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Module - 04 Urban environmental social sciences frameworks Lecture - 29 Urban Political Ecology Part II: (More) Recent Advances

So, with this now we enter into the 2nd part of Urban Political Ecology Scholarship, where I will be focusing on the more recent advances in this particular field.

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CONCEPTS COVERED/ ROUTE MAP

- racial inequities, cities and ecologies
 - interconnections between infrastructures, property investment and supremacy, biological/chemical/ecological reactions
- the "class" angle colonial capitalism

So, burning cities offers urban political ecology insights to understand and explore interconnections between infrastructures, property investment and destruction, white supremacy, biological, chemical, ecological reaction. So for example, let us think about

habitat destruction, toxic smoke plumes, dust, CO2 pulses, etcetera.

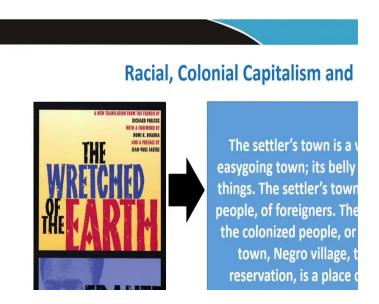
So, you know this riots for example, in cities for example, we have seen these riots recently in several cities of the United States for that matter. So, this racial riots. So they are actually you know this riots can be interpreted as you know some form of channelization of frustration, boiling frustration against perennial racialize inequalities.

And, their intended and unintended consequences and you know outcomes on socio ecological forms and processes that actually shape urban nature or determine the politics

of urban environment. So, this racial inequity or race element, class elements, so apart from class element, race element this you know discussions relating to gender or gender aspect has become a have become significant in the urban political ecology literature.

And, more recently you know political ecology seem to be even more expensive by shedding light on you know the otherwise unnoticed aspects or components such as queered philosophies or queered ideologies, etcetera. So, what we see now is that political ecology, urban political ecology has enriched itself by including and accommodating the class angle, the racial angle, gender angle and also you know discussions surrounding queered or deep queer communities.

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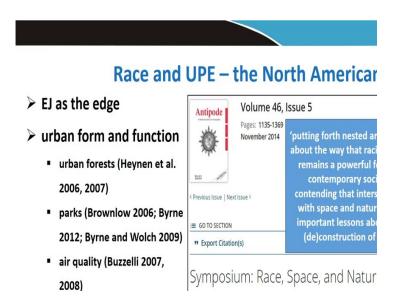


Now of course, we know now that political ecology and more specifically urban political ecology it definitely has a Marxist root and so even as political ecology is expanding. What we find is that it actually has the best historical geographical material ability to articulate dynamic you know processes of racial and class elements in tight contradiction to neoliberal capitalism.

So, this reminds me you know of the remark made by Frantz Fanon in this particular seminal book, The Wretched of the Earth, where he says that the settler's town is a very well fed town, an easygoing town. Its belly always full of good things. The settler's town is a town of white people, of foreigners. The town belonging to the colonized people or at least the native town, Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame.

So, you can see you know how this have been conceptualized you know strict in opposition to each other. So, the native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light and he goes on and on.

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So, in this more recent volume in the antipode so which is an outcome of a symposium on race, space and nature, the organizers in their introduction, they say that putting forth nested arguments about the way that racialization remains a powerful force in contemporary society, contending that intersections with space and nature offer important lessons about the deconstruction of race. And, yes.

So, for example, when Du Bois was discussing about abolition democracy in black reconstruction in the United States. So, when he was talking about you know about the I mean about freedom, freedom from slavery in post civil war reconstruction US. Then he was actually you know he pointed out the very crucial fact that slavery or the end of slavery actually did not equal freedom.

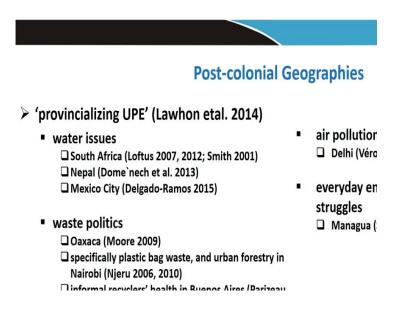
And why was this so? Because you know the spaces which this slaves actually inhabited I mean though they become free, but the political, economic and the legal institutions in the South were embedded with the white supremacy supremacist you know forces and which where I mean which always denigrated the African, American ways of livelihoods and you know their moral ethic in that sense.

So, Du Bois said that you know if slavery had to really come to an end then there had to be prolong struggles and protest against the abolition of the white supremacy for a long period of time. So, this will not happen so immediately.

So, you know urban political ecology also it seems I mean so far as this racial discussions are concerned. The age is of course, environmental justice. You know environmental justice can be definitely be considered as one of the significant notes, so far as this particular ecology literature is concerned.

And, we find even in some of the earlier works for example, by Nik Heynen and Buzzelli and others, they have critically interrogated urban form and function by you know by shedding light on the complex processes shaping urban forest, parks, air quality, food politics in different site, especially you know within North American cities.

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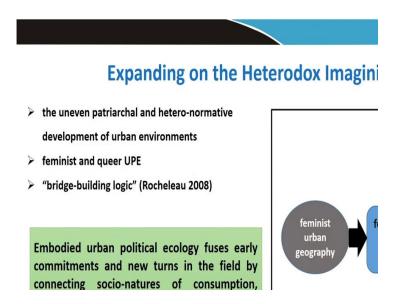


So, but apart from you know North American urban context, now UPE has much provincialized itself. So we find a very rich literature discussing water issues in South Africa and also Nepal, Mexico City. Waste Politics in Oaxaca, specifically Plastic Bag Waste and Urban Forestry Issues in Nairobi, Informal Recycler's Health Issue in Buenos area and air pollution.

For example, this work on the air quality in metropolitan Delhi by Rene Vernon and Shillington has worked on Managua Africa. So, this has discussed everyday environmental struggles in the slums of Managua for that matter. And, Nik Heynen for example, he also Nik Heynen has discussed a lot on abolition ecology and or abolitionist ecology.

And to Nik Heynen abolitionist ecology is a very significant framing. Why? Because UPE continues to be positioned to actually reveal how abolitionist ecology and that is why it is a such an a significant framework because it offers more emancipatory insights into the uneven development of urban nature via the contradictions of racial capitalism.

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So, what we find is that you know UPE is continuously expanding itself. It is getting itself you know enriched through heterodox imaginings or imaginations for that matter. So, minimally or at least there are four nodes of thought, there are four nodes like a feminist urban geography, feminist political ecology, queer ecology and queer urbanism which definitely have significantly and independently contributed to their own fields, but together they can also offer insights to kind of come up with feminist and queered urban political ecology.

So, and as Rocheleau says, that you know there is a bridge building logic in this. And these are you know this can be really solidarity centric projects or models within the urban political ecology literature or embodied you know urban political ecology scholarship or discussions.

So, yes I am just quoting from Doshi and I find this quote to be extremely powerful where Doshi says that embodied UPE fuses early commitments and new turns in the field by connecting socio natures of consumption, waste and resource distribution with the intimate, meaningful and power-laden embodiments of such flows among differently situated groups and that is why and that is how UPE is actually expanding on this heterodox imaginings.

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Gender, Nature and Cities

- uneven gender relations within urban space 1980s and 19!
- gendering of nature even more recent
- political ecology and gender in conversation

'Feminist political ecology treats gender as a critical variable in shaping resource access and control, interacting with class, caste, race, culture,

So, while you know uneven gender relations studies or explorations of uneven gender relation within urban space is a recent phenomenon because we really find significant work only recently only since the 1980s and 1990s and gendering of nature even is more recent. So, now you know what we find or what we see is that political ecology is actually in conversation with gender.

So, political ecology and gender they are in conversation to each other which is a good thing. And, this 1996 book you know Feminist Political Ecology Global Issues and Local Experiences, I think is a significant you know contribution so far as this particular field of feminist urban political ecology or more importantly feminist political ecology is concerned.

You know and the discussions surrounding round or you know the discussions mainly focusing on articulating the dialogues exchanges and intersections among gender, nature and cities, but more specifically gender and nature in that sense.

So, here Rocheleau in the at all in the introduction they argue that, feminist political ecology treats gender as a critical variable in shaping resource access and control, interacting with class, caste, race, culture and ethnicity.

So, and this is how political ecology and now we are discussing also urban political ecology, it has become classed, gendered, racialized you know everything together. And that is why it is it has gained you know so much of meaning, so much of sense during the contemporary times.

So, yes, so interacting with class, caste, race, culture and ethnicity to shape processes of ecological change, the struggle of men and women to sustain ecologically viable livelihoods, and the prospects of any community for sustainable development.

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So, few feminist urban political ecology and so some works some emerging works so far as this particular field is concerned again we know kind of cross fertilizing, feminist, urban geography, with environmental sociology and several other you know domains together that through which the scholars are now trying to gender, nature and.

So, this particular work by Hovorka is also path breaking because you know here Hovorka talks about, how this like women they are being able to renegotiate their marginalized positionality within the larger agrarian restructuring and urban rural transformation in Botswana.

So, men and women they continue working together and almost in equal numbers. So, though they are of course, there are some inequities and some disadvantages which are already there thrust upon the females, but on the other hand you know this article shows that how women they are making fresh claims to land and they also they are like capitalizing on their traditional roles and responsibilities in terms of poultry farming, etcetera.

So, this is an important work piece of work because you know it kind of traces the negotiations of both continuity and change which then enable us to understand this multi layered processes you know kind of shaping gendered positionality. And, within again the larger political economic forces of agrarian restructuring, etcetera in the greater urban region.

So, apart from this, there are works by Laura Shillington. So, two works which I would like to cite here by Laura Shillington are, so Laura Shillington you know she has worked on Managua, Nicaragua.

So mainly in the slums of Managua, so if you see this or read these two articles together back to back, you will see that in the first article you know which came out in 2008 Shillington, this talks about you know these home gardens or patios in the slums of Managua. And how this home gardens, the patios are different from the gardens or even the garden ethic of the western cities.

So, she and the second article which came out in Geo Fforum in 2013 Rright to food, Rright to the city, here she focuses on mainly the you know cultivation of the fruit trees by the female members again in the slums.

And through these two articles she demonstrate that how the this the slum dwellers, the female community, the women, in the slum they assert their <u>Riright</u> to the city and they kind of challenge the exclusions which are thrust upon them by the upper echelons of the society.

And how through this you know, human nature relationship, the relationship between the gardens and this women domestic workers how you know they also address the increasing insecurities in terms of food you know that exist in Managua. So, these are

also a subtle ways to exert you know women empowerment, that is the point which Shillington is actually making.

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Queer UPE

- > UPE fed by queer ecology and queer urbanism
- 'Queering our analysis thus helps us to position sexuality w multifaceted constellations of power' (Oswin 2008: 100).
- What are the political implications of queering urban natu2012: 736)

So, then I finally move on to this very recent development in urban political ecology domain, where UPE seems to accommodate you know the queer as the lens of analysis or the queer analytic in that sense.

So, UPE is now fed by queer ecology and queer urbanism. And so Oswin for example, says that what is this queer? how do we define this? So, if we think that this queer space is equivalent to lesbian or gay space then the plot or the purpose is actually lost. Because then queer no more is able to deconstruct the binary between male and female.

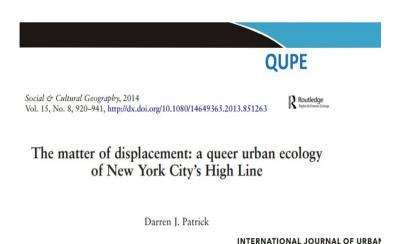
So, rather it is important for us to examine sexualities deployment in concern with racialized all other you know, racialized, gendered and classed processes within the political ecology or more specifically urban political ecology literature. And that is why queering our analysis can help us to position sexuality within multifaceted constellations of power.

So, that should be the agenda of queer UPE. And you know I definitely agree with Oswin. So, Matthew Gandy also he raised this question in 2012 you know, 2012th piece. Where he says that what are the implication, what are the political implications you know of queering urban nature?

And then he also says that you know that may be, you know or not may be rather this is true that, if we are able to appropriately systematically you know properly queer urban nature, then we may notice unnoticed connections, dialogues and intersections.

So, for example, the political dimensions of urban ecology can actually come to close proximity or close alignment with the cultural and material complexities of the urban space. And that is what you know a queer urban political ecology can offer to the larger gamut of both the queer studies and political ecological studies.

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URBAN POLITICA

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There are like very few works on this though, and I found these two works to be significant and it is very difficult. I am sorry, I will not be able to you know I mean, discuss in detail about this works because, I will rather encourage you and I mean there will be whole lot of subjective interpretations to this, where all of our sui generis or our own you know cultural values and our own subjectivities will play a major role in this.

So, what I want here is that, rather than one way traffic I would actually I would like to encourage you to go through these two articles and discuss this with me that what is your take from this and what is, what are your opinion so far you know as this queer political ecology, urban political ecology framework is concerned through these two case studies.

So, one; I mean like Darren Patrick on the on like abandoned queer ecology come then transformed into a homo normative park and then it got turned into a gay space. And, but

then Darren Patrick criticizes this and says that, you know this one should not be very

happy with this kind of gay or green gentrification, because there are limits to this.

So, what are the limits to this? So, and I would definitely encourage you to you know go

through this article to understand the minute and the nuanced you know processes that

actually shaped you know this gay or green gentrification agenda.

So, and this another work that I have cited here by Laura Shillington and Ann Marie

Murnaghan, so this is again another step ahead to queer urban political ecology and they

talk about queering you know both childhood and urban nature.

So, what about the children, why to exclude you know the children from the analytics of

queer? So, one needs to also simultaneously concurrently queer childhood and queer

urban nature in order to dismantle binaries, not only between nature and culture, but also

between male and female in order to you know in order to forge the most inclusive you

know perspective to understand processes shaping urban environment.

So, please go through this; I mean, this works, this emerging path breaking and wide

accommodative and inclusive works to understand you know this recent advances in

urban political ecology literature.

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CONCLUSION: Key highlights

- more expansive and solidarity-centric models for thinking th politics of urban nature
 - race
 - gender
 - dileer

So, these are the references. Whole lot of references are there, but you know I have just covered the most significant works. So, at least you know go through those works that I have discussed here in this particular lecture.

So, yes I would like to conclude this part; the second part of urban political ecology by saying that here we had discussed you know this more expansive, like how urban ecology, urban political ecology has become or is becoming more enrich and more expansive.

And, Nik Heynen says that you know this make, this expansive you know this expansion rests on the solidarity centric models for thinking through the politics of urban nature.

So, why it is important for urban political ecology to get gendered, racialized and queered and classed at the same time yeah. So, yes, UPE has to teach a lot all these different domains, different nodes that we had discussed and at the same time UPE also needs to get enriched from insights and inputs from this allied domain.

So, there has to be a constant mutual exchange and reciprocal learning through which you know we will be able to forge and craft more inclusive domains to understand the nuances of the production and coproduction of urban nature.

Thank you.