

# Exploring the Interface between ‘Green’ Extractivism and Violent Conflict

Call for Papers for Political Ecology Network (POLLEN) Conference 2022, 28 June-1 July

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## Panel description

All over the globe, initiatives to mitigate climate change, including projects to promote a ‘green’ energy transition and the drastic increase of the protected area network, are accelerating. This process can be described as a rapid expansion of the ‘green extractivist’ frontier. It includes (1) the arrival of large-scale wind, solar, tidal wave, ecotourism, agricultural or hydrological dam projects, which leads to new enclosures and forms of displacement and dispossession; and (2) the onset of new mining projects justified in the name of low-carbon infrastructures or green militarization (e.g., to produce equipment used for enforcing conservation), often focusing on the extraction of cobalt, iron ore, lithium, zinc, silver and rare earth minerals (Dunlap, 2021a; Verweijen & Dunlap, 2021).

As is the case with frontier dynamics more generally (Rasmussen & Lund, 2018), the ensuing socio-ecological disruptions and political-economic transformations both shape and are shaped by dynamics of conflict and violence (Fairhead et al., 2012). First, competition for access to and control over ‘low carbon’ resources can feed into geopolitical tensions, with reverberations far beyond areas of resource extraction (Berling et al., 2021). Second, many low-carbon energy or conservation projects are located on disputed or Indigenous lands, where the presence of both green and conventional extractivist projects is endorsed and enforced by national and regional governments. Opposition to government-supported national or transnational projects frequently leads to different intensities of social contestation and violence by state and non-state actors (BHRRRC, 2021). Third, ‘green extractivist’ projects may be rolled out in areas that are already immersed in armed conflict, thereby intensifying and transforming ongoing violence.

Many of these processes are already under way. For instance, the arrival of large wind and solar projects in the Western Sahara is fuelling conflict in this occupied territory (Allan et al., 2021). In Oaxaca, Mexico, large-scale wind projects have fed into a violent conflict between Indigenous groups opposing land grabbing on the one hand and wind energy corporations and their allies, including the Mexican state, on the other (Dunlap, 2017). The European Commission (EC), in turn, anticipates that mining justified by low-carbon infrastructures will generate increasing conflict. It is therefore sponsoring pre-emptive efforts to disable opposition and organize ‘social acceptance’ through such means as “[p]ublic relation campaigns, transparent stakeholder dialogues, and cultural heritage (mining museums, local heritage ceremonies)” (EC 2021: 27; see also Dunlap 2021b).

These ongoing developments make comparative enquiry into the multifaceted connections between ‘green extractivism’ and violent conflict timely. This panel looks for fresh empirical and theoretical insights into the ways ‘decarbonization’, ‘green growth’ and climate change mitigation policies shape and are shaped by dynamics of conflict and violence. We invite contributions looking at, for instance:

- The collaboration and confluence of conventional and green extraction companies.
- The strategies and behaviour of transnational ‘green extractivist’ corporations and their governmental allies in zones of armed conflict.
- The intersections between armed conflict and resistance against ‘green extractivist’ projects, including transformations in armed resistance movements.
- The causes and effects of geopolitical tensions sparked by competition around access to key minerals and locations for green or low-carbon energy production.
- The role of epistemology, accounting and certification schemes to justify ‘greenness’ and land control within conflicts.
- Articulations of “sustainable violence” (Dunlap, 2017), where the police, military, mercenaries or the prison-industrial complex are employing ‘green’ or so-called ‘renewable’ technologies to strengthen or expand coercive force.
- Supply-chains/webs related to ‘green’ mining or technologies and how they shape and are influenced by conflict.

***Please submit a title page by January 23<sup>th</sup>, 2022 including***

- Provisional presentation title
- Affiliation (optional)
- Email
- Abstract (150-200 words)
- 5-6 Keywords

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