Local Democracy and Environment in the Developing World: Institutionalizing Representation

Course Syllabus
[13 August 2012 Draft – Write Professor for Updated Version after 22 August]
Geography 595/390

Fall 2012
Time: Thursdays 3:00-5:50pm
Place: Davenport 329
Professor: Jesse C. Ribot
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Course Description: When is local more equitable and efficient than centralized natural resource management (NRM)? What local institutional arrangements does theory expect will deliver increased efficiency, equity and justice in NRM? Focusing on democratic decentralization this course analyzes the two-way relation between natural resource management and three dimensions of local democracy: representation, citizenship, and the public domain. The course investigates theoretical foundations of democracy, localism and decentralization, and analyzes the policy processes by which theory is inscribed in law and project documents and then translated into practice. Through theoretical literature and natural-resource case studies it explores local-democracy effects of environmental interventions and the environmental implications of local democratic decision making. Cases studies of global environmental policy will be used for theoretical and empirical analysis.

The course will draw on case studies from developing countries around the world with a focus on local forest management (although discussions and assignments may focus on any resource). It will take an in-depth look at forest management in a few cases. The course will pay special attention to the UN program for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) as well as the UN Climate Adaptation fund and World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. Under UN REDD+, payments for carbon emission reductions via maintenance of tropical forests are in the multiple billions of dollars per year. These unprecedentedly large climate mitigation and adaptation interventions are likely to affect forest-dependent groups throughout the developing world. How have these groups been represented in past resource management decisions and how will they be represented in or shape these enormous new interventions? The course will use environment as a lens for better understanding the making and functioning of local democracy.

This 3 credit course will meet for three hours once a week. Participants will also be expected to attend the two or three SDEP Friday lectures (http://illinois.edu/calendar/list/3575, Friday afternoons 3:30 to 5PM) during the fall semester. These SDEP lectures will highlight different aspects of the democracy-environment relationship.

Development of this course was generously supported by a grant from the Environmental Change Institute (ECI) at UIUC.
Assignments and Grading:

1. **Class Participation** (24% of the grade) is essential. This will include intervening in class discussions and will also include periodic leading of discussion in class.

2. **Commentaries on literature** (11% of the grade). Each student must write up to 250 words (no more) on questions that emerge from each week’s readings. These written assignments must be submitted to me by e-mail by noon on the day of class. Each student may miss 2 of these at most during the semester. For some weeks specific questions will be posed for you to reflect on in these commentaries. No commentary is required for the first class meeting – but I do expect you to do the readings. (Please use 12 pt. font.) So, you should have submitted 11 comments by the end of the semester. Each is worth 1% of your grade.

3. **Term Papers** (50% of the grade). The term papers enable you to either analyze a case study in depth or to interrogate a theoretical concept using the theoretical literature and multiple case examples. The Term Papers should be no more than 18 (double-spaced 12pt font) pages in length and are due on Friday, 7 December. Each student will be asked to give a 15 minute presentation of their term-paper project in class followed by 20 minutes of discussion. The grade for the term paper will be divided (40% the written paper, 10% oral presentation). These presentations are designed to give you feedback on your project.
   a. For **Graduate Term Paper**: the term paper is a *Research Proposal*: Please identify a research question you would want to pursue were you doing a Ph.D. Write a full research proposal. The best approach is to identify a funding agency and use their template. You can also follow my outline of a research proposal presented in Annex A at the end of the syllabus. The research proposals will be judged and ranked as if they were submitted to an actual funding agency.
   b. For **Undergraduate Term Paper**: the term paper is to be in the form of a ten-page double-spaced policy brief. Ten pages means that this must be sharply written and focused. For this project you are to pick a policy problem related to the effects of environmental projects or policies on local democracy. Choose a general issue or a specific reform that is in progress. Explain the problem, justify the need for intervention, review the literature, write up targeted policy recommendations (concerning which agencies should make which reforms). See policy brief outline in Annex B of this Syllabus.
Summary Course Schedule

Class I – 30 August: Introduction to Democracy and Environment ............................................ 4
Class II – 6 September: Democracy-Environment-Livelihoods Linkages........................................... 4
-12 September, 1:30-3pm—Occupy Nature SDEP Speaker Melissa Leach, location TBA .......... 5
Class III – 13 September: Theory—Basic Readings on Democracy and Representation ............ 5
Class IV – 20 September: Theory—On Deliberation and Participation ...................................... 6
-21 September 3:30-5:00—Occupy Nature SDEP Speaker Hannah Appel ............................. 6
Class V – 27 September: Theory—On Justice ................................................................. 6
-Assignment due today: Hand in one paragraph description of your proposed term project with your key questions and a list of sources you hope to use ........................................... 7
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Class VII – 11 October: Theory—On Accountability .............................................................. 7
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Class IX – 25 October: On Authorizing Authority – Sovereignty, Belonging and Democracy I .... 8
-3 Student Term Paper Presentations—30 minutes (15 presentation, 15 discussion) ............ 9
Class X – 1 November: On Authorizing Authority – Sovereignty, Belonging and Democracy II .... 9
-3 Student Term Paper Presentations .................................................................................. 9
Class XI – 8 November: Customary/Indigenous Authorities ..................................................... 10
-3 Student Term Paper Presentations .................................................................................. 10
Class XII – 15 November: On Power and the Public Domain—Basic Readings in Political Philosophy .... 10
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-Thanksgiving Break – No class 22 November ................................................................. 11
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Syllabus

Class I – 30 August: Introduction to Democracy and Environment

- Organization of the Course
- Actors, Powers and Accountability
- Politics of Choice and Recognition
  - Choice: Authorizing Authority
  - Recognition: Representation, Citizenship and Public Domain
- Sub-national Sovereignties
- Research Questions on Environment and Democracy

Discussion Questions: What is ‘Governance’? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a polycentric model? What is different about Agrawal’s or Olivier de Sardan’s approach? How does power come into these models of governance?

Required Readings (Pp. 22+33=55) (further readings for each class listed in end notes):


Note: There is a lot of reading in this course and you are expected to do it. This is a course. You are getting full course credit. The readings are essential for the discussions. If you cannot do all of the readings, please give me feedback and I can adjust the readings. The first half of the semester the reading load is greater. The second half it is lighter. We front load the readings in order to have deeper more grounded discussions throughout.

Class II – 6 September: Democracy-Environment-Livelihoods Linkages

Commentary Question: What are the implicit theories of participation, representation or democracy in each of these author’s writings. What is their theory of the link between democracy and environment or democracy and livelihoods?

Required Readings: (23+3+41+36+15+2=119)

- Geiser, Urs and Stephen Rist. 2009. “Decentralisation Meets Local Complexity: Conceptual Entry Points, Field-level Findings and Insights Gained,” Ch. 1, Pp. 15-56 in Urs Geiser and


Schedule class presentations for the second half of the semester.

-12 September, 1:30-3pm—Occupy Nature SDEP Speaker Melissa Leach, location TBA
  —SDEP Lecture attendance is required unless you can show that you have a serious conflict.

Class III – 13 September: Theory—Basic Readings on Democracy and Representation

Commentary question: What is representation? What is democracy? What are the basic elements of ‘representation’ and of ‘democracy’? In essence we are going to get at what a ‘substantive’ definition is and how that enables us to use the definition to get to operational variables that we can them observe and measure through field work. Those observations are then used to interrogate theory and practice.

Required Readings (pp=67+25+32+19=141):iii


  - Fraser, Nancy. “From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a Postsocialist Age” pp. 11-44.
Class IV – 20 September: Theory—On Deliberation and Participation

Commentary Question: How is deliberative democracy different from representative democracy? Is there a difference in who is represented?

Required Readings (6+12+24+33+7+13=95)


-21 September 3:30-5:00—Occupy Nature SDEP Speaker Hannah Appel

Sign up to discuss your research topic w/Professor. E-mail to schedule a meeting time.

Class V – 27 September: Theory—On Justice

Required Readings (50+30+2+10+48=140)

-Assignment due today: Hand in one paragraph description of your proposed term project with your key questions and a list of sources you hope to use.

Class VI – 4 October: Theory—On Access & Representation

Comment Questions: How are people represented in matters of access? How are they able to influence the political economy that shapes their access? What is the material basis of representation?

Required Readings: (pp. 28+55+XX= 83+XX)

- TBA, Pp. XX

Class VII – 11 October: Theory—On Accountability

Commentary Questions: How would you categorize mechanisms of accountability? Does the ‘Incentives, Information, and Institutions’ framing of accountability make sense? Which of the other framings are convincing? What are the advantages and disadvantages if different accountability framings?

Required Readings (40+50+9=99):

Class VIII – 18 October: The Case of REDD

Commentary Assignment: How do Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) programs treat participation, representation and local democracy?

Required Readings: \( (9+24+58+13+2+3+16+13=122) \)


Class IX – 25 October: On Authorizing Authority – Sovereignty, Belonging and Democracy I

Required Readings: \( (pp.\ 22+20+21+22=85) \)


-3 Student Term Paper Presentations—30 minutes (15 presentation, 15 discussion)

- Class X – 1 November: On Authorizing Authority – Sovereignty, Belonging and Democracy II

Required Readings: (26+15+13+15 = 71)\(^{iii}\)


-3 Student Term Paper Presentations
Class XI – 8 November: Customary/Indigenous Authorities

Required Readings: \((4+30+25+9=68)\)


-3 Student Term Paper Presentations
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Class XII – 15 November: On Power and the Public Domain—Basic Readings in Political Philosophy

Required Readings: \((5+29+30 = 64)\)


-4 Student Term Paper Presentations
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Thanksgiving Break – No class 22 November

Class XIII – 29 November: Public Sphere and Civil Society

Required Readings:

-4 Student Term Paper Presentations

Class XIV (Final Session) – 6 December: Implementation and its Discontents

Required Readings: (14+21+28=63)

-4 Student Term Paper Presentations

-Term Projects Due 8 December
Annex A: Graduate Research Proposal Assignment Term Paper

To write a policy research proposal, the assignment requires:

1. developing a policy research question or hypothesis;
2. locating it within the literature;
3. explaining its broader policy significance (that is, making it clear why anyone should care about what is being investigated and what might be found);
4. explaining what data are necessary for answering the question;
5. explaining the methods to be employed for obtaining and analyzing the data (i.e. tracing out how empirical observations will be related to the question or hypothesis);
6. estimating a time line; and
7. estimating funding needs.

A policy research question addresses an unresolved problem (related to climate adaptation or vulnerability reduction) that has policy relevance. The question must also have theoretical relevance—let us know how answering it will contribute to the broader understanding of this problem for instances other than your particular case. At a minimum, your proposal should identify a problem where better understanding or information is likely to help us to formulate a better solution.

A typical policy-research proposal has the following components (this is just an example—you can use a different outline if you wish):

I. Abstract—200 words
II. Introduction
   a. Problem statement
      i. What is the problem to be explored
      ii. Why is it important and to whom is it important
   b. Summary of debates around the problem
   c. Summary of hypothesis and research questions
III. Background—What does the literature have to say about your problem
IV. Research Questions and Hypotheses
V. Case
   a. Where you are going to study your problem
   b. Why this is an advantageous place for studying your problem
VI. Methods
   a. How you get from your questions to answers
   b. Time line
One useful way to organize a methods discussion is to break down the problem as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis or Primary Research Questions</th>
<th>Operational Questions</th>
<th>Data Required to answer operational questions</th>
<th>Methods for gathering data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1: Decentralization reforms leads to better representation.</td>
<td>How has representation changed over time (before and after decentralization)?</td>
<td>Measure of representation (i.e. accountability plus responsiveness) change over time in each case: -Change in accountability -Change in responsiveness -Change in citizen engagement -Change in popular demands being reflected in decisions being taken</td>
<td>Measures before and after decentralization policy implementation of: -Observation of sanctioning by population -Surveys of popular demands -Surveys of decision maker understanding of popular demand -Observation of decision making processes -Decisions (or policies) made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2: More democratic representation leads to more efficient forest management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question: What is the relation between representation and forestry management outcomes before and after decentralization reforms?</td>
<td>How have outcomes varied over time (before and after decentralization reforms)?</td>
<td>Measure of outcomes over time -Change in forest management -Change in hectares under management -Quality of forest health -Change in local income from forests</td>
<td>-Observation and historical interviews concerning change in forest management -Documentation of forest service of forests under management -Transect studies of ligneous density and species mix before and after decentralization reform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table is just an example—in the problem definition or background section you would also have to define your variables and explain what theory has to say about the relations—and why you expect a particular kind of relation.

VII. Budget
VIII. Bibliography

A good looking methods book that I have skimmed through that may be of help is:

Annex B: Undergraduate Policy Brief Assignment Term Paper

To write a policy brief will require defining of your audience (a national or international policy maker or even a local policy maker on a rural council); a discussion of the presenting problem and why it is being addressed now; an analysis of the dimensions and causes of the problem; a proposed set of solution options; a proposed implementation strategy.

A typical policy brief has the following components (this is just an example—you can use a different outline if you wish):

I. Executive summary (one or two pages),
II. Introduction
   a. Define the problem
   b. Convince the audience the problem is grave
   c. Convince them it should be a priority
   d. Tell them something new (research findings, experience elsewhere) that indicates that policy should change
   e. Summarize your argument
   f. Summarize your recommendation
III. Background
   a. Develop your case for change
      i. What does the literature say
      ii. What does new research say
      iii. What does history tell us
      iv. Analyze the problem
      v. Analyze the options for solving the problem
      vi. Weigh the options and conclude with an argument for your choice of options
IV. Recommendations
   a. List of recommendations that follow from your analysis
   b. Strategy for implementing recommendations
V. Bibliography

END NOTES: Suggested Supplementary Readings

i Class I: Suggested Readings:


ii Class II: Suggested Readings:


III Class III: Suggested Readings:

IV Class IV: Suggested Readings:

V Class VII: Recommended Readings:

VI Class VIII: Recommended Reading:


Class X: Recommended Reading:


Class XI: Recommended Readings:
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Class XII: **Recommended Readings on Power:**


Class XII: **Recommended Readings on Structure and Agency:**
