



SCHOOL OF GLOBAL STUDIES

Call for Papers for Workshops

for the Nordic Environmental Social Science Conference (NESS), University of Gothenburg, Sweden, June 7-9, 2022. [Link to Conference site](#)

Workshop: The crisis of inequality: Politics, power and interests in the “development” of forest-agriculture frontiers

Workshop chairs:

Grace Wong, Stockholm Resilience Centre Grace Wong, grace.wong@su.se

Maria Brockhaus, University of Helsinki, maria.brockhaus@helsinki.fi

Thilde Bech Bruun, University of Copenhagen, thbb@ign.ku.dk

Andrea Downing, Stockholm Resilience Centre, andrea.downing@su.se

This workshop will examine the crisis of widening inequalities in forest-agriculture frontiers, as the rush to capitalize on forest and land resources has transformed diverse landscapes, impacted on local wellbeing and generated conflict. Frontier regions are typically mosaics of agriculture, fallow, pasture and forest that provide multiple connected ecosystem services and support diverse social, cultural and livelihood needs. These are also areas where local communities generally have customary and complex systems of rights to land and resources.

Throughout history, and particularly in the tropics, States have enforced the forest frontier as exclusionary for production or conservation objectives, and used coercion to get local people to provide labour in plantations or manage forest resources on its behalf (Byerlee 2017; Doolittle 2007; Pichler, Schmid, and Gingrich 2021). Contemporary plantation development and market-based conservation in frontiers are often promoted under the guise of green or sustainable development and in response to global calls for climate mitigation and biodiversity protection (Brockhaus et al. 2021). Plantation expansions have led to radical transformations in landscapes, livelihoods and social relations well beyond their boundaries (Downing et al. 2021; Kenney-Lazar and Ishikawa 2019; Li 2018; Wolford 2021).

Within these regions, inequalities are manifested in the tenuous and overlapping boundaries of forest and land tenure, in what livelihood and cultural activities are considered as illegal, and in new lines of exclusion drawn for commodity plantations and national parks. Recent discursive practices related to climate change, deforestation, biodiversity loss and COVID 19 pandemic recovery with

narratives of “low carbon transitions”, “tree planting and carbon offsets” and “green deals” for “green recovery” have again converged on frontier regions (Pritchard 2021; UN DESA 2020,), potentially reinforcing deep-seated power imbalances and social-environmental inequalities (Menton et al. 2021).

Thus, forest-agriculture frontiers are sites for contestation, negotiation and adjustment as local people test spaces to express their agency and rights (Hall et al. 2015). Yet, these sites – and spaces - are ultimately part of global political economies and ecologies, connected through material, financial and ideational flows, and characterized by highly uneven power relations.

Our workshop will examine historical origins of development and conservation in frontiers, structural causalities and contemporary (re)production of social and ecological inequalities. We invite papers around these topics with a focus on interdisciplinary social-environmental collaborations/methods, de-colonial approaches and novel conceptual and analytical framings of frontiers and social-environmental justice.

Instructions for Workshop Participants

The NESS workshops follow a standing session format (similar to ECPR), which allows for substantive discussions on research in progress. The conference invites scholars from multiple disciplinary backgrounds in environmental social science. The overall **objective** of the **workshop** is to facilitate and encourage collaboration between younger and more established scholars. Each paper is expected to relate to the theme of the workshop, and the participant submits and presents a paper (or work in progress) for the discussion. Participants should only choose and attend one workshop for the duration of the conference, but you may send abstracts to more than one workshop. Workshop participants will be asked to comment on at least one other paper in the respective workshop, read the other papers and participate in the general discussion of the papers. The ambition with this format is that the workshops allow for in-depth and coherent discussions of the respective themes and provide opportunity for potential joint publications or other continuing collaborations between the participants.

Send your abstract of up to 300 words to all the workshop chairs no later than **December 15, 2021**. Chairs will respond to questions which relate to the workshop theme. For questions of a general nature (i.e. not workshop specific) they should be directed to ness@globalstudies.gu.se

The conference organizers will notify the participants of their acceptance to the workshops by **March 1, 2022**. Workshop papers are to be submitted to the workshop chairs and the other workshop participants at the latest **May 20**. May 20 is also the last day to register for the conference on the website. A workshop schedule including information on presentations, session chairs and discussants will be available on the conference website at the end of May. The workshop

format only allows for very short paper presentations (ca. 5 min) and all workshop participants are expected to have read and be able to comment on the papers in the workshop.

References:

- Brockhaus, Maria et al. 2021. "The Forest Frontier in the Global South : Climate Change Policies and the Promise of Development and Equity." *Ambio*.
- Byerlee, Derek. 2017. "Plantations versus the People: Explaining the Diversity of Land Policies within the Tropical British Empire." *Portuguese Journal of Social Science* 16(2): 163–79.
- Doolittle, Amity A. 2007. "Native Land Tenure, Conservation, and Development in a Pseudo-Democracy: Sabah, Malaysia." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 34(3–4): 474–97. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03066150701802793>.
- Downing, Andrea S. et al. 2021. "When the Whole Is Less than the Sum of All Parts – Tracking Global-Level Impacts of National Sustainability Initiatives." *Global Environmental Change* 69.
- Hall, Ruth et al. 2015. "Resistance, Acquiescence or Incorporation? An Introduction to Land Grabbing and Political Reactions 'from Below.'" *Journal of Peasant Studies* 42(3–4): 467–88. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2015.1036746>.
- Kenney-Lazar, Miles, and Noboru Ishikawa. 2019. "Mega-Plantations in Southeast Asia." *Environment and Society* 10(1): 63–82.
- Li, Tania Murray. 2018. "After the Land Grab: Infrastructural Violence and the 'Mafia System' in Indonesia's Oil Palm Plantation Zones." *Geoforum* 96(August): 328–37. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.10.012>.
- Menton, Mary, Felipe Milanez, Jurema Machado de Andrade Souza, and Felipe Sotto Maior Cruz. 2021. "The COVID-19 Pandemic Intensified Resource Conflicts and Indigenous Resistance in Brazil." *World Development* 138: 105222. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105222>.
- Pichler, Melanie, Martin Schmid, and Simone Gingrich. 2021. "Mechanisms to Exclude Local People from Forests: Shifting Power Relations in Forest 'Transitions.'" *Ambio*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-021-01613-y>.
- Pritchard, Rose. 2021. "Politics, Power and Planting 'Trees.'" *Nature Sustainability* 28(2019): 2898. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/s41893-021-00769-5>.
- Wolford, Wendy. 2021. "The Plantationocene: A Lusotropical Contribution to the Theory." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 0(0): 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2020.1850231>.