in society. Then we will present some cases where there are contestations around science. We will not assign any readings to this, but some of it will draw on Leach and Mearns (1996).

Literature and links

Compulsory readings:

Leach, M. and Mearns, R. 1996. Environmental change and policy. Challenging received wisdom in Africa. Chapter 1 in: *The lie of the land. Challenging received wisdom on the African environment*, 1-28 (i.e. you do not need to read the last section: Ways forward in research). [found in literature folder in Absalon].

Ribot, J.C. 1999. A history of fear: Imagining deforestation in the West African dryland forests. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 8: 291-300.

Supplementary readings:

Davis, D.K. 2004. Desert ‘wastes’ of the Maghreb: desertification narratives in French colonial environmental history of North Africa. *Cultural Geographies* 11: 359-387.

Benjaminsen, T.A., Rohde, R., Sjaastad, E., Wisborg, P., Lebert, T. 2008. Land reform, range ecology, and carrying capacity in Namaqualand, South Africa. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96 (3): 524-540.

2. The political economy of nature and natural resources

Introduction to module and reading guide

Intended learning outcomes

A central element of political ecology is what Blaikie and Brookfield (1987), often considered as the “fathers” of political ecology, have described as “a broadly defined political economy”. Blaikie and Brookfield were interested in causal chains of explanation, that is, to understand processes and outcomes at the local level (the farming activities of a farmer and the resulting economic and ecological outcomes for example) and how these are shaped by processes and structures at other scales (regional, national, international), e.g. legislation, market structures and exchanges. In line with this, Robbins (2012: 59) sees a fundamental link between political ecology and political economy because “...the systems that govern use, overuse, degradation, and recovery of the environment are structured into a larger social engine, which revolves around the control of nature and labor...No explanation of environmental change is complete, therefore, without serious attention to who profits from changes in control over resources, and without exploring who takes what from whom”. It follows that we in this module will continue our investigation into if/how/why the environment degrades and whom to blame.

After this module, students will be able to:

Knowledge:

- Discuss major strains of political economy of relevance to political ecology

Skills:

- Apply political economy to analyze concrete cases of policies, uses and practices pertaining to nature and natural resources

Learning activities and how to prepare for class

Tuesday 18 September

Much work in political ecology has been influenced and framed by Marxist political economy. So, Marxist political economy is a natural starting point for our venture into this field. In preparation for class, you should read the assigned chapters in Stillwell (2002) that will provide you with a good introduction to the ideas of Marx and the specific vocabulary (=terms) of Marxist political economy. These include: alienation and dispossession, surplus extraction, primitive accumulation, commodification, classes, the growth of monopoly power, the expansionary nature of capitalism, uneven development. In preparation for class, try to get a general understanding of what these concepts mean. As supplementary reading, we have uploaded a few more chapters from Stillwell (2002); in case you want to dig even deeper into Marxist political economy.

In preparation for class you should also read, Cáceres (2015) which is a study of the development of agribusiness in Argentina in recent years and the consequences of this development on different groups of farmers and on the environment. Cáceres frames his study closely along Marxist political economy, so it should be fairly easy for you to recognize the key terms described by Stillwell (2002) in an empirical setting. Make note of them as you read!

In class, there will be a brief introductory lecture to Marxist political economy. Then we will do a group assignment/discussion on the Cáceres (2015) text which will be followed by a presentation/discussion in class. The day will be concluded with a second (brief) lecture on some additional perspectives and elements of Marxist political economy.

Literature and links

Compulsory readings:

Stillwell, F. 2002. Political economy. The contest of economic ideas. Oxford University Press, Melbourne. Chapters 12-15 (pp. 93-127). [found in Absalon in Literature folder].

Cáceres, D.M. 2015. Accumulation by dispossession and socio-environmental conflicts caused by the expansion of agribusiness in Argentina. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 15 (1): 116-147.

Supplementary readings:

Stillwell, F. 2002. Political economy. The contest of economic ideas. Oxford University Press, Melbourne. Chapters 16-17 (pp. 128-143). [found in Absalon in Literature folder].

Thursday 20 September

Today we will continue our exploration of Marxist political economy and how it has been applied in political ecology scholarship. The focus of the morning is on what has been called the neoliberalization of nature. Neoliberalism may be defined as the doctrine that market exchange should serve as a guide for all human action (Harvey 2005). In turn, neoliberalization, is “the process of reforms and ideological transformation that seeks (at least in theory) to implement the doctrine of neoliberalism” (Bakker 2015: 447).

Neoliberalism and neoliberalization have been high on the political agenda in both developed and less developed countries since the 1980s in virtual all sectors of society involving reforms such as free trade agreements, the privatization of public utilities, titling and marketization of property rights in land, forests, fisheries and pastures previously under public ownership, and cuts in public expenditure. Neoliberalism may be seen as an ideology that promotes capitalist expansion, and hence a natural object for Marxist political economic analysis. It is therefore not surprising that ‘neoliberal natures’ have been intensively investigated by political ecologists driven by questions such as: 1) Are markets and private ownership the solution, or cause, of environmental degradation? 2) Does the enhanced involvement of private actors result in improved environmental outcomes? 3) How does the capitalist mode of production under

neoliberalization differ from that of the past? (Bakker 2015). Today we will try to give a (partial) response to these questions.

In preparation for class, we ask you to read two papers: Benjaminsen & Bryceson (2012) and Bakker (2005). Start with Benjaminsen & Bryceson because you are likely to find this paper easier to read than Bakker. Benjaminsen & Bryceson describe two cases of conservation efforts in Tanzania: Wildlife Management Areas and conservation of coastal areas. When reading the text, consider how the cases and the analysis fit within a Marxist political economy. Moreover, can we consider these cases as examples of neo-liberalization? And finally, is there something that does not fit with the Marxist analysis? (and yes, we think there is!). Bakker's text is an analysis of the privatization of water supply in England and Wales. This text is a bit long and complex, we admit, but try to get an understanding of the problems and consequences (for citizen and the environment) that the privatization resulted in.

In class, we will do a group exercise on the Benjaminsen & Bryceson text, followed by a class discussion on the Bakker text. A summary lecture will conclude the morning session.

In the afternoon, we will watch the documentary: "Stealing Africa" and we will analyze it within the Marxist political economy analytical framework that we have developed during this week. The documentary will also function as an introduction to another orientation of political economy that we will turn to next: New political economy.

Following that, we will introduce the group paper review essay assignment and there will be time for the groups to have an initial discussion on the assignment. There is a full description of the assignment in Absalon, but basically the task is to do a max. 1,200 word essay on one of the below papers:

Neimark, B.D., Healy, T.M. 2018. Small-scale commodity frontiers: The bioeconomy value chain of castor oil in Madagascar. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 18: 632-657.

Isakson, S.R. 2014. Maize diversity and the political economy of agrarian restructuring in Guatemala. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 14(3): 347-379.

Ascher, W. 1998. From oil to timber. The political economy of off-budget development financing in Indonesia. *Indonesia* 65: 37-61.

Hirald, R. 2018. Experiencing primitive accumulation as alienation: Mangrove forest privatization, enclosures and the everyday adaptation of bodies to capital in rural Senegal. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 18: 517-535.

The assignment is due on Friday 28 September at 4pm. You will have to upload your essay to Absalon under the assignment "paper review political economy" (one per group). You will receive written feedback on your review.

Literature and links

Compulsory readings:

Benjaminsen, T. A., Bryceson, I. 2012. Conservation, green/blue grabbing and accumulation by dispossession in Tanzania. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 39: 335-355.

Bakker, K. 2005. Neoliberalizing nature? Market environmentalism in water supply in England and Wales. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95(3): 542-565.

Tuesday 25 September

Today we will focus on another branch of political economy, called New Political Economy (NPE) that we will have already touched upon in the first week of the module. It is a broad denominator of theoretical orientations with names such as public choice theory, collective action, social choice and regulatory capture. Common for them all are that they try to apply the thinking (assumptions) of neo-classical economics (rational choice, utility maximization etc.) to political decision making processes (politics), that is, to extend the use of economic reasoning into “non-market” settings (Grindle 1991). So different from Marxist political economy which (typically) considers the state as the vehicle of economic interests, that is the state acts in the interest of capitalist forces, NPE theorizes various ways that politicians and bureaucrats may act. Broadly speaking there are two main orientations: Society-centric and state-centric. The society-centric perspective emphasizes the composition and interaction of interest groups in the society and the claims they make on politicians. “Public policy reflects the existence of distributional coalitions in society that seek to shape and control the allocation of public resources to the benefit of their members...Rent-seeking by interest groups overwhelms the notion of a public interest...While an ‘invisible hand’ regulates economic markets, an ‘invisible foot’ results in their distortion through politics” (Grindle 1991: 48). So the society-centric perspective has a rather cynical view on politicians; they are mainly in it for personal gains and/or to secure their next election. Not surprisingly, scholars of this orientation have been prominent proponents for a reduced role of government (“the state”), that is, neo-liberalism as discussed above.

The other orientation of NPE, the state-centered NPE allows a more advanced analysis of the behavior of politicians and the political process. This perspective gives higher emphasis to ideology/ideas than the society-centric perspective, but the self-interest (money, power, positions etc.) is also there. The need for “staying in power” becomes an overriding objective for politicians in achieving any of these. Hence, the argument goes, politicians may supply harmful policies, that is, policies that are not in the general interest of the society (inefficient, inequitable, environmentally harmful) because these policies may provide politicians the means to allow them to stay in power, e.g. provide support in the form of votes or election campaign contributions.

In preparation for class, you will read Grindle (1991) which is a presentation (and at the same time a critique) of the NPE. When reading the chapter, focus on getting an understanding of the key characteristics of the two orientations: society-centric and state-centric NPE.

You should also read Ross (2001) which is an analysis of forest policies in Sarawak (Malaysia) from colonial days to today and how they have been shaped by politicians and bureaucrats, for what reasons and consequences for forest conservation and people. The analysis is rich and there are many persons and

events mentioned, so there is a risk of getting lost, but when reading, try to keep focus on what is the main argument made by Ross. You may also consider how/if the analysis shares similarities with the Marxist analysis, and where it differs.

In class we will do a group discussion of the Ross (2001) case, followed by a group presentations and discussion in class. Towards the end of the morning there will be time for the groups to continue working on the essay assignment.

Literature and links

Compulsory readings:

Grindle, M. 1991. The new political economy: Positive economics and negative politics. Chapter 3 in Meier, G.M. (ed): Politics and policy making in developing countries. Perspectives on the new political economy. ICS Press, San Francisco.

Ross, M. 2001. Sarawak, Malaysia. An almost uncontrollable instinct. Chapter 6 in *Timber Booms and institutional breakdown in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 127-156.

Thursday 27 September

In the morning, time is set aside for groups to finalize the paper reviews. Lecturers will be available in the lecture room from 9am if you have questions you would like to discuss in relation to the review.

In the afternoon, at 1pm, there will be a lecture on Ribot and Peluso (2003): A Theory of Access, a prominent framework, very popular among political ecologists, to analyze who get to benefit from natural resources and through which means. The framework explicitly builds on (Marxist) political economy. We do this to illustrate a way that political economy considerations may be operationalized and to highlight a framework that may be a useful tool in your future careers, whether inside or outside of academia. We will do a group assignment on a concrete case to allow you to practice and get to know the framework better.

We will end the afternoon with a brief re-cap of the module.

Literature and links

Compulsory readings:

Ribot, J.C., Peluso, N.L. 2003. A theory of access. *Rural Sociology* 68(2): 153-181.

3. Environmental conflict and resistance

Introduction to module and reading guide

Intended learning outcomes

Environmental conflicts have multiple causes and forms. 'Environment' itself comes in multiple forms that shape conflicts, e.g. diamonds, oil, land, pasture, water, and so forth. Conflicts may arise when people living in rural areas of the 'Global South' experience restrictions on access to land and livelihood as a consequence of multiple processes of extraction, infrastructure development, or conservation. Conflicts may also arise between groups of rural dwellers and involve grievances that are not directly related to environment, but which come to interact with environment-based grievances. Conflicts may also revolve around access to highly valuable resources, such as diamonds, fossil fuels or wildlife. Conflicts are often both exacerbated by and contributing to local processes of social stratification and elite formation. They are often accompanied by competing claims seeking to legitimate a certain development in the area and about the histories, identities and capabilities of people living there. At times, conflicts erupt into open acts of defiance and violence, whereas at other times it takes shape as hidden forms of resistance. In 'Environmental conflict and resistance' we will seek to understand the causes and forms of environmental conflicts and resistance from a political ecology perspective. We will see how political ecology deconstructs and problematizes both 'environment', 'violence', and 'resistance' as well as generalized and universalizing explanations of how they interact. We will thus see how analyses of conflicts that take a political ecology approach draw upon political ecological understandings of and approaches to analyses of environmental degradation and political economy, but that this dimension adds new perspectives to the political ecology toolbox.

The module relates to the following learning outcomes mentioned in the course description:

Knowledge:

- Describe different causes and forms of environmental conflict and resistance

Skill:

- Analyze dynamics of environmental conflict and resistance

Competencies:

- Reflect on the role of claim making about environments, economies and identities in environmental conflict and resistance

Learning activities and how to prepare for class

Tuesday October 2: Environmental conflict and securitization

This first day of the module we'll get an introduction to how political ecology approaches have problematized attempts at generalized and universal explanations of the interactions between environmental/resource abundance/scarcity and conflict. Specifically, we will discuss how political ecology disturbs commonly held ideas about the role of resource scarcity/abundance in shaping conflict, in

particular, violent conflict and war. And we will discuss why critical attention to such ideas matter. This is a key contribution of political ecology to broader geopolitical and resource-related debates on resources, war, and State capacity, and it draws on what we learned in the initial module on ‘Environmental degradation’. For this part of the morning, you should prepare by reading Le Billon (2017), which is a chapter in the International Handbook on Political Ecology entitled ‘Resources War Conflict’. Phillippe Le Billon is a prominent political ecologist with a keen interest in the entanglements of environments, natural resources, and violent conflicts. In this article, Le Billon outlines some key contributions of political ecology to further our understanding of environmental conflict. Notice how the text deconstructs conflict, resources, and discusses the complex relations between resources abundance/scarcity and violent conflict. Finally, notice the problematizations of what Le Billon calls the ‘resource pathologization’. We’ll engage with this key text in a lecture-cum-discussion in plenum.

Then, we’ll engage with the issue of securitization of the environment and the implications of this phenomenon for people and environment. To do this, you should read two texts in advance of class. One text you should read very carefully so that you can present the arguments made in it to your fellow course participants, whereas the other you can read lightly so that you are able to follow when your fellow course participants present its argument to you.

Group name	Massé & Lunstrum 2015	Duffy 2015
Dianne Rocheleau, Eric Wolf, Michael Watts, Nancy Peluso A	Present	Listen and discuss
Paul Robbins, Piers Blaikie, Tania Li, Nancy Peluso B	Listen and discuss	Present

We will form discussion groups of 4-5 people on Tuesday morning ensuring that at least two people in each group are ready to present each of the two texts, but keeping the groups small so as to allow all to get a possibility to participate actively in the discussion. We end with a plenum discussion of the issue of securitization based on these two texts, and a short summary of today’s main take-home points.

Compulsory readings:

Le Billon, P. 2015. Resources War Conflict. pp. 176-188. Chapter 13 In: Bryant, R.L. (ed.) The International Handbook of Political Ecology. Edward Elgar Publishing. (see literature folder)

Massé, F. and E. Lunstrum 2016. Accumulation by securitization: Commercial poaching, neoliberal conservation, and the creation of new wildlife frontiers. *Geoforum* 69:227-237.

Duffy, R. 2016. War, by Conservation. *Geoforum*. 69:238-248.

Supplementary readings:

Le Billion, P. 2012. Digging into “Resource War” beliefs. *Human Geography* 5(2): 26-40.

Duffy, R. 2017. We need to talk about the militarization of conservation. Green European Journal.

Thursday October 4: Violent Environments

This day we'll continue with the problematization and deconstruction of a key issue in environmental conflict – namely that of violence. We will discuss the issue of violence as its often understood and used in the everyday, physical coercion and infliction of bodily harm, as well as less visible, structural and slow forms of violence brought into view by scholars such as Johan Galtung and Rob Nixon. We will discuss why the definition of violence matters. For this, I ask you to prepare by reading parts of a text by Galtung in which he introduces his typology of violence, as well as parts of a text by Rob Nixon where he introduces his slightly different take on violence and also discusses Galtung's definition.

Then we'll engage with an example of different forms of violence in the form of a chapter by Roderick Neumann about conservation in Tanzania that is featured in the book 'Violent Environments' edited by Michael Watts and Nancy Peluso. I ask that you read it in advance and then you'll discuss it in groups before we summarize in plenum. Specifically, I'll ask you to discuss where in the chapter we find empirical examples of the different types of violence set out by Galtung and Nixon.

In the afternoon, we'll watch the movie 'Honey on the top' which concerns forced evictions of indigenous people from mountain forests in Kenya and on the basis of this example continue our discussion of what violence is and how it matters to environmental conflict.

Literature and links:

Compulsory readings:

Galtung, J. 1990. Cultural Violence. *Journal of Peace Research* 27(3):291-305. YOU ONLY HAVE TO READ PP. 291-296 UNTIL THE START OF SECTION 4.

Nixon, 2011. *Slow Violence and the environmentalism of the poor*. Harvard University Press. pp. 1-14 UNTIL THE START OF THE SECTION ENTITLED 'Slow Violence and Strategies of Representation: Writer-Activism' (see literature folder)

Neumann, R.P. 2001. Disciplining Peasants in Tanzania: From State Violence to Self-Surveillance in Wildlife Conservation. pp. 305-327 In: Peluso, N.C. and M. Watts. *Violent Environments*. Cornell University Press. (see literature folder)

Supplementary readings:

The Themed issue: Conservation and Security in the journal *Geoforum*.

Tuesday October 9: Conflict and resistance

This morning we'll continue expanding our vocabulary and understanding of environmental conflict by focusing in on debates about resistance. We'll revisit James Scott's seminal writings about 'infrapolitics' – the hidden forms that resistance may take under certain circumstances, further pushing the notion of conflict beyond the visible and spectacular forms. We'll discuss Scott's points and the criticisms raised to them and then engage with an example of resistance in the context of wildlife conservation in Tanzania. To prepare, you should read two texts. First, read the book chapter 'The Infrapolitics of Subordinate Groups' by James Scott (1992) and pay particular attention to how it builds an argument for the importance of paying attention to infrapolitics as a pre-condition for more open forms of resistance by emphasizing *both* its symbolic *and* material dimensions. Then, read the paper by Mariki et al. (2015) and note how resistance enters as a way of problematizing alternative explanations of the killing of wildlife. Note how the empirical topic and context of this article is the same as Neumann's book chapter from the week before, and how the arguments in this article connect this module and the initial module on 'Environmental degradation'. Following a lecture-cum-discussion of resistance building on Scott (1992) and a plenum discussion of Mariki et al. (2015), we'll engage with a third text that complicates the picture painted by Scott of resistance and conflict. Specifically, we'll work in groups to discuss what the text 'Situating Resource Struggles – Concepts for Empirical Analysis' by Tania Murray Li adds to the view of the reality in Scott (1992), and how this can be mobilized to further our understanding of resistance and environmental conflict. Thus, please read this text also with this purpose in mind. We'll end with a short summary of take-home points from the day.

Literature and links:

Compulsory readings:

Scott, J.C. 1992. The Infrapolitics of Subordinate Groups. pp. 183-210. Chapter 7 In: *Domination and the arts of resistance: hidden transcripts*. Yale University Press. (see literature folder)

Mariki, S.B., H. Svarstad and T.A. Benjaminsen 2015. Elephants over the Cliff: Explaining Wildlife Killings in Tanzania. *Land Use Policy* 44:19-30.

Li, T.M. *Situating Resource Struggles – Concepts for Empirical Analysis*. pp. 193-217. In: Baviskar, A. (ed.) 2008. *Contested Grounds: Essays on Nature, Culture, and Power*. Oxford University Press. (see literature folder)

Supplementary readings:

Moore, D.S. 1998. Subaltern Struggles and the Politics of Place: Remapping Resistance in Zimbabwe's Eastern Highlands. *Cultural Anthropology* 13:344-381.

4: Examining environmental conflict

This last day of the module we'll engage with a movie, specifically the movie *Crude* which is about a protracted legal struggle between Chevron (previously Texaco) and indigenous people in Ecuador about the pollution associated with extraction of oil in the Amazon. The ambition is to apply what we've learnt to analyze the conflict portrayed in the film. Thus, we'll start the day with developing a set of questions that we want to keep in mind while we watch. Then we'll watch the movie, which lasts almost 2 hours. We'll then break for lunch. After lunch we'll discuss what we've seen and how to understand the movie with the lenses that we've acquired. Finally, we'll end with a short summary lecture on the intended learning outcomes of the module.

Literature and links:

Compulsory readings: None

Supplementary readings: None

4. Gender and Social Difference

Introduction to module and reading guide

Environments are located in socially uneven terrains. Gender, caste, class, ethnicity, and indigeneity are some of the kinds of social difference that shape resource access. In this module we look at perspectives from post-structuralist and feminist political ecology to understand some of the subtle, everyday dynamics that create environmental inclusions and exclusions. Feminist political ecology considers gender a critical variable in shaping resource access and control, and conceptualizes its intersections with other forms of social difference. And more than that, it deconstructs the very idea of gender. Also relying on post-structuralist critiques, we discuss how subjectivities are shaped through interactions with the environment and ask how to denaturalize power, categories, and social hierarchies in our analysis of resource access and control.

Intended learning outcomes

Knowledge: Describe how social categories shape resource access and control, and discuss strands of feminist thinking in relation to analyses of environmental issues

Skill: Analyze situations where social difference influence political ecologies through a focus on subjectivity, intersectionality and/or embodied practices

Competencies: Reflect on the role of gender and other forms of social difference in political ecology

Day 1: Gender and the Environment

This session introduces the contributions of a political ecology which is sensible to gender issues and how these intersect with other forms of social difference. The texts which are assigned for today introduce the broader topic of gender and the environment through a recent overview article. The supplementary literature provides further background reading for those interested in exploring this issue. We will also read a text on land degradation in the Andes. Land degradation is a classic political ecology subject as you all should know by now. However, the analysis shift when our attention is directed at issues of gender difference and how such social classifications and differentiations are inscribed into the landscape. We will therefore spend this day discussing what we gain by turning our attention to gender when we try to understand environmental issues.

Compulsory readings:

Carney, Judith and Marlene Elias 2006. Revealing gendered landscapes: Indigenous female knowledge and agroforestry of African Shea. *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 40(2): 235-267.

Paulson, Susan (2003) Gendered Practices and Landscapes in the Andes: The Shape of Asymmetrical Exchanges. *Human Organization*: Fall 2003, Vol. 62, No. 3, pp. 242-254.

Supplementary readings

Hawkins, Roberta and Diana Ojeda 2011. Gender and environment: Critical tradition and new challenges. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 29: 237-253.

Leach, Melissa. 1992. "Gender and the environment: Traps and opportunities." *Development in Practice* 2 (1):12-22

Resurreccion, Bernadette P. (2017): Gender and the Environment in the Global South: From 'Women, Environment, Development' to 'Feminist Political Ecology', in *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Development*, pp. 71-86

Program

9-10: Introducing Gender and Environment

10-11: Group work on Paulson

11-12: Discussions

Day 2: Gender and Social difference

Morning

This morning session will focus on two articles from Central America which both are concerned with the intersections between gender and race. We start the morning session by discussing in plenum what makes a political ecology sensitive to social difference distinct from other forms of political ecology that you have encountered. We will in particular be concerned with a post-structuralist approach which is highly critical towards the production of social categories such as gender, race and nature, and by thinking through the two cases we aim to understand what is meant by anti-essentialism.

Compulsory readings:

Sundberg, J., 2004. Identities-in-the-Making: Conservation, Gender, and Race in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Guatemala, *Gender, Place and Culture*, 11(1): 44-66.

Sharlene Mollett (2010) Está listo (Are you ready)? Gender, race and land registration in the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, *Gender, Place & Culture*, 17(3): 357-375

[It is preferable that you have read both texts before class. Groups Dianne Rocheleau, Eric Wolf, Michael Watts, Nancy Peluso can start with Sundberg and read that with more attention to detail; Groups Paul Robbins, Piers Blaikie, Tania Li can start with Mollet. When you read the texts I want you to focus in particular on how the authors describe the interlocking of different forms of social difference. Which words do they use to describe that? What kinds of conclusions are the authors able to make by highlighting such dynamics?]

Supplementary readings

Escobar, Arturo. 1999. "After Nature: Steps to an Antiessentialist Political Ecology 1." *Current Anthropology* 40 (1):1-30.

Programme

9-10: The mapping of gender and social difference onto the environment

10-11: Group work on Sundberg and Mollet

11-12: Presentations and discussion

Afternoon

This afternoon is devoted to the concept of intersectionality, which is arguably one of the concepts that have had the highest impact on a gender sensitive political ecology. Intersectionality, in brief, concerns the way in which different forms of social difference such as race, class, and gender, intersect to produce marginalization for some and privileged positions for others. We will spend the first hour discussing intersectionality through the analysis by Andrea Nightingale from Nepal. We will then take the questions that we have explored so far (intersectionality, gendered spaces) to investigate the case of shea butter production in Burkina Faso. Traditionally a female product, recent hikes in the prices have attracted male collectors and traders. How should we then understand such changes in the relationship between environment and gender? Students will be presented the case, and can refer to the supplementary readings listed below. The groups will then be asked to discuss the case and prepare for a presentation Tuesday morning.

Compulsory reading:

Nightingale, A. 2011. Bounding difference: intersectionality and the material production of gender, caste, class and environment in Nepal. *Geoforum*, vol. 42: 153– 162.

Supplementary readings:

Elias, M., & Carney, J. (2007). African shea butter: A feminized subsidy from nature. *Africa*, 77(1 1), 37-62.

Elias, M., & Arora-Jonsson, S. (2017). Negotiating across difference: Gendered exclusions and cooperation in the shea value chain. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 35(1), 107-125.

Rousseau, K., Gautier, D., & Wardell, D. A. (2017). Renegotiating access to shea trees in Burkina Faso: Challenging power relationships associated with demographic shifts and globalized trade. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 17(3), 497-517.

Wardell, A., & Fold, N. (2013). Globalisations in a nutshell: Historical perspectives on the changing governance of the shea commodity chain in northern Ghana. *International Journal of the Commons*, 7(2).

Program

13-13.30: Intersectionality

13.30-14.15: Shea butter and gender

14.15-16: group work on intersectionality: how do you see gender and social difference affect the outcomes of shea butter production

Day 3: Feminist Political Ecology

Today we will name the approach that we have been exploring so far. We will see how these different elements combine to a distinct approach within political ecology, namely Feminist Political Ecology. By discussing the shea butter presentations prepared for this session based on Thursday afternoon's group work, we will seek to unpack what the contributions aim to produce. We will read an overview chapter, and then turn our attention to one of the founding figures of Feminist Political Ecology, Dianne Rocheleau. This is an early example of feminist political ecology, which nicely outlines the initial concerns and suggests some methodological implications which will also be useful for our discussion of the shea case. The closing lecture- discussion will thus explore some of the continuities and changes of Feminist Political Ecology and its relationship to political ecology more broadly.

Compulsory readings:

Elmhirst, R. 2015. Feminist Political Ecology. In *The Routledge Handbook of Gender and Development*, Anne Coles, Leslie Gray, and Janet Momsen (eds.), pp. 58-66

Rocheleau, Dianne (1995) Maps, Numbers, Text and Context: Mixing Methods in Feminist Political Ecology, *The Professional Geographer*, Volume 47, Issue 4, pp. 458-466

Program

9-10.30: Presentations and discussion on shea intersectionality

10.45-11.30: Lecture: Feminist political ecology

11.30-12: Online evaluation

Day 4: Last day of the course

Morning

During this course we have been presented with ways of viewing that appear critical towards much of mainstream practice in development and environmental policy. Some of you might be left with a sense that

any attempts at acting and doing are meaningless given the difficulties of doing 'right'. Not least as soon-to-be professionals, where you – in all likelihood - will have to align your analyses and values with those of the organization that you work for. On this last day of the course we discuss different notions of expertise and the dilemmas associated with having to navigate as an expert in a professional context of institutions with aims, logics, and narratives that may be different from one's own beliefs and ideas. We will discuss different views on this dilemma – its origins and possible solutions – and will then go on to develop a collective moral compass that may guide our future choices.

Following this, we will again turn more directly to the course and do an exercise/discussion on what you consider as your key learning in the course. We will end the morning's programme with a brief end-of-course lecture.

Afternoon

In the afternoon, we will go over the results of the on-line course evaluation and do an oral evaluation of the course. After that we will do a question-and-answer session in relation to any question you may have in respect to what we have discussed in this course and in the curriculum. In order to prepare for the session, we would like you to send any question that you have by 30 October to Christian cph@ifro.ku.dk.

There are no mandatory readings for this day.

Supplementary readings:

Kothari, U. 2005. Authority and Expertise: The Professionalisation of International Development and the Ordering of Dissent. *Antipode* 37: 425–446.

Meyerson, D.E. and M.A. Scully 1995. Tempered Radicalism and the Politics of Ambivalence and Change. *Organization Science* 6:585-600.