

From a Blind Spot to a Nexus

Building on Existing Trends in Knowledge Production to Study the Copresence of Ecotourism and Extraction

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■ **ABSTRACT:** Ecotourism is primarily perceived and studied as an alternative to resource extraction, even though increasingly the two coexist side by side in a nexus. This article investigates how such instances of copresence are marginalized in literatures about ecotourism and extraction, constituting a “blind spot” in academic literature. An extensive literature review focuses on the existing knowledge trends and paradigms in the production of knowledge about ecotourism and extraction, and analyzes whether they contribute to the “blind spot” or can be mobilized by the nexus perspective. Finally, the article briefly outlines two methodological approaches for studying ecotourism and extraction as a nexus.

■ **KEYWORDS:** ecotourism, methodology, nexus, resource extraction, production of knowledge,

Ecotourism in the same place as oil pipes or open pit mines sounds like a strange, contradictory proposition. And, thanks to ongoing new technologies and geographies of the neoliberalization of nature, this “contradiction” abounds in empirical reality: the “protected” Campo Ma’an National Park is being developed for ecotourism by the Cameroonian Ministry of Tourism, 6 miles from the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline; there are indigenous ecolodges right in the middle of Ecuador’s infamous “oil patch”; in Northern Russia there are lakefront ecodestinations literally minutes away from dimension stone quarries.¹

How can we understand and study these seemingly contradictory situations where ecotourism and natural resource extraction occur side-by-side, sometimes even supported by the same institutions? So far, ecotourism is primarily perceived and studied as an alternative to resource extraction, while studies of resource extraction generally do not include ecotourism projects that may exist in the vicinity of extraction sites. Existing academic and policy literatures privilege oppositions and transitions between “sustainable” and “unsustainable” development over congruencies and synergies, which could reveal the uncertainties, contradictions, and fluidities inherent in this polarization. Because of this existing framing bias, the phenomenon of ecotourism in areas concurrently affected by extraction industries (oil production, mining, logging), remains understudied, even though for a range of reasons such a scenario is increasingly common in resource-rich counties of the Global South.

In general, issues around constructions and contestations of “nature” and “natural resources” have only gained traction in the social sciences in the recent years, from a “reimagined” politi-

cal ecology (Biersack 2006) to the “materiality turn,” to articulations of new resource geographies (Bakker and Bridge 2006). Actors across policy and academic arenas engage in debates about the ideologies, policies, and practices of the projects of “development” and nature’s role in it, as well as the various forms of environmental governance. Both ecotourism and resource extraction have been central to the debates and discussions—both are about what is defined as a resource, how it is governable (or ungovernable), and how it is mobilized in the service of “development.” Conventionally, resource extraction and ecotourism map onto “opposite” discourses of development and resource governance within the symbolic universe that operates through reified dichotomies like “exploitation versus conservation,” “commodification versus preservation” and (sometimes) “corporations versus the state” or “corporations versus environmental foundations.” Of course, these binaries do not correspond to the complexities of real practices around commodification of nature, but they are successfully reinforced in production of knowledge practices, particularly in institutional and policymaking settings. Thus, as Igoe and Brockington wrote of spaces of knowledge production and expertise exchange pertaining to international bioconservation: “the term ‘neoliberal’ is not commonly invoked at conferences, on email lists, or in professional journals of biodiversity conservation. To the extent that it is discussed, the suggestion is that international conservation represents a bulwark against neoliberalism by protecting our planet’s ecosystems from the advance of free-market capitalism” (2007: 433). At the same time, extraction enterprises try to “green” themselves through publicity-generating environmental impact assessments, projects like “green mining initiatives,” and other initiatives designed to display corporate virtue and general assimilation to the narratives and semiotics of “compassionate,” “humane,” or “green” capitalism.

There is a body of critical literature that problematizes these dichotomies and knowledge practices. Much of this literature is about macroprocesses—a scale necessary for a systematic examination of fundamental economic, ecological, and cultural paradoxes of global and multisited phenomena like “neoliberal conservation” or “sustainable development.” The broad field of practices of neoliberalization of nature and “neoliberal conservation” has been defined and examined by the likes of Igoe (2003), Sullivan (2006), Heynen et al. (2007), Brockington et al. (2008), Castree (2008), Brockington and Duffy (2010), Büscher (2010), while scholars like Tsing (2004), Vivanco (2006), and West (2006a) shifted between scales showing how processes of globalization and neoliberalization make local natures.

But even as the lines between extraction and conservation are revealed to be more complex and nebulous than the aforementioned dichotomies (still powerful in shaping public opinion and policy rhetoric) would suggest, the notion of resource extraction and ecotourism, as iconic practices within these domains, coexisting literally side-by-side, is underimagined, underrecognized, and understudied. Why do such dichotomies become harder to challenge when it comes to particular material practices in concrete spaces? When I was first intrigued by the copresence of ecotourism and extraction, which I observed over the course of my fieldwork, and wrote a grant proposal designed to systematically study this phenomenon, one of the reviewers—clearly familiar with the broad theoretical literature on “neoliberal conservation”—nevertheless wrote: “I am rather dubious about this [project]. I find it hard to imagine that landscapes ravaged by extraction of oil or other sub-surface minerals are commonly being selected as sites for ecotourism development.”²² This response helped convince me that even in the academic community certain assumptions about what extraction or ecotourism “do” to landscapes contribute to the seeming impossibility of contemplating them as cooccurring practices. These assumptions concern what constitutes an “extractive industry” and the “visibility” (or invisibility) of particular impacts on nature (while the oil sands infrastructure in Northern Canada is at odds with the aesthetics of a landscape constructed by ecotourism fantasies, in the villages connected by the

Chad-Cameroon pipeline, the only outward sign of the oil flow is a small sign indicating the location of the subterranean pipeline, and the effects of the oil industry are not aesthetic in the same way). But another part of it, I contend, has to do with the conventions and practices of knowledge production about these particular industries, and that is what inspired this review. Over the course of this article, I look, in turn, at the key trends in the literatures on “ecotourism” and “extraction” and see how they construct their subjects, and what kinds of analysis they practice and model for other researchers. Do these epistemological practices detect and analyze extraction and ecotourism when they appear in the same spot on the map? Or do they contribute to decoupling them epistemologically as they are already decoupled ideologically?

I introduce the concept of a nexus in my title: I imagine a nexus as a space of engagement, an arena of entanglement, both in terms of production of knowledge, and in terms of competing or complementary material practices being enacted within a specific landscape. The foundational body of literature I reference already engages the macrocontours of this nexus, its ontological dimensions, by showing how the purported dichotomies between capitalism and conservation break down, and how the two converge. Certain works go as far as identify the institutional dynamics and forces that enable and constitute the nexus—for instance, McDonald’s (2010) work on conservation industries finding themselves in bed with the “devil” of “private sector” industries with direct ties to extractive initiatives, or Corson’s (2010) inquiry into interorganizational relations that facilitate the neoliberal conservation regime.

For the purposes of this article, I am interested in the copresence of ecotourism and extraction as material practices that coexist geographically in such a way that they simultaneously engage and impact the same community (or communities), and that they would both be salient factors in an ecosystem-scale analysis (depending on the “ecosystem” in question, the distances may seem greater than in a “community-scale analysis” but the effect no less significant). Although “community” and “ecosystem” are nebulous and fluid concepts for a number of reasons, they are both concepts that are frequently and successfully mobilized as units of analysis or sites of impact in debates about valuation and use(s) of nature. They both index a form of connection that is immediate, visceral, and visible, or at least clearly evident because of the imaginaries of “place” with which they are associated. They are the kinds of spaces within which it becomes challenging to imagine the coexistence of two industries that are so iconically divergent and opposite, that stand for and symbolize such different approaches to both “development” and human-nature relations. One could write a separate article on imaginaries of places and scales, that would explore why practices that are clearly linked on the scales of institutions or ideologies are difficult to imagine as co-existing in the same physical space—but that is not my task here. I note this as context for my working definition of the nexus as possessing the contours of close geographical proximity, although, of course, this nexus exists across multiple scales. That is to say that the scale I am interested in is absolutely not the only one through which the nexus is evident; but it is one, I contend, where it is most underrecognized. Although a full, detailed typology of the kinds of ways in which extraction and ecotourism are linked in such places is beyond the scope of this article, the copresence can occur as a result of top-down facilitated converge, or oppositional strategies or tactics. The first type of linkage is often connected to “green capitalism” or corporate social responsibility (CSR) ventures, where “extractive development” and “sustainable development” are imagined to be integrated. The second type, frequently facilitated by local actors who ally with organizations that help them start ecotourism projects, often functions as a kind of praxis critique of extraction where what Agrawal (2005) would call “environmentality” is mobilized against what could be termed “resource developmentality.” But such oppositional dynamics are complex, with strategic adoptions of particular forms of resource management to send a message that the two approaches are incompatible resulting in their pro-

longed coexistence (and at least technical compatibility), with what are often the same sets of actors brokering local interests in ecotourism with the extraction industries. In other instances, local actors may not see the activities as paradoxical, and desire to be equally involved in both (Smith 2012).

A place-based nexus can also have temporal aspects—as happens in the cases where extraction activities and ecotourism activities are simultaneously envisioned as successive “development” phrases of a particular location—increasingly, as remediation plans are mandated for successful concession bids, ecotourism and extraction can become conceptualized as sequential, planned regimes of commodifying nature. This sort of management regime both challenges and subverts the dominant imaginary of the sequential-temporal relationship between ecotourism and extraction, where the shift is conceptualized as a result of a tension between alternative development paradigms, rather than a part of a premeditated plan.

Because this is a literature review, rather than an ethnographic, or even a comparative article, I cannot focus in-depth on the specific locations where this cooccurrence takes place, although I note a number of them at the very beginning (see also note 1). These locations, I argue, are places where the logic of neoliberal conservation manifests as material practices. By reviewing the bodies of literature that shape the standards and the vanguards of the epistemologies that bear on those practices, I can hopefully contribute to a larger body of literature, the one dedicated to dereifying and challenging the false dichotomies I invoke at the beginning of this introduction. What follows are reviews of knowledge production trends in the study of ecotourism and resource extraction. As I review these texts, I analyze the trends in questions, frameworks, and research designs, and assess whether the existing conventions can be mobilized for the study of the convergence of ecotourism and extraction as grounded practices and as macroprocesses, or whether they downright impede that kind of examination, producing a blind spot.

The Production of Knowledge about Ecotourism

In lieu of launching into a full review of trends and topics in ecotourism literature, I want briefly to reflect on Weaver and Lawton’s (2007) “state of the research in ecotourism” piece. Weaver and Lawton, in their synthesis of 20 years of ecotourism research, identify and discuss a wide range of categories of research undertaken (or understudied). Although their goals differ from mine, from a practical standpoint their review is highly instrumental, and rather than recapitulating it, I instead use it as a starting basis to comment on the trends they identify, then fill in the “blanks” of their overview, while discussing how these broad trends relate to the absence and the possibility of considering ecotourism and extraction together, as a nexus site of production of knowledge.

Supply and Demand

Weaver and Lawton start out with what they call “supply”—supply of ecotourism itself, that is. They engage with conventions and tensions in the definitions of ecotourism, starting with Fennell’s (2001) 85 definitions of ecotourism. They review the literature that has, over the years, attempted to establish a consensus around the definition and the parameters of the practice (Blamey 1997, 2001; Weaver 2005), and in the process still has to reckon with debates of inclusion and exclusion of categories—do “controversial” activities like “trophy hunting” (Novelli et al. 2006) or “natural habitat” zoos (Ryan and Saward 2004) fit the definition? The “what” is immediately followed by the “where” as Weaver and Lawton survey the literature on the

“venues”—the spaces and locations of ecotourism. They note that in academic literature on the subject case studies from the so-called “least developed countries” dominate—“perhaps in recognition of the degree to which ecotourism can potentially serve as a vehicle for economic development in the area” (2007: 1170). They comment that relatively little research is undertaken on the ecotourism “industry.” Perhaps, they speculate, “because LDC sites that dominate the literature tend to follow the community-based model of service provision that is largely external in this industry” (Ibid.: 1171). On this I want to challenge their point and note that the “community-based model” they reference is in many ways an “industry standard,” at least discursively, and any separation between it as an aspirational “model” and a supposedly distinct, firmly demarcated “ecotourism industry” collapses in the face of first “practitioner” and “practitioner-oriented” academic literature that stresses the “community-based model” (Honey 2002; Okazaki 2008). Additionally, ethnographic evidence and critiques of NGO-facilitated, show that “community-based models” struggle, among other things, with gaps between outsider and local definitions of “community” (Chernela 2005a) and misrepresentations of community politics (Belsky 1999). Unsurprisingly, venue-focused literature tends to be case study-based, as exemplified by the examples Weaver and Lawton provide. This focus within this category is largely on “successes” and “failures” of ecotourism, assessed in financial and educational terms. This is also unsurprising, given that ecotourism is a institutional homunculus, launched as a global aspirational enterprise promising to integrate conservation and development, through a sequence of dedicated institutional events (like the Rio Earth Summit and the International Year of Ecotourism), created for efficacy and results, and designed to be assessed, audited, and improved upon.

Unlike resource extraction, which is a multifaceted phenomenon that different types of institutions attempt to regulate and harness, ecotourism, it can be argued, is an institutionally created phenomenon, that has never existed outside of the institutions and bureaucracies of “development,” with resultant fairly standardized rhetoric and framework of indicators and “good practices” and “successes” against which any incarnation of an ecotourism venture can theoretically be measured by the people whose literal job it is to do so. Arguably, it is this ontogenesis of “ecotourism” as an institutional phenomenon that is responsible for the dominance of the “successes”- and “failures”-oriented assessments in ecotourism literature. I contend this a priori institutional nature of ecotourism, which promotes a culture of assessment/knowledge production around its “successes” and “failures” is part of how the blind spot I am investigating is produced. If an ecotourism project is built with oil money in close proximity to an oil extraction/transport operation, what does that mean for how the success of it should be measured? If the metrics for success are decontextualized from the extraction going on in close proximity to ecotourism, is “venue-scale” analysis a deterritorialized one, in a sense that it is removed from the actual ecological and geographical ongoing on the territory in question, and is thus guilty of “virtualism,” which Carrier and Miller (1998) define as an attempt to make the real world conform to an abstract model of itself?

After supply, Weaver and Lawton tackle demand—this section of their article tries to identify and study ecotourism as a distinct set of consumers, meta-analyzing both the critical literature engaging with the methodologies and scope of such research (Wight 2001) and the various “reports” on the profiles of the “typical” ecotourist—one characterized by “higher levels of education and income,” environmental “awareness” compared to “mainstream” consumers, and “disproportionately originat[ing] in MDCs” (Eagles and Cascagnette 1995; Wight 1996). Although actor-level analysis, which is so common for this literature sector is necessary to the study of any system, it can be argued that the dominance of this framework and the research direction it ensures, detracts from a broader reconceptualization of the ecotourism “market” in

a more general sense, beyond the “greenies” with backpacks who can be located (and studied) at specific ecotourism venues. Perhaps another set of “consumers” who should be identified and theorized as such are investors who want to engage with a “green” economy and “green” forms of development, or the “parallel” sector of consumers of fair trade products that are often manufactured within the framework of ecotourism endeavors. Ecotourism “consumers” are not necessarily people in search of or physically going to ecotourism destinations—they can also be individual or corporate actors in the market for a reassuring rhetoric of green legitimacy that different forms of association with ecotourism projects (not necessarily direct participation) can provide. In fact, such a form of “demand” is one of the driving mechanisms for the seemingly paradoxical simultaneous conservation/extraction initiatives under discussion, as in one scenario, such a nexus arises as a “corporate social responsibility” practice. What is interesting about such practices is that the easily recognizable way they operate often involves great distances—for example, sovereign wealth funds enriched by domestic extraction in the Global North being used to fund conservation initiatives, including ecotourism, in the Global South. But ultimately, an oil consortium sponsoring a national park with an ecotourism project blueprint minutes away from an oil pipeline follows the same logic, only putting these activities into the same temporal and spatial context, where they become more difficult to reconcile.

An inquiry into the institutional context of ecotourism could provide great insights into how ecotourism and extraction come to exist in the same rainforests and along the same rivers—after all, the phenomenon that may appear initially puzzling or contradictory “on the ground” may become very clear when the financing and the institutional convergences between the forces that facilitated the emergence of the two endeavors side-by-side are illuminated. But, historically, few studies have addressed this topic—as Weaver and Lawton note, “despite the essential nature of this research to the management of the ecotourism experience, almost none of the empirical studies has been undertaken by tourism specialists or is found in specialized tourism journals” while the studies that do exist appear almost exclusively in *Biological Conservation* (2007: 1173). Fortunately, this is a growing field of inquiry, including texts like West and Carrier (2004), Duffy (2008), Fletcher (2009), Brondo and Bown (2011), emerging as part of the broader production of knowledge on financialization and neoliberalization of nature.

“Impactology”: Ecotourism

Finally, Weaver and Lawton make note of the broad category of “impacts” (ecological, economic, sociocultural). This is an extensive category, as this “impactology” approach has always been important in cross-disciplinary ecotourism studies. Ecotourism has often been viewed and studied as a “change” mechanism, or an introduction of an external force into study sites. Consequently, every discipline could assess some aspect of the ensuing dynamics—impacts on the ecosystem or the “wildlife” (see Buckley’s 2009 review of this literature), including waste (Meletis and Campbell 2009), the local prosperity (Stronza 2010; Stronza and Gordillo 2008; Wunder 2000), social forms, political organization, religious practices, etcetera (Bruner 2005; Cheong and Miller 2000; Davidov 2008; Hutchins 2007). One aspect of “impactology” mentioned perhaps too briefly in Weaver and Lawton’s review is the impact of ecotourism on ecotourists over the long term. Stronza, in her review of tourism literature, wrote: “Less effort has been invested in analyzing the incentives ecotourism offers to tourists to change their own perspectives and behaviors...despite the fact that a significant goal of ecotourism is to raise environmental and cultural awareness among tourists” (2001: 77). A decade later, this has been a growing area of inquiry (Hughes et al. 2011; Powell and Ham 2008), although still understudied compared to research on “the tourees.”

In general, an “impactology” framework could be well-mobilized for an empirical study of the coexistence of extraction and ecotourism, but the articulation of impact rubrics would have to be dynamic and committed to ecosystem-scale/place-oriented analyses, rather than project-oriented analysis or analysis focused on one particular sphere of investigated impact, such as economic prosperity or non-local categories like “community empowerment” or “capacity-building” (Laverack and Thangphet 2009; Scheyvens 1999). Any productive refashioning of the “impactology” approach would have to be more integrative and context-grounded, and less invested in segmentation between “real” ecotourism and more “questionable” activities, as that distinction in and of itself produces a blind spot for the political economy and political ecology of even the most “textbook” ecotourism ventures. Weaver and Lawton point out that there is an “external environments” trend of analysis that focuses on the “blurring” between ecotourism and “mainstream” tourism. They write: “Less understood is the relationship between ecotourism and extractive activities such as recreational hunting and fishing, assuming that the latter do not qualify as ecotourism” (2007: 1175). It is interesting (and telling) that the extractive activities like mining, oil extraction, and logging are not even on this research map, while their very convergence and complex relationship with ecotourism could be the basis of a very different “impactology” approach. One might argue that hunting and fishing are more ambiguous categories that could potentially be incorporated into ecotourism, unlike mineral extraction, but one only needs to look at the conversion of diamond mining and ecotourism in places like Yellowknife, Canada and the De Beers’ Namaqualand mine in South Africa—a conversion pivoting around the symbolic and material figure of the diamond, which is made to represent simultaneously pure nature and the wealth that can be achieved through mining—to see that with the proper “amalgam” objects or activities the boundaries between ecotourism and extraction are also nebulous and fluid.

Critiques

What about ecotourism literature in the years since Weaver and Lawton’s overview, or the literature sectors not included in their article? Although the general trends noted by Weaver and Lawton might be phrased somewhat differently and grouped in somewhat different categories, research priorities articulated by ecotourism scholars in the recent years echo the ones identified by the two scholars. In a more recent overview, Buckley (2009: 643) identifies “future research priorities” as including “product and enterprise analysis; the value and importance of codes, interpretation and marketing, the potential significance of new community and political mechanisms; and post-trip lifestyle change.”

Not covered by Weaver and Lawton is the well-established trend of explicit critiques of ecotourism, which have included scholars questioning whether it can promote sustainable development (Bramwell and Lane 2005), problematizing both definitional problems and issues of implementation (Bjork 2007), implicating it in “neoliberalizing nature” (Duffy 2008) and critiquing it as “egotourism”—a “Trojan horse” inevitably entrapping local economies toward mass tourism (Wheeler 1991: 96). Another classic (albeit outdated³) body of ecotourism critiques concerned itself with the commodification of culture (Silver 1993) and the problems arising from the “Westernization” of the locals (Cohen 1989) and acculturation to capitalist translations and “manufacture” of culture (Dearden 1991). What many critiques have in common is they focus on what ecotourism does or does not do, rather than the fact that it may be complicit in beyond itself. There are also scholars like Cater (2006: 23) who explicitly theorizes ecotourism as a Western construct, inscribed into and complicit in reproducing “Western cultural, economic, and political processes”; Carrier and Macleod (2005), who deconstruct the ecotourist “bub-

ble” that abstracts the tourists from the places they purportedly come to experience; and Duffy (2002, 2010), who not only identifies ecotourism as one form of neoliberalization of nature, rather than an alternative to it, but who even makes an argument that ecotourism itself can be understood as an “extractive” industry.

Methodologies

One more aspect of ecotourism that Weaver and Lawton do not address specifically is the range of works that try to develop and articulate methodology for studying ecotourism. To some extent the methodological bias of all researchers are implicit in the research goals and frames in the profiled texts. However, before moving on to discussing extractive industries, I briefly review articles that explicitly propose or demonstrate methodologies of how to study ecotourism, and discuss the ways in which many of the methods are at odds with a structural, ecosystem-scale analysis that would flag the “paradoxes” (or note the convergences) of the ecotourism-extraction nexus.

Some authors who fall under this rubric discuss the methods of “valuing” ecotourism, such as the “travel cost method” (Tobias and Mendelsohn 1991) or engage in a cost-benefit analysis (Buckley 2009). Increasingly, in the last decade the “contingent valuation” method has been used (Lindsey et al. 2005), especially within the framework of ecological economics and its flagship journal, *Ecological Economics* (Baral et al. 2008; Lee and Mjelde 2006); Zografos and Allcroft (2007) developed a method for a market segmentation study based on the environmental values of potential ecotourists. Others, like Thomlinson and Getz (1996) offer a framework for research and evaluation of the contested issue of scale in ecotourism.

In general, there appears to be a trend toward segmentation in methodologies themselves—micromethodologies that frequently overlap in either goals or executions seem to place certain kinds of disciplinary “stamps” on the studies in question. Of course, from the discipline of anthropology, or at least from practitioners of ethnography there are many rich case study analyses that make site-specific methodological contributions (Chernela 2005b, 2011; Moreno 2005; Stronza 2005). These studies are all the more methodologically valuable because as a body of knowledge they provide a counterpoint to virtualism and essentialism of normative, anti-ethnographic frameworks of what ecotourism “is” and what it “does.” Some case study analyses in this vein, like Fletcher’s (2009) ethnographic perspective on ecotourism development in a community in southern Chile explicitly challenges the conventional methodologies of studying ecotourism in “stakeholders theory” approaches and emphasizing ecotourism as a discursive process deeply contingent on local, emic understandings of the world.

Critical Studies of Resource Extraction

Although ecotourism studies span a range of disciplines, there is a relatively established niche for subject-specific studies of ecotourism in both applied and critical social sciences. “Critical studies of resource extraction” is a less defined niche of production of knowledge, although plenty of knowledge production on the subject takes place. Ecotourism as a phenomenon was (arguably) “launched” institutionally within a framework that at least nominally invited reflexivity and assessment. However, resource extraction in and of itself is not a “designed alternative” industry, but an established mainstream capitalist practice, which has generated endless variations, oppositions, and critiques. It is not my intention to argue that ecotourism is somehow a less complex subject of study than resource extraction, nor that the ethnographic experiences

with it are in any way more uniform than the complex engagements between communities and extractive industries worldwide. On the contrary, one of the challenges of any critical study of ecotourism is to show the multiplicity and the diversity of the agendas, agencies, and experiences that are not contained by the normative narrative of ecotourism as universally applicable solution that is “wholly benign, environmentally, culturally, and economically” (West and Carrier 2004: 484). But while both fields of study contend with multiple forms of knowledge and material practices, the “umbrella” concept of ecotourism is that it is an institutionally constructed framework that practices self-articulation and self-identification as a coherent entity much more than what we understand as “extraction.” To put it another way, the epistemic community of practitioners and academics around ecotourism is diverse, decentralized, and by no means in agreement. Nevertheless, it overlaps enough that it has a shared vocabulary of ideals and practices, although some may try to implement those ideals and practices, while others may critique them from different perspectives. But there is no one unified, however broad, area of “expertise” around resource extraction, which as a field of practical knowledge has a culture of expertise that is far more scientific and technical than anything in the ecotourism sector. For that reason, the literature reviews of the two sectors of knowledge have to be organized in a different way, although some of the epistemological categories may be common to both. I focus on debates and trends in applied and critical literature around resource extraction—that is, works primarily by social scientists. As with the previous section, the literature review I offer in this article, while hopefully comprehensive or at least sufficiently representative, is informed by my agenda to identify theoretical and methodological trends that may impede the study of co-occurring processes of ecotourism and extraction—and, conversely, to recognize the trends that can enable such study.

Theoretical and Epistemological Issues in Resource Extraction Studies

As per Erich Zimmerman’s (1933) famous quote, “resources are not: they become.” First of all, it should be mentioned that there is an ever-growing field of literature that does the heavy theoretical lifting on the subject of how resources are constructed; how they become—these questions and processes belie studies that deal with the ascribed “nature” and “value” of extractable resources. Most recent are new resource geographies and ethnographies that focus on temporality (Ferry and Limbert 2008), and materiality (Bakker and Bridge 2006; Kaup 2008) of resources. In some cases even the agency of resources is theorized. For example, Orlove and Canton (2010) have proposed that water be regarded as a “total social fact” due to the social and symbolic possibilities encoded in water’s materiality and its molecular properties, while Bakker (2004) titled her book about water *An Uncooperative Commodity*.

These theoretical perspectives are the vanguard of the established within political ecology ways of studying what Kaup (2008: 1735) describes as “new forms of organization within nature-based commodity sectors, which often function to secure, define, and limit the access to certain types of nature and their benefits.” Scholars and works reviewed in this section contribute in different ways to the work on extractable resources and their social and political lives. They consider different interpretations of resource regimes from the controversial “resource curse” to “resource triumphalism” (Bridge 2001) and illuminate loci where issues of environmental governance, environmental change, and environmental valuations are played out as subjects of ongoing debates about costs and benefits, opportunities and vulnerabilities, exploitations and exchanges, enactments of agency and transfers of sovereignty, economics and “development.”

Probably the most prominent and well-known theory (and theoretical debate) around resource extraction in the social sciences is that of the so-called resource curse. This theory,

first articulated by Auty (1993) and widely used by Karl (1997) and Ross (1999) stipulates that resource-rich developing countries are “paradoxically” unable to mobilize their resource wealth for economic growth, and, over time, experience worse economic growth indicators and outcomes than countries that lack resource abundance. Studies like Sachs and Warner’s (1995) cross-country comparison have argued for a negative association between resource abundance and economic growth. Scholars from different disciplines subsequently either endeavored to refine the theory, like Hodler (2006) who argued that natural resources only impeded growth in fractionalized countries, or tried to provide an explanation for the “curse,” linking mineral wealth to the structure and quality of the political system (Jensen and Wantchekon 2004) or emergence of enclave economies or rentierism (Franke et al. 2009). Others have applied this theory to specific case studies, such as nickel, copper, and gold in Botswana (Iimi 2006), or oil in Chad and Cameroon (Pegg 2005). But there is also a body of literature that interrogates and critiques the entire framework of the resource curse and the epistemological assumptions that inform it. Thus, Watts (2004) critiques the theory as suffering from commodity-determinism and inadequate attention to the impact of specific resource characteristics on politics and conflict; while Lahiri-Datt (2006) draws on her work on informal mining practices to show how the normative hidden assumptions about resource ownership in the “resource curse” framework delegitimize the subsistence practices (and agency) of a wide range of communities. In turn, Weszkalnys (2009: 698) speculates that the “resource curse” literature may be an “academic fad of scholars seeking to engage in a form of ‘useful science.’” However, she points out that it has usefully opened up a new research agenda “that seems to shake up the foundational categories of the disciplines of international relations, economics, and political sciences.”

Do these epistemological paradigms and trends contribute to the blind spot of the ecotourism-extraction nexus? Can they be mobilized to study the nexus? The “resource curse” paradigm echoes certain discourses about ecotourism (such as the “curse or blessing?” question explicitly asked by the likes of Myles [2003] and the discussion of the “curse of success” in sustainable tourism by Stephan [2000]), and offers some resonances and parallels with the “dispossession by conservation” (Gordon 1989) or “eviction for conservation” (Brockington and Igoe 2006) phenomena. Yet it implicitly but powerfully a) demarcates “resources” as extractable and exportable, and b) is firmly rooted in macroeconomics and macropolitics, with its focus on state structures and economic growths. This perspective makes a locale-based or an ecosystem-based focus challenging for reasons that resonate with Lahiri-Datt’s critique. However, if the open research space noted by Weszkalnys can help facilitate a form of analytic engagement with the concept of “resources” that is attuned to paradoxes, and is equally attentive to different types of nature “resources” as potential sources of “goods” or “value,” regardless of their physical mobility or export possibilities, that may be a constructive research direction.

Different genres of critical engagement required for a nexus-centered approach is already present in much of existing scholarship on the political ecology and ethnography of resources and their extraction. Three seminal review articles published almost two decades apart reflected on the production of knowledge about mining, establishing emergent frameworks for “explor[ing] the nexus of the symbolic and the material” while grounded in “concrete locations” (Biersack 2006). Godoy’s now-classic 1985 text “organized” the mining industry as something that could be studied within the frameworks of economic base, social organization, and ideology. Bridge’s (2004) review focused on the intersection of mining, environment. Ballard and Banks’s (2003) review focused less on thematic typologies and more on different positions and constructions of actors in anthropological studies of mining; their critique of anthropological tendencies “to maintain their focus on the more familiar ‘exotic,’ addressing the position of local communities in the vicinity of mines in preference over the less familiar multinational mining corpo-

rations”, resulting in “the figure of ‘the mining company’ lurk[ing] monolithically and often menacingly in the background of many anthropological accounts of communities affected by mining operations” attested to the necessity of ethnographic engagement with the “the exceptional complexity of the relationships that coalesce around mining projects” (Ballard and Banks 2003: 287)—and other forms of resource extraction. Such complexities can (and do) include situations where ecotourism and extraction converge in the same locales, as they either oppose or enable each other.

As with ecotourism literature, I do not wish to recapitulate existing reviews, but to identify trends in the production of knowledge that help illuminate how disciplinary and subdisciplinary differences in “critical resource studies” are constructed and reproduced, and to look at which units of analysis and what sorts of scales tend to be used and privileged by different approaches. What kinds of researchers take community-level or ecosystem-level analyses as their basis? Do specific objects of inquiry and specific disciplinary grounding inspire more policy-level or state-level analysis?

Issues of Scale and Frame in Resource Extraction Studies

Some significant—although by no means exhaustive—trends in the studies of resource extraction include an increasing emphasis on the links between resource extraction and “empire building” on a global scale and the “petroviolece” (Watts 1999) that comes with this project, as well as state building through resource-led development. Reyna frames his 2011 piece on emergent “monster” beliefs in oil consortium “sorcerers” in Chad with a critical perspective on the importance of oil to imperial domination. Friedman (2010) examines the global networks of power around oil. In critiquing what he calls a “resource determinist approach” to oil and violence he attributes to Karl (1997) and Ross (1999), Friedman argues that it is not oil production itself that is important but “the way it is appropriated and re-deployed within the world economy” (2010: 32). In a complementary engagement of the global scope of oil, Ferguson (2005) follows up Scott’s (1998) “seeing like a state” perspective by analyzing oil-related (and thusly territorialized) capital investment in Africa and the newly emergent forms of spatialized order and disorder. Hornborg (2009) draws on the world-systems theory to think through the ways in which the assumptions and expectations of the cultural context of the capitalist world-system construct peak oil. Zalik’s “oil futures” text (2010) links discussions and perceptions of oil “scarcity” with the global social construction of oil prices.

It is not coincidental that all the macrolevel political economy analyses reviewed above connect to one particular form of extraction—oil extraction. In “extraction literature,” oil has long been a site of exploration of issues of global economy and “empire” on global scales. Other forms of extraction, especially mining and logging, while certainly engaged through a political economy lens, feature more in studies of nation building and local nuances than global dominations—although there are some efforts in that direction (Luning’s [2010] follow-up to Scott and Ferguson, “Seeing Africa Like a Mining Company” is one recent example). But mostly, when mining is considered “globally” it is listed among other forms of global exploitation (Bales [1999] names mining as one of the industries that uses slave labor in the “new global economy” along with prostitution, gemworking, and clothmaking), or other types of global multinational enterprises (Dunning and Lundan 2008), or other resource-intensive but not necessarily extractive sectors of global economy like construction, transport, and agriculture (Behrens et al. 2007).

This is not to say that oil extraction and, for example, mining, or other forms of resource extraction should always be analyzed within the same scales. One of my research sites is Ecuador, a nation where the current government has strategically juxtaposed oil and mining industries,

using them to represent different stages in Ecuador's history of itself (with the oil sector symbolizing neoliberal "baggage" and mining standing for populist, state-controlled, resource-led "new" development). Based on my research in Intag, Ecuador—a place where anti-mining activists identify more with anti-mining activists from other countries than with fellow Ecuadorian anti-oil activists because, among other articulated reasons, "oil and mining are just different"—I am convinced that undifferentiated construction of different types of extraction as categorically similar "economic opportunities" or "environmental threats," while useful politically, may prove essentialist and anti-ethnographic. And there is certainly rich ethnographic work on oil extraction that is ethnographically embedded in local realities or in national narratives, even as it deals with the global politics of oil (Gilberthorpe 2007; Sawyer 2004). But there is something revealing about the fact that most recent explicitly theory-making works on oil (e.g., Reyna et al. 2011) draw on diverse local cases to theorize a global framework for studying oil, while Ballard and Banks (2003) encourage the epistemological pursuit of fragmentation, multiplicities, and fluid and complex relationships, in response to the knowledge practices characterized by the monadic dark specter of "the mining company."

This divergent directionality may be connected to certain realities of how the respective extractive sectors under discussion are organized. Thus, there is a big difference between large-scale mining by a transnational corporation and artisanal mining by locals, but there is no such thing as artisanal oil extraction (unless the oil in question is of the olive variety). It may also be the case that oil is more of an undifferentiated phenomenon in Western intellectual public consciousness. There are "oil wars" and "oil imperialism" and "petro-violence" but also "alternatives to oil." Although there is some work on "conventional" versus "unconventional" (like oil sands) oil sources, the distinctions among varieties of hydrocarbons, such as differences between extra-heavy, heavy, light crude, bitumen, or sweet versus sour crude, remain more esoteric in social sciences and in the public consciousness than the difference between, for instance, copper and uranium, or aluminium and sapphires. That may have something to do with why academic work on oil easily lends itself to productive synergy with neo-Marxist political economy that is structured through a study of discrete categories like primary accumulation and added value. At the same time discourses about "mining" (of different kinds of minerals like copper, aluminium, bauxite, uranium, as well as rare earths, and precious and semi-precious stones) are, so far, less oriented to a macropolitical economy analysis, and more attuned either to local and national contexts (as evidenced by the numerous mining-related examples in the next section) or to locally grounded explorations of how transnational commodity chains of specific resources are connected to specific sectors of the global economy (see, for example, Mantz's [2008] analysis of the way coltan production in Eastern Congo services the digital demands of the global economy of knowledge, or Tsing's [2003] analysis of the interplay between the local and the global through the lens of the logging boom in Indonesia and the commodity chains of timber consumption). In addition, and relevantly for considering extraction and ecotourism in tandem, certain forms of mining—but never oil extraction—work with an interesting subset of resources that can be thought of as "amalgam objects" that, as commodities, in their constitution, representation, and interpretation blur the line between resource extraction and ecotourism. These are objects, which, through their particular "uniqueness" (ascribed or constructed though it may be) mediate the paradoxes between the categories of capitalism and nature, or extraction and ecotourism even as they reproduce them. The most obvious examples of these types of "amalgam" or "crossover" objects are certain types of gemstones, symbolically linked to specific locations. As demonstrated by Walsh's (2012) work on how Malagasy sapphires are infused with place-contingent value, and are fetishized in the same way that Malagasy nature is fetishized, or (illustratively) by a recent report titled "The Perfect Setting: Diamond Tourism in

the Northwest Territories” prepared by a consulting firm⁴ to facilitate diamond tourism in the Canadian North and linking and advocating capitalizing on the “perfect marriage combining the unique experiences of northern travel and the magic of the aurora borealis, with the purity and beauty of Canadian diamonds.” Perhaps such phenomena are a part of why mining studies tend to be scaled locally, while oil is constructed as a global resource with local impacts.

In the discussion of scales in the production of knowledge about resource extraction, a backlash of sorts among a certain class of extraction scholars should be noted—a reaction to what Le Billon (2008), in his analysis of “diamond wars” calls “[the dominance] of econometric approaches and rational theory interpretations” that oversimplify or overlook the geographical dimensions of contested resources. Even without “rational theory interpretations,” Marxist analyses like Labban’s 2008 “Space, Oil, and Capital,” which takes a global scale approach to the relationship between the production of oil, capitalist competition, and social production of space, start with large-scale economic categories and use them to illuminate and explain resource geographies as products of geopolitical practices. The more “grounded” approach of much of mining literature starts with particular geographic and ethnographic loci, producing a different kind of analysis.

Having noted these general trends that, for the time being, can be said to distinguish anthropology and political ecology of oil from anthropology and political ecology of other forms of extraction, what follows are some thoughts on significant trends in approaches and frameworks in critical resource extraction studies, across different types of resources. Certainly, the categories are nonexhaustive, and in many cases the texts discussed fit into more than one category. Thus, the reader should approach this not as a rigid taxonomy, but, rather, a reflection on coalescent topic clusters.

Social Movements and Mobilizations

There is an entire corpus of ethnographically rich and theoretically innovative literature that focuses on social movements and political mobilizations around resource extraction: among them Sawyer’s (2004) work on the Ecuadorian oil patch; Kirsch’s (2007) work on the indigenous resistance to the Ok Tedi mine in Papua New Guinea, with a particular focus on the dangers for indigenous actors of deviating from an “antidevelopment” position “expected” of them; Dougherty’s (2011) take on community resistance to gold mining by Canadian junior firms in Guatemala and, also Guatemala-focused, Urkidi’s complementary (2011) reclamation of a “community” as a legitimate unit of decision making in mining conflicts; Ali and Grewal’s (2006) and Horowitz’s (2002) work on community responses to nickel mining in New Caledonia; Kuecker’s (2007) analyses of the emergence of environmentalism as a response to a copper mining threat in Ecuadorian highlands; Watts’s (2008) take on the militancy and “petroinsurgency” in the Niger Delta; Welker’s (2009) case study of village leaders and rural youth in Indonesia living near a mining company’s operation attacking visiting environmental activists; Kaup’s (2008) article detailing how Bolivia’s social movements have approached and utilized natural gas to strategically engage with the processes of capital accumulation. The various theoretical concepts developed out of these case studies include “folk environmentalism” (Kuecker 2007), “environmentalism of the poor” (Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997), and “glocal environmental movement” (Urkidi 2011). Many of these texts, in one way or another, engage with Agrawal’s notions of environmentality—a key concept in work on environment-and-resource related social movements (although no less key is Cepek’s [2011] critique of Agrawal and his meditations on the limits of “environmentality” when it comes to emic categories of indigenous ethnoecologies).

In some cases, ecotourism (and other strategies of constructing nature as a site of inalienable value, rather than circulating goods), is part of the strategic opposition to resource extraction (Kuecker 2007; Stem et al. 2003) and is noted as such in case studies, but often such a perspective reinforces the purported dichotomy between the two, even when merely documenting the ethnographically relevant uptake of this dichotomy for local political uses. Thus, the community-scale focus dominant in “social movements” literature is a helpful platform for exploring the ecotourism-extraction nexus where it occurs, with the caveat that it is more likely to “catch” the cooccurrences in an oppositional dynamic. When the two phenomena are in synergy, that kind of arrangement is unlikely to be on the radar of a “social movements” approach. This is because while increasingly there is work that destabilizes the simplistic David versus Goliath scenario of “community” versus “corporation,” the social movement framework generally focuses on specific, recognizable types of social mobilizations or organized activity that makes tensions and ruptures explicit and visible in concrete ways. Arguably, instances of dispossession for conservation projects and ecotourism produce different (and perhaps understudied) social movements than anti-extraction mobilizations, not least because the alliances and types of access to transnational resources of media and political capital that are possible for anti-extraction activists are often denied to actors dispossessed for “green” reasons.

“Impactology”: Extraction

As with ecotourism, there is a broad category of critical resource extraction studies that could be characterized as “impactology,” where the primary goal of the research is to study the impacts on a particular set of actors or subjects. Because the range of effects and subjects is extremely wide, this may seem like an ineffective category to posit, but it does highlight a particular cluster of research practices and goals—usually concerned with changes over a designated period of time, and focused on specific social actors, or specific environments, whether or not the final goal is to use those actors or environments to represent a larger class of actors and environments.

This is the category that lends itself well to both quantitative and qualitative research rubrics, and is thus as likely to draw economists and development studies scholars or public health scholars as it is ethnographers and other more qualitatively oriented researchers. Lockie et al.’s (2009) longitudinal social impact assessment of the Coppabella coal mine on the community using the “resource community cycle” model; public health assessments like the study of para-occupational and environmental mercury exposure in small-scale gold miners in Nicaragua (Cuadra et al. 2009); a discussion of community health issues during both the “boom” and the “bust” parts of the mining cycle in a northern Canadian mining community (Shandro et al. 2011) represent one end of the research spectrum possible within the “impactology” parameters. At the other end are holistic ethnographic explorations of direct and indirect consequences of extractive industries on various domains of community life—from Walsh’s (2003) discussion of “hot money” and “daring consumption” by young men involved in sapphire mining in Malagasy to the effects of oil money on kin relations in farmer communities of Southern Chad (Hoinathy 2011). Many of these works focus not so much on “material” changes, but on changes in beliefs and ways of meaning-making connected to what often amount to new moral economies.

In general, starting with modern “classics” like Taussig’s (1987) writings on indigenous beliefs emerging around the terror of rubber plantations on the Putumayo River, a rich body of work documenting and theorizing both “occult economies” and broader religious and cosmological transformations around resource extraction has emerged: Werthmann (2003) on beliefs about ill-gotten gold-mining wealth in Burkina Faso; High (2008) on cosmological mediations of envy

around mining wealth in Mongolia; Ekholm Friedman (2011) on child witchcraft during the “oil boom” of Congo-Brazzaville; Horowitz (2008) on the way Christian discourses frame local interpretations of multinational mining in New Caledonia; Golub (2006) on the fundamental disharmonies between Ipili cosmologies and the labor regime of the mining industry. At times these writings overlap with the more general work on the occult economies of neoliberalization, development, and accumulation (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Geschiere 1997) as well as with scholarship that looks at emergence of resources as contemporary forms of “total social facts” stressing the commodity fetishism around extraction practices (Nash 1979; Taussig 1980; Walsh 2010).

As with ecotourism, a certain type of “impactology” research into resources extraction can at times be limited by its own rubrics, resulting in a tunnel-vision research design that does not place chosen empirical metrics into broader structural context. But as a part of a larger structural analysis in a research framework characterized by a mixed-method approach, the emphasis on documenting changes over time, and the predilection for community-level or ecosystem-level, “impactology” can be useful for empirical assessment of complex situations such as the copresence of extraction and ecotourism. In fact, the feature that most “impactology” studies, across the disciplines, have in common is the sort of community-level analysis that provides a good platform for a nexus-cognizant research orientation. Community-level analyses can allow dynamic studies that show how resource extraction industries not only impact specific aspects of community life, but also coexist and interact with other local industries and realities. Although not dealing with ecotourism per se, in terms of setup and methodology, studies like Cartier and Burge’s (2011) work on synergies between farming and mining cycles in Sierra Leone, which argues that small-scale agriculture and artisanal mining are livelihood complements, rather than alternatives, exhibit the kind of dynamic study set-up and methodology that could facilitate a fruitful study of the ecotourism/extraction nexus.

Furthermore, the discussed “occult” subsection of the impactology literature is particularly interesting, as transformations of beliefs can illuminate how tensions, contradictions, and paradoxes emerge—local beliefs do not necessarily distinguish between categories like “sustainable” or “mainstream” development, and, in territories where both types of “development projects” arise, can point to emic perspectives that interpret both as new, and not necessarily different, types of “modern” incursions. These perspectives may reflect true ethnographic experiences of the locals. In my fieldsite in northern Russia, rapid privatization of nature in the post-Soviet period has transformed the beliefs of the Veps, a small indigenous group in a way that makes it visible how both resource extraction and ecotourism projects have become incorporated into their cosmology and discourse as similar, rather than different forces. Whereas historically their cosmology has pivoted around balanced and fair exchange with spirit masters of forests and lakes, their cosmological narratives have recently shifted so that these spirit masters are imagined to have departed due to being supplanted by the new “bad” masters. The latter are private companies who are both aggressively amplifying the logging and the mining activities in the region, and developing the Veps’ lakeshore for luxurious eco-resorts, literally extracting portions of the beaches from local use and passage, both experienced as negative forces of privatization. In my other fieldsite, in the lowland Kichwa villages in Ecuador, narratives circulate of both resource extraction and ecotourism making appearances in shamanic visions (Davidov 2008; Whitten and Whitten 2007). Although the visions take place at different points in time, such “sightings” are often discussed together, as illustrations of the power of shamanism to foresee upcoming significant changes. Not only do extraction and ecotourism coexist in the lowlands of Ecuador, they explicitly converge as prophesied forms of “modernity” for communities becoming entangled with them.

Discussion

When Ballard and Banks (2003) wrote their review article assessing the state of knowledge production of the field, they were explicit about the fact that they felt compelled to do so in response to the “mining boom” as well as the increased recognition of indigenous rights from the 1980s on, and the institutionalization of impact assessments and community inclusion, thus highlighting a much larger pool of actors with complex relationships with mining companies, NGOs, and the state. This research dynamic, focused on a larger pool of social actors is visible in social science literature on human-nature relationships in general. Overall there has been a trend in ethnographic studies of both on-the-ground and transnational dynamics around extraction to follow Ballard and Banks’s call, as monolithic and essentialist representations of local communities engaged in struggles over resources give way to “[drawing] upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes, and repertoires of meaning ... through particular patterns of engagement and struggle” (2003: 98).

This practice in scholarship offers a counterpart to the literature that theorizes and narrates contested resource extraction (especially on indigenous territories) as marking the shift from “traditional” to “neoliberal” economic and social forms. One of the common narratives about neoliberalization of natural resources focuses on the rapid advent of extractive industries in previously “untouched” or “remote” areas (Bebbington and Bebbington 2010; Kuecker 2007; Tsing 2003) resulting in dispossession of the locals. The extent to which such narratives are ethnographically “true” is epistemologically ambiguous. Claims and articulations of “traditional” forms of subsistence are themselves contingent on historical positionalities formed during a succession of “modernities.” Particularly in cases of indigenous communities, who still have to negotiate what Prins (1997) described as “paradox of primitivism,” a discursive distinction between “tradition” and “neoliberalism” can be politically advantageous (Robins 2003). The advent of resource extraction often becomes an iconic moment in discursively separating regimes of “ecological integrity” (and “traditional” subsistence forms) from regimes of “ecological disembedding” (and extractive capitalism). In the same vein, strategic use of environmentalist rhetoric can, in some cases, link the advent of ventures like ecotourism with a reclamation of territories, and either opposition to or reversal of extractive activities. Since such “oppositional” discourse is frequently profiled by the media, and is emphasized by the pedagogical scripts of many ecotours, this becomes the mainstream understanding of what extraction and ecotourism can do for and to communities, and how they relate to each other. Given that trend, increased anthropological and critical geography engagements with cases where the inception of resource extraction is not and cannot be framed as the iconic moment of dispossession, the line in the sand between ecological holism and alienation, as well as the cases where ecotourism is not an “empowering” activity but a site of dispossession by conservation (Brockington and Igoe 2006), or an instance of corporate greenwashing, make a valuable contribution to anti-essentialist political ecology (Escobar 1999) and the critical study of human-nature relations. This non-essentialist ethnographic approach to extraction and to ecotourism that highlights the plurality of meanings and stakes involved, exemplified by work like Slater 2002; Walsh 2003; Carrier and Macleod 2005; Wadley and Eilenburg 2005; Stonich 2006; Vivanco 2006; and West 2006b can only be enhanced and thickened by empirically engaging with the nexus of ecotourism and extraction, as more and more fieldsites lend themselves to that kind of study.

So far, though, it appears that no research design exists that explicitly theorizes them as a nexus. There are many books, both monographs and anthologies that critically engage with ecotourism in ways that range from concept critiques to “impactology.” There are also sophisticated examinations and critiques of resource extraction within frameworks of environmen-

tal anthropology, critical geography, rural sociology, and other disciplines that draw on the political ecology approach. But, on the whole, even sophisticated analyses of ecotourism and resource extraction either explicitly (through juxtaposition) or implicitly (through omission) engage these two concepts as divergent development trajectories. This is the case even when the field and the study scope lend themselves to a “nexus” perspective, although there is some existing work that may prefigure such an approach (e.g., Che’s [2006] work on the efforts of Forest County in Pennsylvania to diversify its economy by developing ecotourism based on its unique hardwood forests produced by timber harvesting).

Once a theoretical foundation for studying ecotourism and extraction together is in place, and once it is recognized as a necessary and desirable way of focusing and framing research, what are the practical ways in which the two phenomena can be studied as a nexus? Can there be an empirical model, a methodological approach that would be applicable in multiple fieldsites? I conclude this article by proposing two such approaches, in hopes that many more will be generated by scholars working in “nexus” fieldsites currently and in the future.

One approach could be based in empirical, ecosystem-scale or locality-scape analysis of a place where ecotourism and resource extraction are copresent. It could be achieved through environmental ethnographies that draw comparative ethnographic and ecological analysis of communities in “nexus” areas and focus on the range of experiences and outcomes for local actors, empirically engaging with the common assumptions that resource extraction degrades the environment and harms its denizens, while ecotourism conserves the environment and benefits its denizens (and that, consequently, ecotourism can be a part of the “environmental offset” for resource extraction, the way it is supposed to be in the Chad-Cameroon pipeline case). The optimal way of studying the nexus through this approach would be a combination of ethnographic projects and ecological surveys designed to empirically assess the impact of ecotourism and resource extraction on the communities experiencing the effects of both. The ecological surveys would need to overlap in time with ethnographic fieldwork to ensure mutual dialectical feedback, where, for example, discoveries of certain environmental impacts could then be addressed ethnographically. Conversely, ethnographic research could yield data that may suggest environmental changes that would need to be documented and analyzed. Of course, all ethnographic and ecological data would be contextualized by a historical and institutional analysis of the central actors, networks, and dynamics pertinent to the political ecology of the region.

The second approach focuses on the aforementioned phenomena that blur the line between resource extraction and ecotourism. Such “crossover” objects—often types of stones or wood—are promoted in identification with the nature of the places. They are products of natural processes,⁵ and valued as such, yet in order to be marketed and sold they have to be extracted. So, such “amalgam,” or more accurately, “integrative”⁶ objects are fundamental to both extraction and ecotourism enterprises in the same locales, and thus can be starting points of study and key figures in interpretive frameworks of how nature is constructed, valued, and used in these places. In addition, activities like “trophy hunting” in safari tourism can be interpreted in the same way (as explicitly extractive activities which are, nevertheless, iconic aspects of ecotourism in that particular location). Sometimes, iconic activities (rather than objects) associated with the two respective industries themselves merge into a single amalgam, as in cases where versions of extractive activities become a part of the “ecotour package” (so, panning for gold is a staple part of ecotours in Ecuadorian Amazon), or in cases of “recreational mining.” “Crossover” phenomena like that can serve as “theory machines” (Galison 2003; Helmreich 2011) to reconceptualize the schismogenesis between resource extraction and ecotourism and help destabilize the categorial difference between the two on a conceptual level. This approach, although inherently limited, can lead to either theoretical reconceptualizations of how a specific site of nature is

being constructed and “developed,” or can serve as an entry point that uses a “materiality” frame for an environmental ethnography grounded in a political ecology perspective.

Both approaches proposed in this coda can build on much of the literature reviewed in this article, and achieve a new and warranted research agenda: a systematic (and, ideally, comparative) study of the copresence of resource extraction and ecotourism, including how the range of possibilities and reasons for why such a convergence may manifest, and the range of outcomes of this copresence for the local actors and landscapes.

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■ NOTES

1. Abstracts submitted for a panel I coorganized for the 2012 European Association for Social Anthropologists meeting on the topic included further ethnographic examples of such copresences: between rubber plantations and ecotourism in Laos; larimar mining and ecotourism in southwestern Dominican Republic; the cut flower industry and ecotourism in Kenya; ecotourism and oil extraction around the Sartsoom-Temash National Park in Belize.
2. Anonymous review for the Integrated Programmes 2010 WOTRO subsidy, project # W 01.67 .2010.026.
3. Over time the “hosts” and “guests” dichotomy approach morphed into ethnographically thick explorations of the nuanced dynamics of the performances (on both sides), spaces and encounters of ecotourism.
4. The North Group, “The Perfect Setting: Diamond Tourism in Northwest Territories” (2004), http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/Publications/2007/Diamonds/diamond_setting.pdf (accessed 1 April 2012).
5. Although crude oil and uranium are also natural substances, they do not represent the “pure” “authentic” nature in a way that can be consumed and marketed.
6. “Integrative” can describe the function of such “amalgam” objects, because amalgamation pertains to how the objects have to straddle two industries; but as “theory machines” these objects have an integrative function as centerpieces of sorts in the imaginary Venn diagrams between extraction and ecotourism in specific places.

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