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## Fields of Green and Gold

Territorial hunger, rural planning, and the political ecologies of high-end golf

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# Fields of Green and Gold

Territorial hunger, rural planning, and the political  
ecologies of high-end golf



**LUND**  
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Erik Jönsson

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

by due permission of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University, Sweden.

To be defended at Världen, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Geocentrum 1. 13 Sep, 1 pm

*Faculty opponent*

Distinguished Professor Don Mitchell

Geography, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University

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| <p>Abstract</p> <p>Fields of Green and Gold is a multiple case study analysing the placing and establishment of two large-scale, high-profile, upmarket golf developments with the aim of exploring a political ecology of high-end golf. The cases studied are Bro Hof Slott Golf Club in Upplands-Bro, opened in 2007, and Trump International Golf Links Scotland in Aberdeenshire, opened in 2012. Reading these two cases together permits shedding light on the radical but multifarious environmental transformations undertaken to produce landscapes for the production and selling of upmarket golf experiences. The cases together also provide an opportunity to analyse the complex planning processes which these high-profile developments are enmeshed in, and the ways through which planning practices are reshaped in dealing with developments potentially reorganising rural landscapes and local/regional economies in new ways. Identifying a gap in how tourism studies has generally not engaged with political ecology and in how political ecology has seldom engaged with tourism or leisure the dissertation concludes that the laborious socio-ecological orderings necessary to establish spectacular golf landscapes are almost illegible from the standpoint of prominent tourism studies strands. Bro Hof Slott and TIGLS are – in their respective ways - constituted through a variety of political, economic and socio-ecological connections. The production of golf experiences is made possible through radically remaking established planning practices, but this is never uncontroversial. We thus encounter struggles concerning how legal and planning frameworks should relate to each other in governing rural socio-ecologies, for whom and what purposes the countryside should be ordered, and what the socio-ecologies transformed actually are. While built on landscapes shaped by myriads of forces – human and non-human throughout history the developments also spur novel visions, both utopian and dystopian, for the countryside.</p> |                         |                   |
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# Errata list

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Erik Jönsson

| Page/Line        | Original text  | Corrected text  |
|------------------|--|---|
| 9/ Figure        | Fig 2.   | Fig 1.  |
| 17/15            | A first more permanent golf course was established in Hovås, south of Gothenburg in (Ekermann, 2007).  | A first more permanent golf course was established in Hofås, south of Gothenburg in 1904 (Ekermann, 2007).  |
| 18/23            | The Worldwatch Institute estimates that irrigating the world's golf courses consumes 9,500,000 m <sup>3</sup> /year (cited in Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). | The Worldwatch Institute estimates that irrigating the world's golf courses consumes 9,500,000 m <sup>3</sup> /day (cited in Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). |
| 81/4             | Irene Seth, Moderates – Chairman of the Municipal Assembly, Upplands-Bro   | Irène Seth, Moderates – Chair of the Executive Committee, Upplands-Bro  |
| Article II, 2/18 | On the way to Bro Hof Slott visitors thereafter first pass a rune-stone - popularly referred to as the Bro stone or Assur's stone - erect since 1866     | On the way to Bro Hof Slott visitors thereafter first pass a rune-stone - popularly referred to as the Bro stone or Assur's stone - erect since 1886    |

# Fields of Green and Gold

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Erik Jönsson



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Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Human Geography

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Front cover photo: The Stadium Course at Bro Hof Slott Golf Club, photo by Erik Jönsson



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# List of papers

## Paper I

Jönsson, E. (*Submitted to peer-reviewed journal*) 'Bro Hof Slott and the Political Ecology of High-end Golf'

## Paper II

Jönsson, E. (*Submitted to peer-reviewed journal*) 'Brogård backwards: The high-end golf landscape and the nobility as structuring force'

## Paper III

Jönsson, E. (In press) 'Contested expectations: Trump International Golf Links Scotland, polarised visions, and the making of the Menie Estate landscape as resource' *Geoforum*

## Paper IV

Jönsson, E. & Baeten, G. (Accepted and revised) "‘Because I am who I am and my mother is Scottish’: Neoliberal Planning and Entrepreneurial Instincts at Trump International Golf Links Scotland' *Space and Polity*

# Acronyms

DDT: Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane  
DPEA: Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals  
EPA: United States Environmental Protection Agency  
GC: Golf Club  
GDP: Gross Domestic Product  
KPMG: Klynveld, Peat, Markwick, Goerdler  
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation  
PGA: Professional Golfers' Association  
SFS: Svensk Författningssamling  
SGF: Svenska Golfförbundet (*the Swedish Golf Union*)  
SGU: Scottish Golf Union  
SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest  
STERF: Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation  
TIGLS: Trump International Golf Links Scotland  
UNWTO: (United Nations) World Tourism Organisation  
USGA: United States Golf Association

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# 1. Introduction

In 2007 Bro Hof Slott Golf Club - by Lake Mälaren some 35 km northwest of Sweden's capital Stockholm - opened its first course. This development turned agricultural land and flooded beach meadows into a landscape where the developer explicitly aimed to establish a world-leading tournament course. Five years later, in 2012, American property tycoon Donald Trump's first golf development on European soil opened its first course. Trump International Golf Links Scotland (henceforth TIGLS) along the Scottish North Sea coast in Aberdeenshire refashioned agricultural land and sensitive shoreline sand dunes into what the developer claims would be the world's greatest golf course. In both cases rural landscapes were remade to cater for new uses, and for being utilised by a new clientele of golfers and golf tourists. Land previously shaped by farm labourers would now be shaped by golf course architects and greenkeepers, by entrepreneurial visions and immense investments<sup>1</sup>.

These cases illuminated how "the country takes on a new profile, a new face and new landscapes" (Lefebvre, 1976:84) through the production of a particular kind of leisure space. Now thoroughly re-ordered these landscapes provide opportunities for upmarket golf-consumption in scenic settings, and the establishment of spaces providing such experiences is this dissertation's topic. These golf landscapes are important to scrutinise for three interrelated reasons. Their production sheds light on the environmental transformations undertaken to order upmarket leisure landscapes, on whose enjoyment the countryside is reshaped for, and on how the radical reshaping of rural landscapes becomes enmeshed in planning decisions and discourses.

In writing this dissertation the probably most common question I have received is whether I am a golfer. I am not. I have never played - bar from a couple of driving range sessions, occasional miniature golf rounds during

---

<sup>1</sup> See [brohofslott.se](http://brohofslott.se) and [trumpgolfscotland.com](http://trumpgolfscotland.com)

summer afternoons, and a disastrous round of pitch and put along the Brighton and Hove seafront where I managed to place my first stroke firmly on the hood of a car in the parking lot. Thereafter I am often asked whether I am for or against golf course developments. Given this dissertation's topic this is no doubt a relevant question. It is however impossible to give a general, across the board, answer. Generalisable impacts to judge golf developments *qua* golf developments are lacking. Golf remains an internally differentiated activity. Akin to what Bourdieu states of tennis, golf is a 'democratized' sport where different sub-populations of players coexist, 'generally in separate spaces and times' (Bourdieu, 1984: 211). A round played at Malmö Burlöv Golf Club is not the same as a round at St Andrews Links, popularly referred to as the home of golf. A round at the latter, in turn, is not the same as a round at any of the Mediterranean courses fiercely competing for scarce amounts of water (Markwick, 2000). Low-key courses and the major tourist magnets of famous golf developments worldwide are simultaneously part of the same golfing world, and worlds apart. Therefore any evaluation must rest on a thorough analysis of the relations and processes constituting specific courses and golf developments (cf. Ollman, 2003). Shedding light on such processes and relations means disclosing the *particular* socio-natural dynamics of *particular* golf landscapes. This can productively be done by centring on these golf landscapes from a political ecology perspective, viewing them through a lens focused on the inescapably power-laden refashioning of socio-ecologies (cf. Robbins, 2011).

Throughout the dissertation I scrutinise the relations and processes producing Bro Hof Slott and TIGLS. Thereby I create an account of environmental governance, future visions, golf's territorial hunger (Lowerson, 1994), and the making of rural landscapes into resources from which golf experiences are extracted. Emphasis is put on how upmarket golf experiences are made possible through the establishment of spectacular golf courses as leisure spaces. Following Benjamin (1989:48) I aim "to detect the crystal of the total event in the analysis of the small, individual, moment". Upscale golf landscapes here provide 'sideway glances' (cf. Žižek 2008) on the multi-scalar and complex nature of rural planning, environmental discourses, and how political constellations are reshaped in encountering these projects.

Such focus potentially lays bare the relations and 'metabolic processes' (cf. Swyngedouw, 2006) golfers – often unwittingly – become part of. Underneath, above, and beyond these exists a plethora of relations together constituting the leisure space. Golfers tread on ground resulting from many millennia of geophysical processes (cf. Price 2002) and centuries of so-called human history.

These grounds are subsequently appropriated by those actors today discovering its economic potential as leisure space, and thereafter thoroughly refashioned to satisfy golfers' expectations. Turfgrass, over decades specially developed to create the optimal golfing surface, is laid out and continually maintained in ways that direct the working rhythm of those employed to cater for courses (cf. Robbins 2007a, USGA, n.d.). Sophisticated drainage and sprinkler systems are dug down to regulate humidity. Fertilisers, fungicides, and pesticides are applied according to what particular grass types require, according to the expectations golfers have on these emerald-green landscapes, and increasingly according to the requirements of being able to state that the golf course is managed in an environmentally sustainable manner (cf. Dahl Jensen, 2013; STERF, 2012). Underneath any course vast networks of non-humans (i.e. all those which affect processes without being human actors) co-constitute courses as hybrid landscapes (cf. Latour, 1993; Whatmore, 2002; 2006).

But a focus on relations producing (and reproducing) high-end golf developments blurs boundaries not only between the human and non-human. This focus simultaneously emphasises the various sites and processes elsewhere – nationally and internationally – shaping and shaped by these spaces (cf. Cronon, 1992; Gezon & Paulson, 2005; Mitchell, 2008; 2012). Courses could not have been etched into the countryside (legally, that is) without the consent of state bodies governing planning processes, potentially bringing in a plethora of political actors into the life of any golf course. Acknowledging the many forms of state intervention that high-end, high-profile, golf landscapes can be subject to here emphasises the impossibility of dividing the world into economic and extra- or non-economic processes (cf. Callon 1998, Mitchell 2002, Prudham 2008). State actors, NGOs, firms, etc. participate in the constitution (and contestation) of these landscapes. Here Bro Hof Slott Golf Club and TIGLS illustrate the local manifestations of how rural planning philosophies, political problem formulations, and a since long globalised golf trend, come together in the reshaping of rural landscapes to offer leisurely retreats and upmarket recreation.



## 2. Aim and research questions

The immediate aim of this dissertation is to analyse the establishment of high-profile, high-end, large-scale golf developments, underscoring the roles of state actors in these establishments. I seek to elucidate the dynamics of such developments through analysing two cases, TIGLS and Bro Hof Slott Golf Club. The broader aim is to grasp these landscapes as continuously struggled over socio-ecologies and, in that way, to contribute to a nascent ‘political ecology’ perspective on tourism and leisure. In this I strive to grasp two related issues undoubtedly broader than this particular dissertation. These are, first, the role of leisure developments in the material transformation and globalisation of the countryside (McCarthy, 2008; Woods, 2007), and second, the roles that economic elites play in these transformations (Beaverstock, 2004; Duncan & Duncan, 2004; Hay, 2013). A study of two top-tier golf developments makes it possible to scrutinise the complexities and contradictions of processes radically re-ordering rural landscapes to offer upmarket leisure opportunities.

Throughout the dissertation I strive to answer two questions focused on the production of leisure spaces from which golf experiences are extracted (and extracted is here deliberately chosen to underscore the role of the material landscape appropriated and reshaped). Taken together, these questions hold the potential to disclose the broad range of forces set in play as landscapes are re-valued, redefined and materially transformed to make possible the production of a particular kind of golf experience.

1. What happens when a landscape becomes subject to plans for a high-profile, large-scale, and high-end golf development?

- Which actors become involved in defining, debating, and reshaping the landscape?
- How are political constellations rearranged through such developments and how are the developments shaped by existing political structures?
- What kind of discourses are mobilised to situate and frame developments, and how do developments influence discourses and planning practices?

2. What are the sites of production for high-end golf experiences?

- How are these sites constituted?
- How is the production of golf experiences made possible, and what forces work against this possibility?
- How do these developments cumulatively build on and reshape a pre-existing landscape?

### 3. Grasping globalised golf

In comprehending the transformation of rural landscapes into upscale golf destinations, the notion of ‘global countryside’, has great bearing as broader framework. This global countryside is, Woods (2007:499-500) suggests, about rural localities as ‘hybrid assemblages of human and non-human entities’ introduced into and interpenetrating with new networks of global interconnectivity which changes, but does not obliterate, the local.

Rather, the networks, flows and actors introduced by globalization processes fuse and combine with extant local entities to produce new hybrid formations. In this way, places in the emergent global countryside retain their local distinctiveness, but they are also different to *how they were before*. (Woods, 2007:499-500, emphasis in original)

This underscores a mesh of interwoven forces acting upon (or rather through) rural landscapes. A certain kind of elite leisure countryside, McCarthy (2008:129) emphasises, is shaped by architects and designers (and I would add entrepreneurs) “plying their trades in a growing number of far-flung rural locations”. The landscapes of this global countryside:

variously function as sites of wealth-generation for the transnational rich and super-rich (from farming, mining, energy production and property holdings), and as their playgrounds. Fashionable rural resort areas can act as hubs of transnational elite social space just as much as the gated communities and exclusive clubs of global cities (Woods, 2013:123)

In grasping high-end golf landscapes this aspect is central. In Aberdeenshire and Upplands-Bro alike wealthy developers employ world famous course architects to fine-tune topographies capable of attracting prospective prosperous golfers globally. These developers introduce rural localities into novel global networks,

and this is made through processes refashioning hybrid assemblages, interweaving human and non-human entities in new forms. Bro Hof Slott and TIGLS are, framed as high-end leisure spaces rather than high-end golf developments, intertwined in global networks of upscale ski-resorts, island paradises (Cousin & Chauvin, 2013) and privileged countryside retreats (Duncan & Duncan, 2004; Wiener, 2007)<sup>2</sup>. But for a study centring on the socio-ecological dynamics of Bro Hof Slott and TIGLS, framing them specifically as *golf* developments is important, shedding light on the socio-ecological peculiarities of this kind of leisure space.

Golf is today a force wresting rural landscapes into global networks. Golf courses have become a world-wide feature (see figure 1 below), with golf tourists criss-crossing the earth and golf courses ranked against other courses globally (cf. Golf Course Architecture, 2013). There are today in total approximately 56 million golfers and 35,000 courses, half of which lies in the US (Tourism Intelligence, 2010, Saito, 2010). Based on this, a reasonable estimation is that golf developments globally cover up to 3.5m ha while golf courses alone cover 1.4 -2.1m ha (cf. Briassoulis, 2007; Gössling, 2002; Saito, 2010)<sup>3</sup>. Golf course developments would thus cover about the same size as the entire Taiwanese island, or the entire land surface of the Netherlands. A particular kind of Scottish seaside landscape has become established everywhere from the sandy sceneries of Dubai, to the blackened lava fields of Iceland and suburban real estate developments in the US (see Bale, 2003). Grasping this, and thus situating the study conducted in this dissertation, necessitates placing golf historically, contemporary, and as environmental transformation.

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<sup>2</sup> Networks in plural rather than a network in singular is important here, since economic elites are a highly stratified category, relatively segregated not only from 'non-elite' settings, and groups but also internally segregated into lower and higher echelons of millionaires, multi-millionaires, and billionaires (cf. Frank, 2007)

<sup>3</sup> Gössling (2002, see also Saito, 2010) estimate that a golf course needs 40-60 ha land while Briassoulis estimates 50-60 ha for a golf course alone and at least 100 ha for a golf course development. It should be noted that many upmarket facilities utilise significantly bigger sites, and that resorts require much more land than stand-alone courses



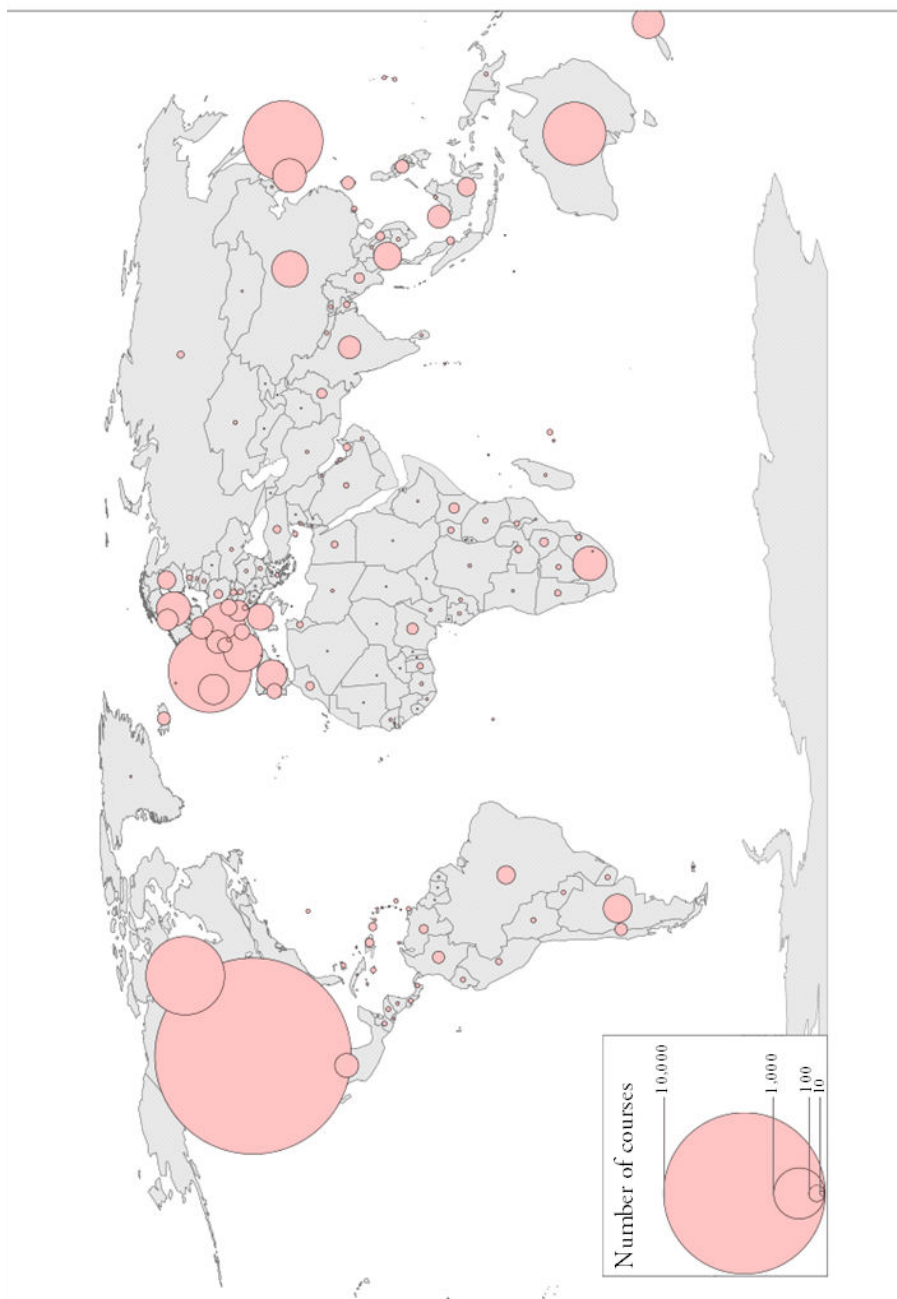


Fig 2. Distribution of the world's golf courses. Map compiled by Erik Jönsson. Data source: Golf Digest, 2012

## Placing golf historically

As Ollman suggests, processes of things' "becoming is as much a part of what they are as the qualities associated with how they appear and function at this moment" (Ollman, 2003:116). Understanding golf developments (both upmarket and more 'ordinary') today consequentially necessitates not only studying their immediate qualities, but also an eye backwards on the processes historically coming together to shape a 'golf world'. Generally traced back to 15th century Scotland (although Chinese and Netherlander origins are also brought up), a starting point is often set at 1457, when King James II in an Act of Parliament forbade the playing of "Gouff". Golf was early on played on the links, the Scottish seaside dunes, and the first golf clubs were here founded in the early 18th century (Price, 2002). Royal Calcutta, established in 1829, was the first club outside the British Isles (but then within the confines of the British Empire), while Pau Club in 1856 became the first course on continental Europe, catering to British holiday-makers. The first real golf club in the US was founded in 1888 (Ekermann, 2007; Price, 2002). From the very beginning golf's development went hand in hand with the conquests of the British Empire, British holiday preferences, as well as with the transformation of British landscapes through railroad developments (Price 2002). Evident over the long haul is also a turn from golf with improvised clubs on public land to golf in regulated spaces with formalised dress codes, gentrifying golf (Ceron-Anaya, 2010). As Ceron-Anaya (2010:344-5) comments the "proliferation of private golf clubs meant that the game was played in spaces physically and socially delimited, which still resembled aristocratic private gardens, and thereby offered golfers the illusion of an honourable lifestyle". But it has simultaneously been emphasised that golf (at least in the US) during the second half of the 20th century underwent popularisation and democratisation (Adams and Rooney, 1985:438).

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century golf was characterised by a hierarchy of professional players subordinated to (generally more affluent) amateurs (Ekermann, 2007), mirroring a broader view on amateur ideals in sports (cf. Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007). A distinction between various participants has in other words existed alongside a distinction between participants, and non-participants or spectators (cf. Bourdieu, 1978). Golf is inherently about so much more than the rounds played, changing in tandem with both changing fashions within the game and with political- and economic processes. Apart

from a basic dynamic of clubs wielded in order to transport balls from tee to hole in as few strokes as possible few aspects remain constant (and even this is somewhat simplistic given how constant technological innovations in ball and club construction altered also this). As Perkins comments, course architects in the 19th century rarely employed maps when laying out courses. But the golf industry has since then – due to the development of zoning systems, environmental concerns, and commercialisation – become formalised in its appraisal of potential sites, and rules of best practice have evolved (Perkins 2006). With technological developments golf courses and their surrounding environments were reshaped.

The development of turf science after the Second World War allowed courses to become much more controlled environments, often now relying on regular application of fertilizers and pesticides and a carefully automated mowing regime. [---] The systematic use of earthmoving equipment instead of hand labor allowed courses to be imposed onto environments, rather than matched to landforms, and the golf buggy led to an inexorable spread of cart paths across what were formerly grassy fairways (Perkins 2010:315-6).

The history of golf is thus the history of landscapes reshaped as leisure spaces, together with the technological, political-economic, and (as in 19<sup>th</sup> century Calcutta) geopolitical forces making their production possible.

In placing golf's history its entanglement in broader economic trends and patterns is vital (cf. Adams & Rooney 1985, Neo 2010). Adams and Rooney (1985) conclude that during the 20<sup>th</sup> century the fortunes of golf clubs depended on the fortunes of the US economy. Different regional economic characteristics are also mirrored in the kind of golf facilities being built. The tourist-oriented economies of states such as North and South Carolina as well as Florida implied a commitment to provide golfing opportunities to a wide range of visitors, and thus a commitment to public rather than private facilities (Adams & Rooney 1985). Likewise golf was used to attract, particularly middle-class, holidaymakers for long stays at Brighton and Bournemouth in early 20th century UK (Vamplew 2010).

## Placing golf today

Golf is today a multi-billion dollar industry branching into real estate development, professional sports, fashion, and tourism (Bale, 2003; KPMG, 2008a). Growing tremendously over the last three decades golf is world-leading among sports in terms of total economic expenditure (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006), with the global turnover of golf tourism alone estimated at £10bn (€11.7bn) (Tourism Intelligence, 2010). The total amount of golf courses tripled in Europe between 1985 and 2011, meaning that the continent now harbours 6,740 courses. In Europe, the number of registered players during these years went from 1.3m to 4.4m (KPMG, 2012). The US, likewise, saw an increase from 11.2m golfers in 1970 to nearly 38m in 2004 (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). KPMG (2008a:5) in an illustrative (if also boosterist) example equates the annual impact of the golf industry in Europe, the Middle East and South Africa to the total impact of the 6 Olympic Games held between 1984 and 2004.

USGA, governing golf courses in the US and Mexico, estimates a cost of \$1.6 – 4.5m (€1.2 – 3.4m) solely for construction a 18-hole golf course, and frequently more than \$10m to put a new course on line (USGA, n.d.). Other estimates have costs ranging from just over \$521,000 (€386,000) for a minimalist course to \$2,218,000 (€1,642,000) for an ‘average’ course and \$5,814,000 (€4,307,000) for an upscale course (Turner Macpherson Golf Design, 2007). To such figures can additional tiers be added where, regarding investments, merely the sky is the limit. The kind of course that can break into rankings of the world’s best courses makes estimates for upscale courses seem absurdly modest, as does the construction of the courses that cultures of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure can be built around (cf. Veblen, 1899). At Shadow Creek, sporting the US’ highest green-fee<sup>4</sup> at \$500 (€349) and only accessible by limo, a mere up-date of the course was for example a multi-million endeavour (Olmsted, 2013).

KPMG (2008a) divides the golf economy in Europe, the Middle East and South Africa into six clusters in turn subdivided into two groups; core industries and enabled industries. Core industries concern golf facility

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<sup>4</sup> I.e. the price to play a round (on a full-scale course 18 holes)..

operations, golf course capital investments, golf supplies, as well as golf tournaments and endorsements. Already this core contains a broad range of activities, from the sale of golf-brand gloves or caps, via new course developments, to green-fees and membership fees. The golf economy is thereafter broadened by the inclusion of two clusters of enabled industries; golf tourism and golf real estate. Noteworthy is that the direct effects in revenues of the enabled industries at this point together accounted for almost half of the direct revenues of the golf economy, with golf real estate alone accounting for 32,5% (KPMG 2008a:8). Regional differences are however accentuated. For some regions, such as Great Britain or in Scandinavia, core industries account for the vast majority of golf's economic impact whereas in France, Spain and Portugal, enabled industries accounted for over 80% of golf's contribution to GDP (KPMG 2008b:20). Golf's globalised countryside can in other words be just as much about niche real estate developments as about golf, the sport. In 2006 more than 150 golf-related real estate projects were being finished in Europe, the Middle East, and in South Africa, together comprising 17,000 units and making up 2.25m<sup>2</sup> of residential space. Almost three quarters of these properties were built in the South of France, Portugal and Spain with an additional 14% being built in South Africa (KPMG 2008a:24). This was, however, a distinctively pre-financial-crisis development.

As Harvey (2006:369) remarks, speculation "in land may be necessary to capitalism, but speculative orgies periodically become a quagmire of destruction for capital itself", imposing contradictions "upon the very physical landscape of capitalism itself" (Harvey, 2006:372). Speculation in and high-hopes for golf developments pre-crisis have left a material (and as such ecological, see Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003) legacy of unfinished resorts and courses (cf. Donegan, 2011). The economic downturn affected both golf real estate and golf tourism. In 2010 42% of golf tour operators reported that the average golf tourist budget had decreased - a marked distinction from pre-crisis surveys emphasising how high-end packages were becoming more popular (KPMG 2008c, KPMG 2010a). Post-crisis, 44% of courses reported decreased revenues, resulting in a situation where less than half of all courses were profitable while almost a quarter made an operating loss (KPMG 2011).

But the effects of economic turmoil have been highly variegated. Before the financial crisis UAE (together with China, Eastern Europe, and India) was seen as a future hot spot by golf course architects in a regional golf economy partly fuelled by "the growth of the expatriate population from traditional golfing markets such as Great Britain and Ireland, the US, South Africa and

Australia” (KPMG 2008a:12), further underscoring the continued entanglement of golf in much broader political and economic developments (cf. Ceron-Anaya 2010, Price 2002). Despite losing some high-profile projects, golf developments in the Middle East and North Africa (post-crisis but pre-Arab spring) moreover fared better than in many other regions. It is also in these regions that courses were most active in making capital investments after the financial crisis (KPMG 2010b). Significant differences in the fortunes also hinge on the structure of particular facilities. Resort courses and courses linked to residential communities were hit harder than courses on average. In Europe, the Middle East and Africa, 78% of these kinds of courses claimed that the global economic downturn had a negative impact on their operations, a claim shared by 66% of all courses (KPMG, 2010b: 6).

## Placing golf, Scotland

In Scotland courses occupy *at least* 20,000 ha. At present day prices “courses, clubhouses and related facilities probably represent a capital investment in excess of £500 million” (€770 m) (Price, 2002: 16)<sup>5</sup>. 236,000 registered golfers today play 578 golf clubs (SGU, 2013).

But a hierarchy of courses nationally is rather remarked; with a mere 68 courses generating 75% of all green-fees from overnight visitors. 22 high-earning links (coastal) courses together receive 37% of all visitor rounds (SQW, 2009:18, 31). Golf tourists in other words particularly target certain predominantly coastal landscapes. In much the same way tourist numbers can also be broken down (and this is important for comprehending proponents’ high hopes for TIGLS – see article IV). US golf tourists were in Scotland before the 2008 financial crisis generally the most high-spending golf tourists, spending just above £3,300 (€4,870) per trip. The presence of this group, characterised by “a preference for better quality accommodation and playing at the highest profile links and championship courses” however fell significantly following the financial crisis (SQW, 2009:36, 38).

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<sup>5</sup> These figures however seem to modest, appearing to only account for actual course surfaces and only direct investments rather than the full range of investments in courses, land acquisitions, and residential development. They are furthermore now a decade old, lacking developments happening since 2002.

In 2002, Price described the evolution of Scottish golf as a story of two booms, the first 1880-1909, with 242 courses opened, and the second 1980-2001, with 103 courses opening<sup>6</sup>. As Price suggests concerning the second golf boom this was also a period when luxurious projects were dreamed up.

In the 1980s there were numerous proposals for multi-million pound golf-related property developments in Scotland. Championship golf courses, five-star hotels with leisure and conference facilities, upmarket housing and holiday chalets, and in a few cases marinas were proposed, often by developers who had no knowledge of the Scottish golf and housing markets. Fortunately, few of these projects were actually started and only four (Letham Grange, Brunston Castle, Loch Lomond and Westerwood) encountered serious financial problems (Price, 2002:37).

Likewise KPMG suggests that the “market has shown that there is no strong demand for secondary homes attached to golf courses where the weather can be unpredictable all year round” (KPMG, 2013:26) and only list £3m (€3.2m) golf-related real estate sales for 2011. 98% of Scottish courses operate without real estate components, but several high-profile projects are planned (KPMG, 2013). Derelict 18th century Loudon Castle in East Ayrshire is planned to be turned into a 5 star hotel in a £300m golf resort plan (BBC News, 2013). £500m investments are planned for gWest in Gleneagles (KPMG, 2013:13), where the developer envisions “an exquisite golf course and clubhouse, an ultra-luxury hotel with concierge services, world-class dining, destination spa, leisure and entertainment facilities” (<http://www.gwest.co.uk/the-estate.php>). Difficulties for golf resort developments at large, and for golf-related real estate in Scotland, have not stopped dreams of radically refashioning rural landscapes for upscale leisure.

Placing golf in Scotland, furthermore, also places golf in rural landscapes where countryside access is guaranteed through the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 (Scottish Parliament, 2003). Even upmarket developments, the ‘ultra-luxurious’ ones, are on land accessible to the public. Applications for golf course developments are filed with local authorities who in making their decision relate

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<sup>6</sup> KPMG (2013) states 597 courses (i.e. not necessarily clubs) today, meaning that Scotland now has 69 courses more than in 2002, when Price listed 538 (Price, 2002).

to local development plans and to regional structure plans, for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire for instance currently North East Scotland Together, establishing visions for 2001-2016 (Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire, 2002). Golf course developments potentially relate to a varied list of planning issues, ranging from policies concerning rural developments, archaeological remains, and green belts to the capacity of surrounding roads in accommodating flows of golfers (see Scottish Office, 2008/1994)<sup>7</sup>. How golf courses are dealt with planning-wise to a large degree depends on the scale of these developments, with golf courses using existing buildings or lacking associated development easier to accommodate. “Associated development such as new housing is however likely to be incompatible with green belt policy unless such sites can be justified as part of an overall strategic appraisal of housing land requirements in a structure plan” (The Scottish Office, 2008/1994:13). But large-scale developments can instead be more favourably regarded concerning economic ambitions. Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire for example assert that their “structure plan and local plans must seek to encourage and support the tourist industry in the North East” (Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire, 2002:26, see also Scottish Executive, 2005).

## Placing golf, Sweden

Also in Sweden ‘access to nature’, and thus the right to access private land is legally stipulated, as part of *Regeringsformen*, one of the four laws in the Swedish Constitution (SFS, 2011: 2 Kap §15). Golf developments are subject to legally binding detailed development plans approved at the municipal level. The possibility of accepting such planning applications are also related to how these fit into the municipal master plan and with national policies. Developments can potentially become entangled in a variety of national planning policy considerations and environmental governance issues, such as green belt policies and issues outlined as national interests. Such explicitly stated national interests relevant to golf course developments include recreation, Natura 2000 areas, and conservation areas – all included in the environmental code (*Miljöbalken*) (see SFS, 2013: Kap 3 and 4). Developments can also raise issues regarding biotope protection (SFS 2013: Kap 7 §11), and – as will be evident in Article I and II –

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<sup>7</sup> Though Scotland is part of the United Kingdom, planning is conducted on the Scottish scale.



shoreline protection (see, SFS, 2013: Kap 7 §13-18). As I will return to in Article I and II, golf course developments might in rural planning, largely due to the agreements made in detailed development plans, also be seen as a vehicle for conservation of particular eco-systems and for preservation of cultural landscapes.

Undoubtedly golf gained popularity much later in Sweden than in Scotland. Throughout its early history one can trace a distinct UK legacy. The first course was built on the Sager family's summer residence Ryfors Bruk in 1888, laid out by English gardeners and ordered by two brothers who had acquired their golf interest in England (Ekermann, 2007:66). This development connects further with a UK pattern, where many "of the best inland courses have indeed been crafted from the grounds of former stately homes" (Perkins, 2010:314). The first golf club was thereafter established in Gothenburg, where 4 holes were to serve the city's British population. A first more permanent golf course was established in Hovås, south of Gothenburg in (Ekermann, 2007).

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century golf displayed rather strong growth, reaching the highest figures concerning participation in 2004. In five decades, from the mid-50s onwards, Sweden went from 38 courses and 7,000 registered golfers to just over 450 courses and 554,000 golf club members (Jansson, 2004; SGF, 2013). SGF suggests that golf from the beginning of the 1980s to today "has gone from being called an upper class sport to becoming a popular sport" (SGF, 2007:12)<sup>8</sup>. Club membership has however fallen continuously for close to a decade, with 482,000 registered golfers and 482 clubs in 2012 (SGF, 2013). Courses today occupy about 30,000 ha (Bucht, 2008).

According to SGF, there was in 2007 SEK 30-50 billion (€3.2-5.4 bn) invested in Sweden's golf clubs and about SEK 3 billion (€320m) known investments over the coming years (SGF, 2007). These investments were predominantly planned for golf clubs in the Stockholm, Gothenburg, or Bohuslän regions, hence particularly targeting certain parts of the Swedish countryside. Crucial is also that planned investments do not necessarily translate into actually finished courses. With the financial crisis the massive Holiday Club project by PGA National in Bara, in the southernmost part of Sweden, for instance, folded. Here some SEK 1.5 bn (€107m) investments were planned in establishing a water park, 300 timeshares and a hotel together with a

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<sup>8</sup> All translations in this dissertation are done by the author.

prestigious golf course. To date, none of the real estate and recreation elements at this development have been finished (cf. Nilsson, 2008). Some clubs also faced hardships even before more global-scale financial turmoil became evident in 2008, with Scandinavian 18 hole courses then displaying some of the lowest average revenues on the European continent (KPMG, 2007).

But some high-profile upmarket developments have materialised even though membership figures have fallen. The opening of Sand GC in Jönköping in 2006 was followed by a small 16 room hotel. Though the holiday facilities at PGA National in Bara were put on ice due to financial crisis 16 suites were finished, enabling golfers to stay on the second floor of the club house. Bro Hof Slott Golf Club is in other words not the only upmarket or high-profile development to be established during the last decade.

## Evaluating golf

How are we then to grasp golf courses as socio-ecologies produced? In this section I will trace some fundamental features of golf courses, and how golf courses are currently evaluated. The history of golf is not only the history of a quintessential Scottish shoreline landscape gone global. It is just as much the history of the production of such a landscape in various highly different settings through acts of creative destruction (see Castree, 2002). The forms of such creative destruction are highly dependent on the kind of setting a golf course is established in.

The Worldwatch Institute estimates that irrigating the world's golf courses consumes 9,500,000 m<sup>3</sup>/year (cited in Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). In the Mediterranean golf courses may consume up to 10,000m<sup>3</sup> of water per hectare per year, the equivalent of the average annual water consumption of 12,000 people (Briassoulis, 2007). A 60 ha course would by these standards use 600,000,000 litres of water each year. But in other settings water use is not regarded a major issue. Scottish and Scandinavian summers for instance often tend to be rather rainy, and drainage might thus become more important than watering. Whereas Briassoulis (2007:450) states that golf course development "may produce ecosystem and landscape fragmentation and perturbations with negative and unknown long term consequences for the dynamic stability, variety and connectedness of the local/regional resource base" other evaluations are more appreciative. Golf developments do not *necessarily* entail

environmental degradation. But they do make environments into something else than before, with long-lasting negative *and* positive impacts for both humans and non-humans. In some cases courses can in benign ways contribute to creating eco-systems otherwise lacking in modern agricultural landscapes. In an extensive literature review Colding and Folke (2009) find that many ('first world') courses enhance biodiversity, but that the effect of any particular course is deeply dependent on what it is fashioned from.

Golf-course construction involving replacement of native habitats generally leads to a regional decline of biodiversity. Conversely, well-planned and adequately designed and managed golf courses may enhance biodiversity in ecologically impoverished landscapes through an increase in landscape diversity (Colding & Folke, 2009:205).

Golf courses can, perhaps above all, re-introduce wetland elements to agricultural landscapes during two centuries increasingly turned drier through embankments and tile drainage. Surveying how UK golf courses compare with the habitats from which they were constructed Tanner and Gange (2005) found higher bird and tree diversity compared to surrounding farmland. For beetles higher diversity was not as pronounced, but the number of individuals captured was much higher on the course than on adjacent sites. For bumblebees no difference in diversity could be found, but abundance and species richness were higher on the course.

It should moreover be noted that the golf course is far from a homogenous surface, constituted by about 60% roughs, 29% fairways, and 5% tees and greens (driving range practice areas make up the remaining 6%) (EPA, 2005). Some parts, such as the rough, require relatively little maintenance while greens and, after them, bunkers, are the most heavily maintained parts of the course (see USGA, n.d.). Non-playing areas represent a "significant amount of land that can be used for nature conservation purposes" (Gange et al. 2003:63). Some golf course sites have been shielded from potentially more harmful urban or intensive agriculture development for more than a century - and numerous initiatives strives to combine course management and ecological consideration. (Gange et al. 2003).

But rather different evaluations of golf courses co-exist. Wheeler & Nauright (2006) remark that golf courses apply about seven times as much dry and liquid chemicals as large-scale agriculture - approximately 20 kg per treated

hectare, per year. How chemicals are applied and the chemicals used co-evolve with broader attitudes. US Golf course management discourse has for example during the last five decades shifted from vehemently protecting the rationality of ‘plant protectants’ such as DDT and mercury-based fumigants to regarding the environment as a major issue. But management discourse also underscores the ability to self-regulate, with the industry in the face of critique willing to modify behaviours only to a degree (Millington & Wilson, 2013). The dangers of potentially harmful chemicals can be discussed, but not the existence of (more) golf course developments per se (see also Neo, 2010). With an expansion of golf courses promoted by golf industry bodies, moreover, less chemicals per course may still translate into more chemicals introduced into the environment overall (Millington & Wilson 2013).

## Summary and transition

Evident from these various takes on the socio-ecological merits and problems of the golf landscape is that analysis should avoid reifying the course. Courses’ setting and the kind of creative destruction initiated to produce a golf landscape matters immensely. But to merely account for historical development, the material flows involved, and the ecological implications golf developments can have, gives a rather anaemic depiction. Hence the following two chapters will be devoted to conceptualising high-end golf landscapes through constructing a theoretical lens that makes these come alive as struggled over socio-ecologies, and thereafter how I have gone about to study Bro Hof Slott and TIGLS following this conceptualisation. To bring life to analysis political ecology (the topic of the next chapter) offers a vantage point not only to survey the material transformations undertaken to reshape rural landscapes for new uses. It also, and maybe more importantly, offers a vantage point to survey the political nature of such transformations asymmetrically producing winners and losers among both humans and non-humans. Just as with any landscape, the production of the golf landscape is essentially a question of power (cf. Mitchell, 2008).

# 4. Towards a political ecology of high-end golf

## The fundamentals of political ecology

Throughout the last forty years (starting with Wolf, 1972) political ecology as approach for studying socio-ecological relations has followed a rather winding road partly corresponding to established ‘turns’ (most) evident within the social sciences (cf. Escobar, 2010). Robbins (2011:20, emphasis in original) outlines political ecology as a term describing “a *community of practice* united around a *certain kind of text*” which broadly “can be understood to address the condition and change of social/environmental systems, with explicit consideration of relation of power”<sup>9</sup>. A ‘generous term’ (Robbins, 2011), political ecology does not signify a single methodological, topical, or theoretical approach. Scholars are concerned with a number of issues ranging from ‘race’ and colonial legacies in resource control and conservation policies (cf. Kosek, 2006; Peluso, 1992; Tsing, 2005), gendered natures (Rocheleau et al. 1996), environments and knowledge production (Forsyth, 2003; Goldman, et al. 2011), to political economy (Prudham, 2005) and/or the acting of non-humans (Bennett, 2010; Robbins, 2007a, 2007b). Subsequently a loosely defined field with highly blurred boundaries some political-ecological commonalities can still be discerned. Above all is a shared acknowledgement that “[p]olitics is inevitably ecological and that ecology is inherently political” (Robbins 2011:3). Regardless of particular theoretical and methodological direction, this establishes a bottom

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<sup>9</sup> Political ecology here overlaps with a number of other texts and communities (such as environmental history, landscape geography, agrarian studies etc.) potentially analysing similar issues.

line in society as indivisibly socio-ecological (see also Haraway, 2008; Latour, 1993; Moore, 2010a; 2010b), with any enquiry therefore equally political and ecological. (Paulson et al., 2005:32).

Here the manifold ways that power is conceptualised within political ecology should be noted. Throughout 40 years issues studied, theoretical starting-points, and methodological lenses have been in constant transition, a fact that has sometimes sparked tensions (cf. Vayda & Walters, 1999; Walker, 2005). The probably most widely cited definition centres on political-economic power to assert that political ecology:

...combines the concerns of ecology and a broadly defined political economy. Together this encompasses the constantly shifting dialectic between society and land-based resources, and also within classes and groups within society itself (Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987:17)

Although one should be wary of overly 'stagist' descriptions, Blaikie and Brookfield's focus on political economy combined with ecology corresponds to what Escobar (2010) calls a first, pre-constructivist, generation of political ecology. A constructivist generation of political ecology thereafter paid more attention to epistemological issues, acknowledging nature as a powerful, and discursively remade, idea (cf. Cronon, 1996; Williams, 1983). Lately, Escobar claims, one can begin to trace a third generation, a post-constructivist political ecology shifting focus from questions concerning epistemology to ontology. This strand draws on a range of approaches including "assemblages, networks and actor-networks, relationality, non-dualist and relational ontologies, emergence and self-organization, hybridity, virtuality, and the like [displaying] renewed attention to materiality, whether through a focus on practice, or relations, networks, embodiments, performances, or attachments between various elements of the social and the biophysical domains" (Escobar, 2010:97-8). This generation has during the last decade brought together versions of political ecology with Science and Technology Studies as well as emphasised the acting of non-humans (cf. Bennett, 2010; Braun & Whatmore, 2010; Whatmore, 2002).

Evident is thus that 'politics' and 'ecology' are rather open terms. Whether politics is considered as a question of who controls the means of production, the structure of environmental discourses, or how particular non-human elements exert power in socio-ecological constellations is bound to lead to

rather divergent enquiries. I would however hold that it is unduly simplistic to single-handedly choose *one* line of inquiry. They are in no sense incompatible. Already Smith (2008) in his highly influential account of the production of nature combined nature as materially and discursively remade. Four decades of political ecology has provided a fantastic toolbox where the 'pure' conceptualisations of particular schools of thought are continuously refashioned to fit particular inquiries. To account for the manifold ways that high-end golf developments are permeated by various kinds of power exertions analysis can fruitfully combine several political ecology traditions simultaneously. As I will return to, 'nature' vis-à-vis golf developments is both what is reshaped through flows of investments and political decisions, an idea guiding what golfers want to encounter, and a 'composite term' (Castree, 2005) denoting a variety of forces potentially refashioning the course.

## Tourism, leisure, and political ecology perspectives

2012 saw just over 1bn tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) and global international tourism receipts at \$1,075bn (€837bn) (UNWTO, 2013). During the last 50 years mountain chains (such as the Alps) and island group (say the Balearic Islands) have been thoroughly transformed to facilitate leisure-based economies. Tourist industries have moreover become central target of a number of variously scaled state policies. Tourism, in short, has remade the face of the earth.

Yet leisure, tourism, or even consumption as such, receives surprisingly little attention from a political ecology perspective. A fairly recent 400+ page volume bringing together some of the world's most renowned political ecologists contain chapters on livestock industries, honeybees, and fisheries (as well as on gene research and slum-dwellers) but only mentions tourism in passing (Peet, et al. 2010; but see Ghertner, 2010). In tourism studies – though widely engaging with sustainable tourism, green tourism and eco-tourism – political ecology as lens remains scantily used (but see Campbell et al., 2008; Cole, 2012; Gössling, 2003; Stonich, 1998), even though tourism remains as perpetually political and as inevitably ecological as all other processes and practices. To shed light on tourism's power-permeated material transformations a political ecology lens can here be constructed, first through acknowledging the few existing attempts to develop this perspective in tourism- and leisure studies

and thereafter through reading between the lines of existing texts dealing with the political economy of tourism as well as with those texts scrutinising tourism as socio-ecological, “fundamentally an *earthly* business” (Gren & Huijbens, 2012:156, emphasis in original). To construct this lens is what I will devote the remainder of this chapter to.

## Early work on the political ecology of tourism

The article usually credited as the first to explicitly utilise political ecology in tourism studies was Stonich's (1998) 'The Political Ecology of Tourism'. Despite its title this is not *primarily* a conceptual article, but rather a case study of tourist developments, water, and environmental health in the Bay Islands, Honduras. Finding herself with very little guidance in the form of earlier political ecology accounts, Stonich suggests that political economic analysis of international tourism contains “a number of important characteristics associated with the expansion of tourism in the Third World that are central elements of political ecological analysis as well” (1998:30). Based in these she centres especially on the multi-scalar power struggles over water availability and water quality to provide a rather scolding critique of what tourism meant for the Bay Islands.

In short, the consequences of tourism have included increased social differentiation and a growing gap between rich and poor; the assignment of the majority of ladinos and Islanders to low status, low paid, temporary jobs; reduced access for local people to the natural resources on which they depend for their livelihoods; escalating prices for food, manufactured goods, and housing; land speculation and spiralling land costs; increased outside ownership of local resources; and deterioration of the biophysical environment (Stonich, 1998:38).

Five years later Gössling (2003) edited a volume on the political ecologies of tourism in tropical islands, with chapters on ten cases in the global south all but one located on islands between the tropic of Cancer and the tropic of Capricorn (Ilha Grande, the outlier, is just south of this area). The view of tourism's socio-ecological impacts is here significantly more positive.



While tourism may often have detrimental consequences for the environment, it can also contribute to conservation. First, protected areas have become important tourist attractions in many tropical countries, and tourism thus increases the interest of governments to safeguard ecosystems or to preserve areas in a natural state (Gössling, 2003:24).

This highlights a prominent trend within contemporary political ecology, what Robbins (2011:5) calls a shift in focus from human destruction of environments to the production of socio-ecologies, co-constituted by many kinds of human and non-human actors. As Castree (2002) emphasises capitalism is not per se about environmental degradation, but about creative destruction. Enterprises, on all scales, are transformative – and these transformations can very well include environmentally benign actions or a will to conserve specific sites. This, as Gössling (2003) partly acknowledges, does not mean that conservation is uncontroversial. Conservation can indeed be an important way through which the interests of powerful actors are strengthened at the expense of less powerful groups (cf. Bryant, 2002; Kosek, 2006). Though illuminating important issues for a political ecology perspective it should also be noted that Gössling's volume is rather uneven, with some chapters clearly more well-versed in what a political ecology perspective can do and has been historically than other chapters. The volume also advocates a curiously policy-oriented aim of utilising political ecology perspectives to support tropical islands' moves towards sustainable development (cf. Gössling, 2003:30). Gössling seems unable to shake off an applied ambition to assist tourist industry and policy makers, a feature which has elsewhere been criticised for hampering critical analysis in tourism studies (cf. Ateljevic et al. 2009, Hall, 2010).

In the latest addition to this small group of explicit political ecology works in tourism studies, Cole notes (again) that it is surprising how little political ecology has been used in examining tourism before analysing how outside investors in Bali – aided by the local state – “have driven unsustainable developments with no regard for water resources” (2012:1237). Much like other political ecology accounts she puts emphasis on how the effects of socio-ecological transformation are highly asymmetrical, with degradation attributable to outsiders benefitting from tourism most clearly felt by locals.

Evident from these few accounts is a breadth in how political ecology work in tourism studies evaluates tourist developments. Sometimes positive results are emphasised, and sometimes focus is on unsustainable degradation of specific socio-ecologies for the benefit of powerful groups (tourists, and tourism

development tycoons) elsewhere. But the examples above simultaneously deal with settings similar on one important point. They all analyse developments in the global south (Bali for Cole, Bay Island – Honduras for Stonich, Tropical Islands for Gössling, parks and protected areas in the ‘third world’ for Campbell et. al.). Many theoretical expositions and socio-ecological configurations remain untapped. The most thoroughly mapped area of the world – the global north - generally remains uncharted territory.

There is thus a need to broaden the kind of socio-ecologies studied to reach a fuller understanding of tourism and leisure as radically remaking the earth. The lure of specific golf courses need not be that they are located in ‘exotic’ settings, but rather that they are well-designed or symbolically laden enough to offer a certain kind of golf experience. The vast majority of the most prestigious courses are in Europe or the US (cf. *Golf Course Architecture*, 2013). A political ecology of high-end golf is often, if not exclusively, a ‘first world’ political ecology (cf. McCarthy, 2005).

## On natures and political economy in tourism studies

Though few tourist scholars have self-identified as doing political ecology, many do offer fundamental insights for furthering this perspective. Several strands provide ground for scrutinising the socio-ecologies produced and destroyed as spaces are reorganised to become leisure spaces. These strands make possible the development of a political ecology of ambiances, studying an earth remade as leisure landscape through the combination of the ‘soft’ seductions of sun, sea, and sand (and sex, and shopping) with the sometimes brutal exertions of power necessary to produce the spatial preconditions for such seduction (cf. Allen, 2003; 2006).

The social construction of leisurely behaviour has since long pre-occupied many tourist- and leisure scholars. As Rojek (1985) remarked a sociology of leisure needs a sociology of pleasure; an analysis of why activities become construed as pleasurable. Many texts have dealt with the social construction of desirable places, illustrating the discursive remaking of various spaces as leisurely landscapes worth visiting together with their material remaking, as railroads (and later airports) made distant spaces increasingly accessible (Aitchison et al. 2000; Corbin, 1994; Franklin, 2004; Löfgren, 1999). Franklin (2004) could be singled out as particularly inspirational in this vein, connecting the English countryside’s remaking as tourist destination not only to its discursive

remaking, but also to a budding range of Actor-Network-Theory, Science and Technology-Studies, and Deleuzian influences within tourism studies where the roles of non-humans are explicitly accounted for (cf. van der Duim et al. 2012).

tourism cannot be a purely social activity, or at least its social nature also articulates necessarily and in complex ways with non-human objects, systems, machines, bureaucratic processes, times, timetables, sites, photographs, tents, flows, desires, visitors, businesses, locals and so on in a complex materially heterogeneous assemblage (Franklin 2004:284).

Franklin focuses on tourists interpellated to experience the country by the forces of nationalism and the decentralisation of high culture (on interpellation outside of and in political ecology see Althusser, 2008; Robbins, 2007a), expressing a simultaneous attention to ecology and to power relations. Drawing on some of the same conceptual inspirations Gren and Huijbens (2012) criticise how tourist phenomena is mapped onto the reference plane of the social in a 'de-earthified social spatialism' to instead put emphasis on tourism as earthly, supplanting the reference plane of the social for the Earth as "plane of reference and provider of consistency for all actor-networking" (2012:160-3).

In order to further Gren & Huijben's conceptual argument the position of tourism as earthly *economic* activity should be underscored. Tourism represents the "largest scale movement of goods, services, and people that humanity has perhaps even seen" (Greenwood, 1989:171). As Lefebvre (1976:84, emphasis in original) asserted the leisure industry meant "a large-scale commercialisation of specialised spaces, a division of social labour which is projected 'on the ground' and enters into global planning". Tourism is undoubtedly a rather complex phenomenon and studies of tourism can (depending on specific focus) illuminate a variety of issues.

Tourism is a phenomenon that comprises a collage of producing and consuming moments. It is essentially a global process, which manifests itself locally and regionally, and explicitly involves the construction of place. As such, the study of tourism provides great potential to reveal the dialectics of production and consumption, the tensions between the global and the local, and core issues associated with social and spatial polarization (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001: 386).

During the last decades tourism studies has seen a number of attempts to introduce (Britton, 1991; Williams, 2004) and re-introduce (Mosedale, 2011) political economy. But due to texts' format as academic journal articles and (text)book chapters intellectual engagement with political economy has often taken the form of brief mingles rather than a sustained focus on how tourism is permeated by political-economic relations (but see Mosedale, 2007; Rojek, 1985). Two facets unite almost all accounts dealing with the political economy of tourism and leisure. They are a) short, and b) primarily conceptual. Both of these aspects must be transcended in order to develop a political *ecology* perspective. Article-length accounts, though easily digested, often leave little room for explicating the many ways through which socio-ecological relations are refashioned through tourist developments<sup>10</sup>. The conceptual nature of many accounts, moreover, result in canonised (if insightful) articles such as Britton (1991) repeatedly recounted at the expense of theoretically informed empirical research.

What Britton (1991:475) influentially argued was that “we need a theorisation that explicitly recognises, and unveils, tourism as a predominantly capitalistically organised activity driven by the inherent and defining social dynamics of that system, with its attendant production, social, and ideological relations”. Likewise Urry (1995:129) emphasised that “the consumption of tourist services cannot be separated off from the social relations within which they are embedded” (see also Adorno & Horkheimer, 1997; Debord, 1979; Lefebvre, 1976; 2008; Vannegeim, 2001). Tourism and leisure takes the form of a rather diversified set of commodified experiences - from a night spent at a roadside motel to a day at an expensive London spa, from a hike through the remote Cambodian wilderness to the rollercoasters and ice cream parlours of Disneyland, California. Tourism is, as Debbage and Daniels (1998:23) comment “no simple product but, rather, a wide range of products and services that interact to provide an opportunity to fulfil a tourist experience that comprises both tangible parts (e.g., hotel, restaurant, or air carrier) and intangible parts (e.g., sunset, scenery, mood)”.

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<sup>10</sup> This might seem like a contradiction given that this is an article-based dissertation, but as I will return to later each article herein sheds light on a specific aspect of the political ecology of high-end golf. For the broader conceptual project the articles should be read together.

The groundwork for a political ecology perspective can here begin by emphasising all experiences as socio-spatial. In tourism “the qualities and ambiance of places and sites are a critical element in the selling of experiences and commodities and the encouragement of consumption” (Britton, 1991:475). Socio-spatial is here a great bridging concept in that no activity exists outside of space relations, and that no space exists outside nature. In the words of Lefebvre (1991:123) the “raw material of space is not, as in the case of particular objects, a particular material: it is rather nature itself, nature transformed into a product, rudely manipulated”. An industry confronted with and reliant on ecological production processes must, as Prudham (2005:13-16) underscores, deal with nature as land, nature as time, and nature as form. The properties of the commodity produced merge with the biophysical properties and rhythms of the substances and settings that go into its making to constitute the socio-ecological relation. Political ecology, often quite literally, means grounding discussions on issues otherwise seen as social. Experiences are socio-spatial, and therefore socio-ecological, relations. Acknowledging this enables elaborating on experiences as extracted from spaces materially, politically, and discursively transformed. The production of leisure spaces is always the production of leisure natures (cf. Smith, 2008). There is nothing whatsoever intangible – in the sense of immaterial – about scenery, mood, or sunset given how these are inalienable from spaces experienced. Setting is in itself a spatial concept, undoubtedly hinging on what is physically present. How specific tangible environments affect the mood of consumers is a prominent theme for applied place-marketing literature (cf. Bitner, 1992, 2000). The ‘intangible’ sunset as part of the experience requires the very tangible production or retention of a landscape geared to allow for sunset experiences. To comprise part of the experience this setting sun must be visible, rather than hidden behind office blocks, or rows of chimney stacks. The production and reproduction of sceneries is consequentially inseparable from struggles remaking how humans and non-humans can inhabit the earth.

In securing such scenic settings state interventions play an indispensable role. As O’Connor (1998:164-5) emphasises of production in general, “the state places itself (or mediates) between capital and nature, with the immediate result that the conditions of capitalist production are politicized”. The necessity of land ‘ultimately, in the most absolute sense’ make politics and political strategy part of the picture (Lefebvre, 1991:323f; see also Elden, 2010) Land is fundamentally a political category grounding economic activities in sites administratively and politically subdivided into states, regions, and local-scale

polygons. As I flagged in describing golf in Sweden and in Scotland, flows of invested capital thus become inescapably entangled in environmental legislation, greenbelt strategies, heritage conservation, etc., underlining the impossibility of dividing the production of golf landscapes into an economic sphere and a non-economic sphere (Mitchell, 2002; Prudham, 2008).

[States] do not organize the actions and economic behaviours which already exist, outside of state action; they format these actions. Could we say that the waffle exists independently of the waffle-iron? Of course not. Similarly, we can't say of an organized market activity that it exists without the state (Callon 1998: 40-41)

But tourism is not only about state decisions and circulation of capital to the spaces invested in. Though, as Fox Gotham (2002) underscores, the consumption of ordinary commodities - such as postcards and keepsakes are important, tourism is also built on another kind of circulation. Tourism "involves people travelling to locations that are consumed as spaces of consumption, instead of the circulation of commodities among people." (Fox Gotham, 2002:1753). The consumption of experiences thus differs from the consumption of all those commodities readily crisscrossing the globe. Here a political ecology perspective should strive to illuminate the dynamics of those natures firms desperately want consumers to notice, visit, and consume where much previous political ecology meritoriously shed light on environments *hidden* from consumers' views (cf. Watts, 2001). Tourism studies therefore actually have much to offer a political ecology perspective, where the spaces of consumption have to date often been problematically black-boxed (but see Heyman, 2004). Such black-boxing is impossible in scrutinising an industry where the prime commodity – the experience is generally consumed as it is produced. The tourist or leisure-seeker experiences both service and space simultaneously, in encounters "immediate, embodied and geographical" (Gibson 2010:527). Non-storable yet fixed, encounters weave together the bodies of tourists, tourist industry employees, and specific sites at specific times. As Gibson (2009:529) states the "The 'trick' of tourism capitalism is its ability to commodify entire places and all they contain; to spill outwards from the edges of organized capital to saturate all other elements of place". Land (and thus natures) is indispensable for tourist businesses. This is the dynamic which

sets in play all those forces constituting leisure spaces, and this is the dynamic that a political ecology perspective should centre on.

## In the nature(s) of golf

No other sport occupies and manages such large areas of green space and no other sport facility undergoes as many daily inspections as a golf course (Dahl Jensen, 2013:3)

That leisure practices only exist to the extent that specific spaces become organised to cater for leisurely activities is simultaneously self-evident bordering on banal, and a starting point for bringing in the wide range of actors co-constituting (if often in contradictory and conflicting ways) leisure spaces. The peculiarities of the political ecology of high-end golf follows directly from the spatial peculiarities of the golf landscape (cf. Giulianotti, 2005). For golf developers, developable space itself – a pre-existing reshapable topography – is what oil is to airlines or what cotton is to jeans manufacturers. This is essentially what notion of golf as territorially hungry (Lowerson, 1994) suggests. It is in search of the right kind of scenic settings, to which prospective golfers can travel reasonably easy and which can be turned developable, that golf course developers ‘stalk the earth’ (cf. Smith, 2008). Golf landscapes are, moreover, rather unbounded. They interpenetrate with their entire surrounding, including vistas over vast areas not necessarily owned by the company producing and selling golf experiences. Territorial hunger can thus become a hunger to somehow exert power over a wider world impossible to fully shade off from golfers’ view.

As leisure practices and the leisure industries build on distinctively spatial encounters between consumer and spaces consumed leisure seeps down into a topography perpetually ‘more-than-human’ (Whatmore, 2006), in some senses malleable to human influences but simultaneously relatively irresponsive (a firm can for instance optimise a seaside vista, but can rarely dig a sea). Part of what makes a political ecology perspective apt to analyse golf landscapes is the way that appropriated spaces form the foundation for golfers’ experiences.

The flat course along the river valley that rarely dries out sets off a different experience from the sandy soil of the coastal links. The open moorland course is very different from the flat enclosed wooded fairways of the plain. And golf is now global; it's played in almost every kind of environment. A desert course in Arizona is totally unlike new courses cut through the rainforest in Malaysia to satisfy the demand of Japanese hospitality tourism. Urban courses surrounded by golfing communities evoke different impressions from golf resorts isolated amongst wetlands. (Perkins 2010:314)

But the environments appropriated and transformed never passively await their transformation, and are not *naturally* found as resources. Rather, the tangible spaces providing the 'intangible' moods crucial to golf experiences *become* resources in the meaning of “a potent social category into which – and out of which – can slip those parts of the non-human world to which humans attach value” (Bridge, 2009:1218, see also article III). Golf course developments are undoubtedly about how flows of capital reshape the face of the earth. Immense amounts of investable assets are ploughed in to generate the preconditions for producing upmarket golf experiences, and various state bodies play key roles in allowing and reshaping these transformations. The relation of capital to these specific spaces internalises the decisions of states which “have come to play a key role in the management and maintenance of capitalist growth at all spatial scales, from the local to the worldwide” (Brenner & Elden, 2009:17, see also O'Connor, 1998; Lefebvre, 2009a; McCarthy, 2007).

A “golf course is a piece of nature” (Dahl Jensen, 2013:13) and golf is undoubtedly an activity that participants see as taking place in and with nature. In a survey conducted by the Swedish Golf federation in the late 90s male and female golfers alike listed experiencing nature as the most important reason to play golf (Janson, 2004). The same basic pattern was found in a recent survey conducted by the Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation (STERF):

Some overall elements have an influence on the whole golf experience. The main issue among players is the nature experience. This element has the greatest impact on the golf experience in combination with the design of the course (Dahl Jensen, 2013:12)



Evident is however that what is desired is an encounter with a *specific* nature – well-kept lawns - rather than with any nature as such. The production of golf landscapes are inherently intertwined with discourses on what a beautiful/enjoyable setting is. Fungal attacks, puddles of water in bunkers, and clover are perfectly natural features, but ‘matter out of place’ (Douglas 2002:44) on the golf course, detracting from the golf experience (Dahl Jensen, 2013). Wheeler and Nauright discuss the ‘Augusta National Syndrome’<sup>11</sup> as referring:

to the desire of participants, managers and superintendents to have the course they utilize most often resemble the magnificence of those captured in all their full-colour, high-definition glory nearly every weekend. Courses are designed to closely mirror those that host the best televised tournaments (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006:430)

Producing the spaces fulfilling such desires often require colossal transformations and laborious maintenance. Establishing such spaces planning-wise also requires developers to utilise ‘magical visions’ (Tsing, 2005) compelling actors to see a landscape which does not yet exist. As planning applications are filed, as key planning decisions are made, these spaces (as leisure spaces) exist *only* as future potentiality. These spaces can at this point only be discursive landscapes, albeit with the present topography as the canvas upon which future visions are laid out. Through neat architectural drawings and glossy prognoses of future economic performance, developers paint a picture of a future landscape which politicians subsequently relate to, adding their visions to the same canvas. The (already in itself political) landscape becomes (further) politicised as a variety of actors compete to define what it actually is (a key theme for article III).

The golf landscape is constituted (discursively and materially) through relations with the rest of the world (of labourers, capital investments, fertiliser industries, tourist agencies, guide books, golfers, etc.), and simultaneously also a socio-ecological relation to the myriad of other existences together constituting the landscape. The golf course remains earthly - constantly remade by weather

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<sup>11</sup> Augusta National in Augusta, Georgia, hosts the Masters Tournament, one of the four golf tournaments considered ‘majors’. Golf Course Architecture in 2013 ranked this course as the fourth best, globally (Golf Course Architecture, 2013).

and wind, birds and bees, sinkholes and moles. To the pre-constructivist and constructivist inspirations one can thus fruitfully add post-constructivism (Escobar, 2010) to the political ecology lens. Especially because of the expectations golfers have on the course as piece of highly manicured nature the lawn makes demands from the moment it is laid out. “[M]onocultural lawn cultivation imposes a set of economic relationships between grasses, weeds, chemicals, companies, and people” (Robbins, 2007a:xvii). Engineering landscapes to always look as green as possible, ordering non-humans to this end, is certainly no simple feat. Thus golf courses simultaneously become spaces for the consumption of golf experiences, sites for the often labour-intensive production of these commodities, and sites where other commodities (pesticides, fungicides, etc.) are applied. The golf course is inevitably dependent on both an inherited landscape, and on a number of rhythms – biophysical, geophysical, seasonal – together interpellating those working the land (cf. Robbins, 2007a). The course, once laid out, is never a stable thing.

A political ecological perspective on upscale golf developments here chimes well with how Bennett insists on taking serious the many ways that non-humans act – what she refers to as thing-power (Bennett, 2010:5). To work the golf course is to have your working day structured by thing-power, but so is playing the course. Emphasis on the ways that courses affects the player and how this differs from more standardised playing fields is often an important source of self-identification for golfers, setting them aside from the participants of other sports (cf. Shier, 2010). Winds cause ball trajectories to alter radically. Wet grass doesn’t behave as dry grass does - causing the ball to roll further or shorter once it lands after each stroke.

## Summary and transition

And what does then a political ecology of high-end golf mean? First of all it should again be stressed that experiences are extracted. They result from how various objects are situated spatially, and are thus inescapably tangible. Experiences furthermore result from the processes through which objects and places gain cultural meaning. The ways the experience sits in a symbolically laden space refashioned to cater for new uses can fruitfully be underscored. In this, two important additions to earlier work on political ecology are crucial. First of all this implies that *space itself*, rather than spatially situated objects

(such as gold nuggets, diamonds, or salmons) is the resource. Second, spaces are radically transformed as simultaneously spaces of production and spaces of consumption – a significant difference from, say, diamonds where the mines of Sierra Leone are hidden from upmarket jewellers elsewhere. High-end golf landscapes are structured to ‘seduce’ (Allen, 2003; 2006) potential golfers to come to them, to encounter them. In this structuring, they are about how capital and state actors sometimes collaborate and sometimes collide in determining how spaces should be utilised, and what is to be resources.

In essence a political ecology perspective entails studying the manifold power relations continuously permeating golf landscapes. These are indeed rather fascinating landscapes, sometimes produced through unfathomable investments ploughed down to remake the material landscape and thus make possible the spread of a quintessential UK coastal (or manorial) landscape.

They are landscapes built through appropriating an inherited topography, hence simultaneously shaped by established socio-ecological relations, and reshaping socio-ecological relations. They remain green, rain or shine, (seemingly) obliterating local climates through engineering landscapes optimised for this kind of globalised countryside. They remain entangled not necessarily in questions of environmental degradation, but certainly in creative destruction, radically reshaping socio-ecologies to cater for new uses and new groups. They remain immensely desired by some and contested by others. They remain complex issues for rural planning politics. With ‘high-end’ added as signifier all of these processes are amplified, which is precisely what the Augusta National Syndrome discussed by Wheeler & Nauright (2006) points towards. Golfers’ expectations rise, extending the scale of the environmental transformations made to fulfil these expectations, and the maintenance undertaken to satisfy upscale consumers’ demands (a point I will return to especially in article I). Thereby, also planning-political complexities are amplified.



## 5. Methodology

In this chapter I will now discuss the methodological considerations imbuing my research. But before discussing particular methods etc. it should be further underlined that this dissertation concerns the *establishment* of two high-end golf developments. This has been intimately coupled with important benefits and drawbacks. The main benefit of studying projects at an early stage has been the opportunity to hear first-hand how key actors reasoned regarding planning processes and future visions before initial expectations had settled. In Aberdeenshire I was fortunate enough to approach TIGLS before this firm became more reluctant to discuss matters with potentially critical voices. The drawbacks, conversely, have been the impossibility of saying anything regarding the longer term effects of these projects.

While planning documents etc. have been constantly available, permitting continuous engagement, more intensive periods of fieldwork in situ were primarily concentrated to May 2009, and February-March 2010 for TIGLS - and July 2011, November 2011 as well as May-August 2012 for Bro Hof Slott GC. When I conducted research in Aberdeenshire TIGLS had yet not opened, meaning that this is a study of the planning process rather than the dynamics of an operational golf facility. While Bro Hof Slott was operational when I conducted my fieldwork many initially planned features are yet unfinished. State-developer conflicts furthermore put their realisation at peril.

### Material and method

Methodologically this dissertation is an exploratory multiple-case study. It is a study geared at exploring a topic rather than testing propositions, where multiple-case simply means that more than one case is studied (Yin, 2009). I analyse how high-end, high-profile projects contribute to refashioned socio-

ecological and socio-spatial relations, thereby *exploring* the political ecologies of upscale golf.

Rather than a rigorous approach to gather data from one particular and defined source, such as texts (broadly conceived) in discourse analysis or verbal accounts in a purely interview-based study, case study research is perhaps best described as a reflexive combination of data from many sources. Indeed, ensuring validity of findings in such research is precisely about using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2009). Various materials can, much like Haraway describes situated knowledge and partial perspectives, be regarded as “highly specific visual possibilities, each with a wonderfully detailed active, partial way of organizing worlds” (Haraway, 1988:583). Each material, each (sub-)method, permits for a particular ‘partial perspective’ into the dynamics of the case. Interviews as verbal reports can for instance be fruitfully corroborated with planning documents and meeting protocols to combine two crucial yet inescapably situated vantage points (cf. Yin, 2009; see also Harvey, 1984). Case study research permits pragmatically using various sources of evidence, thus constantly triangulating findings (cf. Flick, 2006). Case study research, as Flyvbjerg (2006:223) remarks, is also well suited to offer concrete, context-dependent knowledge. Especially with political ecology, embracing the complexities and messiness of cases seems far superior to working with more rigidly structured (and distanced) methods.

Probably most important among the primary sources has been the interviews I have conducted with planners, politicians, residents, activists as well as governmental and nongovernmental organisations in Aberdeenshire and Upplands-Bro (for a list of respondents, see Appendix A). All in all 34 people have been interviewed, chosen to ensure a broad spectrum of actors involved with the cases. Because the way the planning processes was structured and forms contestation took differed the range of interviewees differ somewhat between Upplands-Bro (*mostly* politicians, business, and bureaucrats) and Aberdeenshire (also governmental advisory organisations and activists). The vast majority of respondents have been interviewed in their official position. There has thus been no need to anonymise these. When activists or residents have been interviewed I have however chosen not to disclose their names to protect their identities. In form the interviews were partly similar to the focused interview (Merton, et al. 1990). Interviewees are known, as the focused interview stipulates, to have been involved in a particular situation. They have all been involved in one form or other in planning, establishing and/or contestation of a high-end, high-profile golf development. I could thus hypothetically analyse

processes, and develop interview guides accordingly, again as stipulated by Merton et al. (1990). In line with this the interviews targeted interviewees ‘definitions of the situation’ (Merton et al, 1990), offering fruitful accounts concerning how actors understood the process they had become enmeshed in and - in this – making it possible to grasp key issues such as their definition of landscapes, what planning did and should aspire to achieve, etc. Concerning the interview guides, it should be noted that these were not structured primarily to function as a formal list of specific questions, but rather to suggest particular themes to discuss. They were “guided conversations rather than structured queries” (Yin, 2009:106). Often, respondents moved freely between various themes and issues. It should also be noted that on some occasions respondents strongly preferred to be interviewed in pairs, and I have permitted this<sup>12</sup>. The only political party represented in either Aberdeenshire’s or Upplands-Bro’s council unrepresented among the respondents have been the Sweden Democrats in Upplands-Bro, since their representative turned down the interview.

Both projects also left significant paper trails. Written evidence was given for when and where decisions are taken. Various planning documents (both architectural drawings etc. by developers and the municipalities own plans) communicate visions of what materialises in the countryside. Document analysis was therefore also an important part of my case study research (cf. Yin, 2009:101f). In Aberdeenshire the form of decision-making, a public inquiry held in 2008, proved a veritable gold-mine (see DPEA, 2008 for a shortened summary). Here proponents and opponents of the development explained their stance in texts made publicly available. This material has made it possible for me to scrutinise how the project became entangled in views of what the development could become for Aberdeenshire and what it would mean for the coastal landscape. This material has been particularly important for article III, concerned with how a sand-dune system designated environmental protection as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)<sup>13</sup> was controversially re-valued and

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<sup>12</sup> This was the case with Robert Collier and Gordon Prentice, Martin Ford and Debra Storr, Kjell A Johansson and Kerstin Åkare, Jan Ekblom and Johan Kannerberg

<sup>13</sup> SSSI is a UK conservation designation denoting protected areas. Areas can be protected both due to biological and/or geological interests at the site. Scottish SSSI’s are protected by law from development, damage or neglect through lists of Operations Requiring Consent (ORC’s) from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). This protection is however not absolute but

reshaped through the establishment of TIGLS. In relation to these high-profile planning controversies a number of other documents (especially communication between firm and state authorities) have also been made available through freedom of information requests<sup>14</sup>. In Upplands-Bro court cases concerning developer's breaches of the detailed development plan similarly led to a number of actors forced to clarify their stance on the development, material which both illustrates the polarised nature of how particular landscapes are valued and the planning processes concerning this kind of large-scale developments. Also the municipalities own working papers and memos have provided valuable material regarding such issues. Swedish legislation stipulating public access to documents stored, sent to, or produced by government agencies is generally invaluable in securing such material<sup>15</sup>.

A third source of material has been the abundant coverage of these projects by the media regionally and nationally, where many of those I later interviewed had before my study started made utterances highly important to comprehending the cases. Golf media, both nationally and internationally have covered the two developments while Aberdeenshire also saw texts published by residents (Milne, 2008), councillors (Ford, 2011) and activists (Wightman, 2011) useful to the study – as these actors could here elaborate on their stances in a longer form than in interviews.

During my work on Bro Hof Slott I became increasingly interested in how analysis could be extended to account for those past processes without which the present day leisure space would be unthinkable (see Benjamin; 1968; Mitchell, 2003; Lefebvre, 1991). Guided by a will to get at the 'preconditions'

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rather an acknowledgement that SSSI interests should be weighed against other factors. While Scottish National Heritage as governing body opposed the form of the TIGLS golf resort development they could not veto any planning decisions, even though many of the necessary procedures in transforming the mobile sand dunes at Foveran Links into a golf course – such as modification of natural features and application of fertilizers – were considered Operations Requiring Consent (ORC).

<sup>14</sup> 'Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002' stipulates a general entitlement that a "person who requests information from a Scottish public authority which holds it is entitled to be given it by the authority" (Scottish Parliament, 2002)

<sup>15</sup> This is stipulated as part of 'Tryckfrihetsförordningen', part of the Swedish constitution (see SFS:2011)



(see Ollman, 2003) for Bro Hof Slott as leisure space I conducted archival research primarily based in the partly digitalised Brogård archives in which tax records, correspondence, contracts etc. from 400 years of estate history have been preserved (see Article II for a longer discussion). Valuable to this research has also been Lantmäteriet's extensive archive of historical maps<sup>16</sup>. Key to how this archival research fits into this dissertation was how this was sequenced in relation to other data-gathering methods (Flick, 2006). Since I had conducted interviews and surveyed planning documents I could, as I return to in article II, study the process leading to Bro Hof Slott 'backwards' where "search for an answer is aided by what we already know about the present, the result. Knowing how the 'story' came out, placing such knowledge at the start of our investigation, sets up criteria for relevance as well as research priorities" (Ollman, 2003:118). This article and the archival research leading to it should be regarded as 'extending' the case backwards (cf. Burawoy, 2009), and as part of an overall research approach permeating the dissertation. I want to get at how an "event or a thing at a point in space cannot be understood by appeal to what exists only at that point. It internalizes everything else going on around it in past, present, and even future" (Harvey, 2008:101-2). This will be substantially elaborated on in the section on dialectics below.

## On cases and contexts

Already in the introduction I emphasised that is a dissertation about a *specific* kind of golf developments. The two cases are what Flyvbjerg (2006) calls extreme or deviant cases chosen precisely because they are special, spectacular, the very opposite of mundane. Such cases "often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied" (Flyvbjerg 2006:229). They are chosen to "obtain information on unusual cases, which can be especially problematic or especially good in a more closely defined sense [and to] understand the limits of existing theories and to develop new concepts, variables, and theories that are able to account for deviant cases" (Flyvbjerg, 2011:307). Bro Hof Slott Golf Club and TIGLS are

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<sup>16</sup>Available online at <http://www.lantmateriet.se/en/Maps-and-geographic-information/Historical-Maps/>

high-profile, spectacular developments accentuating forms of rural planning allowing environmental transformation in the present in the hope of achieving future economic boosts. This is precisely what makes them apt to develop a political ecology of high-end golf. The cases illuminate how upmarket golf developments aim to compete at a global level as ‘scale-making’ (Tsing, 2005) projects causing politicians, planners, and activists to envision their locales in relation to processes on distinctively beyond-local scales.

In order to know which conclusions I could draw from these cases it is crucial to know how I can and cannot generalise findings. Since the cases are explicitly chosen as extreme cases any extrapolation of findings would generate extreme fallacies. But as Flyvbjerg (2006:227) suggests, that “knowledge cannot be formally generalized does not mean that it cannot enter into the collective process of knowledge accumulation in a given field or in a society” Findings remain analytically generalisable to my conceptual project of exploring the political ecologies of high-end golf (cf. Yin, 2009).

In case study research every type of case study design “will include the desire to analyze contextual conditions in relation to the ‘case’ [since] the boundaries between the case and the context are not likely to be sharp” (Yin, 2009:46). A case/context description however risks portraying processes too rigidly, even when boundaries’ blurriness is acknowledged. Burawoy (2009:90) is here more to the point in emphasising external *forces* rather than external *context*;

to underline the way the environment is experienced as powers emanating from beyond the field site, shaping the site yet existing largely outside the control of the site. These forces are not fixed but are in flux. They appear and disappear in ways that are often incomprehensible and unpredictable to the participants. External context, by contrast, is a more passive, static, and inertial concept that misses the dynamism of the social order.

Any notion of as stable backdrop becomes untenable if phenomena lumped together as ‘context’ are themselves in flux. Scottish central state politics has for instance since I first started studying TIGLS’ establishment gone from one where first minister Alex Salmond was criticised for his close relations to the Trump Organisation to one where Trump calls Salmond “hell bent on destroying Scotland's coastline” by promoting wind turbine developments possibly disturbing the view offered at TIGLS (Cramb, 2012). Likewise has Upplands-Bro’s municipality’s attitude towards Bro Hof Slott (as I return to in

article I) gone through a number of twists and turns making any notion of a stable pro- or anti-golf development stance problematic. We are, as Burawoy (2009:9) states, “living history as we do research”. To claim that the cases are embedded in contexts displaying certain characteristics would be a rather simplistic way of grasping the dynamism of cases and forces co-evolving, a point I will return to below. Critique against TIGLS’ establishment has frequently targeted how the project distorted established planning procedures. If there is any merit to this critique (and as I will return to in article III and IV I think there is), this suggests that what might be regarded as external forces are not external at all. For some participants, these forces might indeed appear and disappear in incomprehensible and unpredictable ways. But powerful actors can tweak forces in ways that render these predictable to them (cf. Allen, 2011). These actors’ possibility to reshape nominally external forces can in itself be what renders these illegible to actors less powerful, of which the 2010 arrest of film-maker Anthony Baxter while filming close to TIGLS is a vivid illustration (Carrell, 2011). Undoubtedly the establishment of TIGLS reshaped the practices of law enforcement, making it incomprehensible or unpredictable to others.

## Abstracting high-end golf landscapes

In order for any analysis, an infinitely complex world must be reduced, made analysable through deliberately choosing certain aspects to study. As Ollman (2003:61) remarks literature could for example be abstracted to include its audience or to exclude everything but its form, leading to a sociology of literature or structural approaches respectively.

Any phenomenon can in essence lead to a plethora of divergent studies on various scales depending on how it is abstracted. Since I am particularly concerned with how a particular kind of golf course landscape is established analysis is abstracted to include planning, preparations, and the moment of production - but not the moment of consumption. This partly excludes the specific demand there might be for these kinds of leisure spaces, how the landscapes might ‘feel’ to the golfer, or their agency in determining the experience (cf. Perkins, 2010). That such issues are not surveyed does not mean that they are insignificant. As Figure 2 immediately below displays, consumers are (as in any processes of commodity production) internalised throughout.

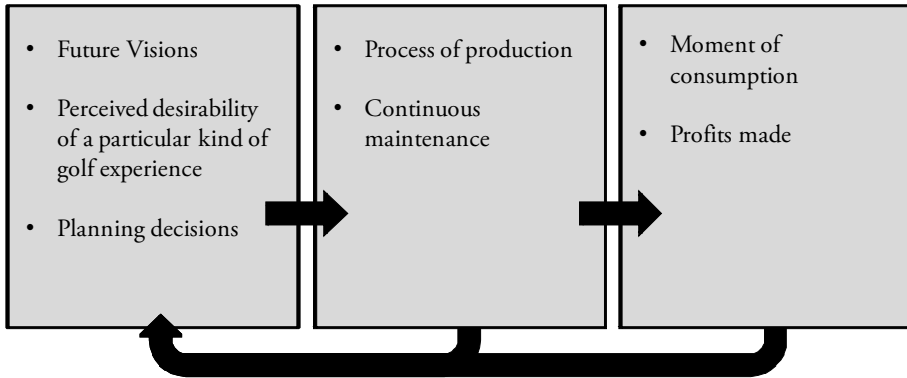


Fig. 2. Moments in the production and consumption of golf experiences as commodities

Ideas regarding the experience prospective golfers want (as well as how this could be shaped) are present in the planning and material production of the golf landscape. Golfers' expectations guide the everyday life of course maintenance and customer service. It is the prices these consumers pay that realises profits, and which makes the course possible in the long run. But as Hall (2011:121) comments, studies of tourism is simultaneously plagued by a "seemingly endless fascination with experiences, the experience economy and supposed co-creative agency while seemingly ignoring (or forgetting) the role of structure". Conversely, understanding tourism in depth requires going beyond "an account of travel or 'what I did on my holidays'". It demands an analysis of politics, of the structure of business, of the places in which it occurs, of the nature of industrial production and private life" (Hall, 2011:111). There is thus an obvious merit to abstracting golf landscapes to emphasise planning and processes of production. What golfers did on their holidays is what keeps golf as industry afloat. But understanding specific golf developments in depth demands a more multifaceted analysis

Excluding golfers unfortunately means the omission of issues such as the gendered nature of golf (McGinnis et al. 2005, Vamplew, 2010), golf in relation to disability (Maas & Hasbrook, 2001) and the body (Perkins, 2010), as well as golf, ethnicity, and race (Gray, 2010). These omissions remain justifiable, though, given how there is a temporal aspect to the process outlined in figure 2. The sequencing of decisions, transformations, and consumption (re)producing the golf landscape should be acknowledged. Before any golfers can visit any courses a material ground has been produced, with developers and

labourers thereby encountering nature as space, time, and form (Prudham, 2005). Material transformation co-exists with, but pre-dates the moment of consumption. Though, as Gibson (2010) remarks the tourist encounter is immediate, there is much prior work conducted to make this immediate moment possible. There is, furthermore, no guarantee that material transformation will ever result in any commodities being sold. Commodity production is inherently speculative (cf. Harvey, 2010). This, it seems, sometimes risks getting lost among politicians arguing along the lines of ‘if we plan it, it will happen’, a key point I will come back to in article IV.

Though the processes studied throughout this dissertation connect a number of sites globally, my cases are distinctively place-based inquiries. While aware of the multi-scalar, ‘scale-making’ (Tsing, 2005) nature of high-end golf developments, fieldwork was conducted within the respective regions, even though production processes and contestation of these projects both display a ‘jumping of scales’ through which “geographical scale is hierarchically produced as part of the social and cultural, economic and political landscapes” (Smith, 1992:66). I will return to these issues throughout the dissertation, but it should be noted that I will not in length scrutinise issues such as the state of golf industries nationally and internationally and national planning policies except in relation to the two cases.

My own situatedness should also be elaborated on here, as the dissertation has been guided both by what I wanted to see, and what I initially thought I could and would do. This does not mean any pre-conceived answers, but rather the kind of vantage point I wanted to utilise (cf. Haraway, 1988; Harvey, 1984; Ollman, 2003), tied to how the initial starting point of this dissertation was another case, the aforementioned development by PGA National in Bara east of Malmö. I started grad school on September 8, 2008 just to see stock markets plummet little more than a week later, on September 16. Global financial turmoil made it evident that the situation for the (inherently) speculative production of large-scale leisure developments had radically changed (as I discussed in chapter 3). The Bara development was put on ice, and only later resurfaced in a stunted form. Hence, I was at a very early point left in a situation where I could not study the development I thought I would. This experience has been formative in making me focus on two cases throughout the dissertation, to minimise the risk of ending up studying envisioned landscapes that never actually materialised, which could actually have been the case for TIGLS when fieldwork was conducted in Aberdeenshire 2009-10.

## On dialectics as methodology

The sections of this chapter so far have explored data-gathering methods and material used, what I think I can say, and the delimitations of my study. But for this to have any deeper meaning I need to insert my enquiries into an underlying ontological commitment or broader methodological framework. The ontological starting point for this dissertation could best be described as a form of social-constructivism suggesting that utterances, definitions etc. re-make reality, but also that the non-human world cannot be *freely* re-made. Various elements do not allow themselves to be transformed in the same way (see Callon, 2007; Harvey, 1996). But even more important has been a will to analyse dialectical relations. Generally not well understood in geography and the social sciences (Harvey, 1996), an explication of what I take dialectics to mean is here in place. While the “reduction of dialectics to a set of ‘principles’ might be self-defeating” (Harvey, 1996:48) this methodological commitment can be provisionally pinned down.

Levins & Lewontin (1985:271) pose dialectics against formalised, reductionist or mono-causal readings of the world, asserting that “[n]o way of thinking about the world of phenomena can provide a total description of the infinitely complex set of interacting causes of all events” in criticising a Cartesian reductionism aiming to “find a very small set of independent causal pathways or ‘factors’ that can be used to reconstruct a large domain of phenomena”. But this merely describes dialectics negatively, as opposed to Cartesian reductionism. A positive definition of dialectics should therefore be added. This can in a first step be done through engaging with the description after all given by Levins and Lewontin (1985) together with other influential accounts trying to elucidate dialectics (cf. Harvey, 1996; Lefebvre 1991, 2009b; Ollman 2003; Ollman & Smith, 2008). In the second step - and it is through this that the first step becomes meaningful - the methodological pointers provided influence analysis. Dialectics, as Ollman (2003:12) is soon to point out neither explains, nor proves, predicts, or cause anything to happen.

To me, four overlapping notions (relations, processes, impurities, co-evolutions) brought together in two pairings together explicate dialectics and how I’ve drawn inspiration from this tradition. Together these permit the construction of a vantage point (or rather set of vantage points) making possible an analysis of high-end golf landscapes as continuously refashioned.

## Relational processes

Probably most important for a dialectical approach is acknowledging everything as in constant flux. Between various dialecticians one can, in a rather skeletal way, establish some 'dialectical laws' (Ollman 2003).

First and foremost, and stripped of all qualifications added by this or that dialectician, the subject of dialectics is change, all change, and interaction, all kinds and degrees of interaction (Ollman, 2003:59)

Harvey, like Ollman, states that change is perhaps the most important of all dialectical principles. The implication is that “change and instability are the norm and that the appearance of stability of ‘things’ or systems is what has to be explained” (Harvey 1996:54). Subsequently; “Dialectics forces us always to ask the question of every ‘thing’ or ‘event’ that we encounter: by what processes was it constituted and how is it sustained” (Harvey, 1996:50). Inquiry into any phenomena is inquiry into a set of processes constituting and sustaining the object under study.

Dialectics restructures our thinking about reality by replacing the common sense notion of “thing”, (as something that has a history and has external connections with other things) with notions of a “process,” (which contains its history and possible futures) and “relation” (which contains as part of what it is its ties with other relations) (Ollman 2003:13)

Understanding *any* space (a golf course) or practice (a round of golf) therefore necessitates grasping those processes producing and reproducing it - and outside of which its existence would be impossible. The golf course can only be understood as a process continuously reproduced and remade by (inter alia) golf course architects, golfers themselves, greenkeepers, and course managers (as well as earthworms, thunderstorms, dry summers, pesticides, fertilisers, investments, and so on). Their actions are inescapably tied to what the course is and any possible future trajectory will by necessity be based in the processes already contained as parts of what the course is today.

For Lefebvre (2009b:23) dialectical reason “transcends all the congealed categories of the understanding; it abolishes them inasmuch as they are isolated and thereby restores to them their truth within the total movement of reality

and of thought, of the content and the form” But to transcend congealed categories, is not necessarily to make identity impossible to speak of. Emphasis on processes should not be conflated with a focus on undifferentiated fluidity. As Harvey (1996:81) writes;

Reifications of free-flowing processes are always occurring to create actual “permanences” in the social and material world around us. Examples might be material landscapes (such as cities), social institutions that seem almost impossible to transform by virtue of the solid way they have been constructed, divisions of labor that are so routinized and organized through an infrastructure of factory and machinery that they seem impossible not to replicate, socially constructed discourses that tightly constrain and regulate behaviours [...] and even discourses which become so widely accepted and reified, that they themselves become part of a landscape of knowledge seemingly impermeable to change

That everything is in constant flux does not mean that change is easily achieved, especially not if change requires transforming an existing material landscape (cf. Mitchell, 2008; Winner, 1980).

Processes, moreover, do not evolve haphazardly. From the insistence on process-oriented inquiries follows a focus on contradictions continuously spurring processes. In Lefebvre's (2009b:28) words, “[a]ll movement is contradictory because without an immanent contradiction nothing can move”. Processes, in short, transform because there is a reason for them to transform. Change as key subject of inquiries implies that keeping anything – such as the lawns discussed in chapter 4 – in a steady state requires action. Processes sustaining anything are furthermore spatial relations (cf. Lefebvre 1976, 1991). Space and time, Harvey remarks, are contingent and contained within processes. “Processes do not operate *in* but *actively construct* space and time and in so doing define distinctive scales for their development” (Harvey, 1996:53). Just as chapter 4 would suggest, spatial relations constructed through processes are socio-ecological (see Foster, 2008). This is rather remarked cities are conceptualised in contemporary urban political ecology, as “dense networks of interwoven sociospatial processes that are simultaneously local and global, human and physical, cultural and organic” (Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003:899; see also Robbins, 2011). The city only exists through the various relations to various processes in various places making its current existence possible. Hence follows an approach emphasising how nothing is truly local (cf.



Gezon & Paulson, 2005; Mitchell, 2008), remade as it is through processes connecting many locales - near and far.

Dialectics emphasises phenomena's connection to the whole. In the words of Lefebvre (2009b:115) "the whole exists concretely and pre-exists its elements; in one sense these elements are real 'in themselves', as moments of the whole, but in another sense they are simply abstractions in relation to the whole". Thus, Lefebvre asserts on the same page, we should move on to the market from the commodity in analysis. From the viewpoint of the isolated producer dialectics demands that we move on to examine production and productivity. In the same vein I argue that the production of golf landscapes cannot be understood solely by analysing the viewpoint of the isolated developer but through analysing the relations from developers to local, regional, and national decision-making bodies as well as to the globalisation of rural localities through golf developments. Here an important difference exists compared to another influential form of relational ontology – Actor-Network-Theory (cf. Callon, 1986; Latour, 2005). In this tradition leading figures are openly hostile to theories' holistic aspirations (cf. Latour, 2005:155-6) and are – though often claiming the opposite - rather willing to easily divide the world into separate spheres where some remain outside of studies. Callon, for instance, explicitly cuts all discussions on how scientists are socially situated short in his highly influential account of scallop-harvesting in the St Brieuc bay (Callon, 1986), and ignores that fishermen might have conflicting goals (Wynne, 2007). Only specific aspects of a much more complex reality are studied, contrasting starkly with a more inclusive dialectical approach. Ollman (2003:156) refers to the problem stemming from such simplistic divisions as the Humpty Dumpty problem, where "the pieces of our everyday experience are taken as existing separate from their spatial and historical contexts" makes it hard to put them together.

But just as with process-oriented investigations there is also here a risk of going too far. Ollman (2003) comments that while non-dialectical thinkers miss the forest for the trees, dialectical thinkers often do the opposite. They miss the trees in over-emphasising the totality of the forest. In the same way that the focus on processes could not be translated into an undifferentiated description of all processes as equally fluid or equally transformable not all spatial relations can be said to be equally important. As stated above abstraction is an absolute necessity, but key is that processes of abstracting must be deliberate. Ollman (2003:61) asserts that most people are lazy abstractors,

”uncritically accepting the mental units with which they think as part of their cultural inheritance”<sup>17</sup>.

## Impure co-evolutions

Harvey (1996:79), sketching a rather useful map of ‘moments’<sup>18</sup> in social processes insists that the “social process [...] flows in, through and around all of these moments and the activities of each and every individual embrace all of the moments simultaneously”. Each moment, Harvey asserts, should be viewed as dialectically internalising all others. While all moments are potentially transformative it is simplistic to privilege any one moment over the others (see also Ollman, 2003:71). Moments, in other words, co-evolve.

Levins and Lewontin further concretise this by elaborating on the co-evolution of individual and society.

The individual and the social interpenetrate each other, the individual life history is the particular pathway that the realization of forces takes, but the individual lives can develop only in the context of a social milieu. The ambiguity of subject and object, of cause and effect implied by the interpenetration of individual and social cannot be accommodated by Cartesian analysis, which takes as its first premise the alienation of subject and object (Levins & Lewontin, 1985:264)

Elsewhere, the authors (1985:134) illustrate this co-evolution through the example of a seedling and the soil as each other’s environments. The “soil undergoes great and lasting evolutionary changes as a direct consequence of the activity of the plants growing in it, and these changes in turn feed back on the

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<sup>17</sup> No traditions or scholar is immune to this failing. Katz’ (2006:241-242) for example criticises Harvey’s (1996) emphasis on class to instead point out that “class formation is not separable from racialization, nation or gender. Quite the reverse, it is squeezed through them”. The long-standing (if never full) neglect of categories such as gender and ethnicity/race within Marxian circles can certainly be called a lazy abstraction within this school of thought.

<sup>18</sup> The moments Harvey account for are ‘Power’, Discourse/language, Beliefs/values/desires, Social relations, Institutions/Rituals and Material practices

organisms' conditions of existence". Harvey (1996:66) continues to draw on Levins and Lewontin to argue for the same analysis of political economy, pointing out how firms "actively transform the social and economic environment to which they must first perforce then adapt". Again, context disappears – supplanted by interpenetrating forces where everything can be both subject, and object.

Impurities, the last of my chosen dialectical key concepts, should not be read as a term denoting something unclean in a negative sense. Rather, a focus on and acknowledgement of impurity follows from the three other concepts, underscoring an anti-structuralist tendency within a tradition often seen as structuralist. Structure "is but a stage in process" (Ollman, 2003:27). Lefebvre similarly notes that there "is not and never has been an accomplished system, only an attempt at systematisation" (Lefebvre 1976:66, emphasis in original). The world is impure, persistently in the process of becoming something else than it is today. For geography as discipline crucial phenomena such as the nation (Goswami, 2004), states (Brenner, 2004; Tilly 1985), territory (Elden, 2010; Painter 2010) or indeed space itself (Lefebvre, 1976, 1991) are increasingly viewed as processes never existing in fully finished, pure, states. The same, Perkins (2010) asserts, is true of golf. Because of this focus on all phenomena as continuously co-evolving processes inquiries are fated to be provisional mappings. A particular moment can only be analysed through taking it "by surprise in its fluid relationship with its 'other'" (Lefebvre, 2009b:29). Taken together these aspects result in an approach where analysis must steadily shift between various vantage-points and elucidate a variety of aspects on a number of constantly intertwined scales (cf. Ollman, 2003:131). A constant shift between various vantage-points by necessity brings together a wide range of strands as sources of inspiration and result in a notoriously partial view of phenomena (cf. Haraway, 1988, Harvey, 1984).

## Summary and transition

In line with these impurities a dialectical investigation is somewhat of a hybrid analytical framework, drawing on various sources to analyse complex phenomena rather than pure systems. As Kipfer (2009:xxvii) comments on Lefebvre's dialectical materialism, this "has room for philosophical elaboration, cultural critique, and historical materialist investigations all at once. It integrates

but cannot remain political economy”. Economic relations, according to this view, “are not the only relations but the simplest ones, the ones found again as 'moments' in complex relations” (Lefebvre 2009b:73).

Here dialectics actually merges quite well with case study research, in emphasising how any enquiry as a complex entanglement, and the continuous need of moving between various vantage points (or expressed differently, various kinds of data) to elucidate various aspects. Dialectics “discovers its truth by being united with the actual content. In other words [...] [t]he materialist dialectic accords the primacy explicitly to the content [and] is an analysis of the movement of this content” (Lefebvre 2009a:90).

Accounts should accord primacy to analysing the world in all its complexities, messiness, and impurity rather than through reductionist models, and again case study research and dialectics overlap. But dialectics also transcends the insufficient focus on ‘context’ inherent to much case study research. This overarching attitude, - simultaneously methodological commitment, ontological vantage point, and a connection to a vibrant historical-materialist legacy – obliterates fixed points to instead shed light on a lively set of interpenetrating forces constituting spaces and practices. A political ecology perspective developed through engaging with tourism studies and an emphasis on dialectical relations presents a continuous ambition to view the cases as these are constituted by (reshaped and reshaping) a variety of forces tying together spaces and spheres. Above I conceptually outlined some contours for a political ecology perspective, suggesting features to scrutinise. But a political ecology enquiry cannot be primarily conceptual (even though all research is guided by theory - see Burawoy, 2009). Therefore I will now turn more to the actual cases scrutinised.

## 6. Setting the scene for analysis

### Introducing Bro Hog Slott and TIGLS

Though no findings can be transplanted from one case to the other this dissertation's cases *can* be read together as two stories of radical environmental transformation in the hope of attracting high-income spenders. They can thereby further the understanding of high-end golf landscapes as socio-ecological relations, and the position of upmarket leisure in globalising rural transformations (cf. McCarthy, 2008; Woods, 2013).

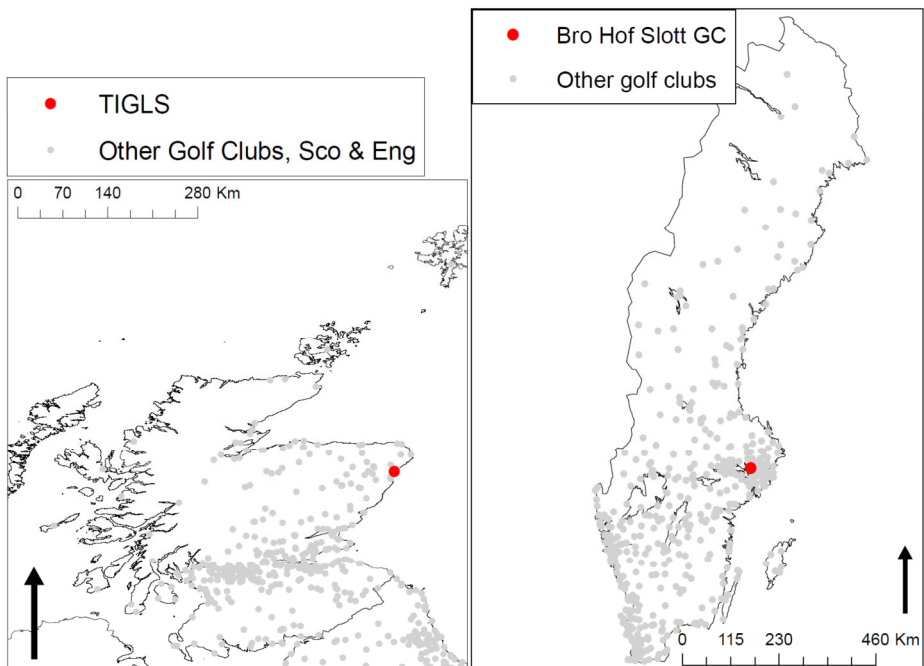


Fig 3. Location of Bro Hof Slott and TIGLS. Maps compiled by Erik Jönsson. ( GPS Data Team u.d.; SGF - personal communication)

**Tab. 1** Bro Hof Slott and TIGLS

|                           | Bro Hof Slott   | TIGLS  |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Courses (Opening Year)    | 2 (2007, 2010)  | 1 (2012)   |
| Size of development site  | 300 ha  | 470 ha   |
| Green fees (full senior)  | 750-1650 SEK (€82-180)  | £195-215 (€207-228)  |
| Notable current rankings: | The Stadium Course: #1 nationally (Golf Digest, 2012) & #54 worldwide (Golf World, 2012). The Castle Course: #5 nationally (Golf Digest, 2012). | #63 worldwide (Golf Course Architecture, 2013)   |
| Major features unfinished | 70 room hotel development, whisky distillery, Spa facilities  | 450 room hotel, 800 holiday home units, 186 golf villas, 600 residential units, staff accommodation, Spa facilities. A second golf course is advertised but not built. |

**Sources:** Aberdeenshire council, 2010; brohofslott.se; DPEA, 2008; Golf Course Architecture, 2013; trumpgolfsotland.com; Upplands-Bro, 2004.

## Bro Hof Slott Golf Club

Bro Hof Slott is located by the shores of Lake Mälaren in Upplands-Bro, a municipality with about 24,000 inhabitants in the commuter belt some 35 km north of Sweden's capital Stockholm. The nearest locality is Bro, with 7,050 inhabitants (SCB, 2013). Stockholm is possible to reach in about half an hour by both car and train. The golf facility is also located close to Arlanda, Sweden's primary airport – with almost 20 million passengers in 2012 (Svedavia, 2013).

Plans for a golf resort began here a decade ago when Björn Örås bought the Brogård property, a landed estate originally dating back to the 1570s. A detailed development plan for what eventually became Bro Hof Slott Golf Club was approved in 2004 (Upplands-Bro, 2004). This plan outlined two golf courses, of which the first was to be a tournament course and the other a high quality club course. Water contact, and thus exceptions from shoreline legislation, was explicitly stated as a necessity for the quality of the courses. The aim was also to establish a high quality restaurant and conference facility established in the Brogård manor house as well as 6 villas with about 70 hotel rooms together. This plan, furthermore, outlined a malt whisky distillery, estimated to become a regional attraction drawing 30,000 visitors each year (Upplands-Bro, 2004).

The first course – the Stadium Course - opened immediately by Lake Mälaren in 2007, designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr. An inland course – the Castle Course, designed by the same golf course architect - opened in 2010. Since 2010 the development has hosted the Nordea Scandinavian Masters tournament, Sweden's only tournament on the European Tour. This tournament is now also owned by Björn Örås, Bro Hof Slott's owner. But as, as I will return to in article I, the development of Bro Hof Slott Golf Club has also been imbued with conflicts regarding the shape this development could take and the role planning should have.

## Trump International Golf Links Scotland

Trump International Golf Links Scotland is property tycoon Donald Trump's first golf development in Europe. This development has transformed the Menie Estate, just North of the seaside hamlet Balmedie. The first course, opened in 2012, was designed by Martin Hawtree. The closest city is Aberdeen, Scotland's third city with about 220,000 inhabitants, some 14 km south of the TIGLS (National Records of Scotland, 2012).

The first proposal for a Trump golf resort development on these shores surfaced in 2006, and outlined two golf courses 950 holiday home units, spa, conference facilities, a 450 room resort hotel, 36 golf villas, 400 units for staff accommodation and two areas earmarked for 500 future residential units (Aberdeenshire Council, 2006). This application was granted in December 2008, after a lengthy process, which saw the project refused by the locally responsible planning authority before being scaled up and granted by Scottish

Ministers (see article III and IV for a longer discussion). A second Masterplan extending the land to be developed beyond the property the developer owned has thereafter been granted (Aberdeenshire Council, 2010)<sup>19</sup>. Thereby scaling up the development site this Masterplan also scaled down the total number of holiday home units and apartments slightly, to 800. Instead the developer added an additional 150 golf villas and a further 100 residential units compared to the first plan granted. In both of these plans the development's first golf course overlapped with the southern part of the Foveran Links Site of Special Scientific Interest, protected due to both geological and biological interests (see DPEA, 2008). This has, as the articles will illustrate, lead to intense conflicts with a number of NGOs and governmental advisory bodies who had radically different visions concerning what this site should become

## Structure of the articles

Analysis of the first case, Bro Hof Slott Golf Club, begins with article I. In this article I analyse the emergent golf landscape in light of the processes producing and sustain it in its present form. Conceptually, this article traces the contours for a political ecology perspective on high-end golf, permitting an analysis of Bro Hof Slott in a dialectical interplay with broader processes. I have in this article drawn from and sympathetically criticised current conceptual strands within tourism studies to construct this lens, striving to grasp the golf landscape as a human-non-human ordering made possible through the interplay between vast investments and political decisions as well as corresponding to a pre-established idea of what a beautiful landscape is.

In article II I continue my analysis of Bro Hof Slott, but now focus on the various processes and relations through time shaping the landscape now turned into a high-end leisure space. I rearrange how the study of the high-end golf landscape is abstracted to allow for a focus on how the production of Bro Hof Slott as upmarket leisure space today is merely the latest stage in a cumulative reshaping of the land. I analyse how Brogård as manorial landscape was shaped

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<sup>19</sup> The size listed in table 1 includes these properties incorporated as part of the second Masterplan, but not actually owned by the developer.



from the 16th century to the 20th century, and how this relates to the spatial form and place-marketing of today's golf development. In this I argue that the prime resource at Bro Hof Slott's disposal is the actual material landscape inherited and that an analysis of the development therefore implies an analysis of how the manorial landscape was shaped - its morphology (cf. Mitchell, 2003, 2012). This relates to political ecology in emphasising any production as continuously reshaping all that which functions as preconditions (Ollman, 2003), or in other words – production as selective creative destruction (cf. Castree, 2002). The article underscores the fundamental role of an earthly landscape shaped by the human hands subordinate to the will of the estate owner and constantly interpellated by the requirements of the landscape's non-human features (cf. Robbins, 2007a).

For Article III I shift to Aberdeenshire and Trump International Golf Links Scotland. Here I primarily analyse the ways the Foveran Links sand dune system became a prominent topic in debates on TIGLS simultaneously through its inclusion in the high-profile, high-end, golf development - and through activists' contestation of this inclusion. I shed light on how sand dunes protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest could *become* a resource for TIGLS, and how a process of 'ontological mutation' (cf. Callon, 2007) reshaped and redefined the sand dunes while through this also reshaping politics. This relates to a political ecology perspective in emphasising the fundamental role knowledge about eco-systems, both actual and perceived, play in processes of environmental transformation together with how eco-systems are always already inscribed with ideas about nature – past, present, and future.

Lastly, In Article IV I (together with Guy Baeten) scrutinise the role of the actual developer in the constitution of the leisure landscape, and planners' high hopes for what a high-profile developer can achieve. In this article we analyse the relation between Donald Trump, the world-famous property tycoon, and the planners, politicians, businesses, and activists involved in the struggle to shape and define the Aberdeenshire landscape (topographically, politically and economically). We argue that more focus can fruitfully be put on the actual entrepreneur himself in understanding the transformation of both countryside and rural planning-politics. Above all this chapter furthers a discussion on who is to utilise what becomes defined as resources and how a taken-for-granted neoliberal mindset in rural planning today cause politicians to surrender ambitions to govern the rural environment in the face of possible large-scale investments.



## 7. Conclusions

I will now briefly reiterate the conclusions from the four articles and then explore what these together can offer political ecology.

In Upplands-Bro, the Bro Hof Slott Golf Club landscape appears as a meticulously manicured human-non-human ordering, shaped by entrepreneurial visions and massive investments re-making the shoreline landscape. The golf experiences the developer aims to sell have a very obvious material basis in this ordering, making any notion of an intangible or purely social experience problematic. But equally problematic are accounts overlooking the political conflicts, contradictions, and negotiations that this ordering became enmeshed in and made through. Re-ordering the shoreline landscape simultaneously re-ordered the municipality as political entity. The Bro Hof Slott development became the nodal point for dreams of a future Upplands-Bro known, and prosperous, because people knew and visited a high-profile golf development. But through the establishment of Bro Hof Slott various state actors also became enmeshed in new conflicts. The development led to conflicts accentuating intra-state tension between the municipality as political entity (mostly) permeated by a desire to see Bro Hof Slott prosper in Upplands-Bro, and the municipality as a bundle of state bodies with specific legal obligations. Since key planning decisions regarding the development were left as un-formalised verbal agreements, the development came to breach the document which was formalised - the legally binding detailed development plan. Consequently those state representatives who had as their function to uphold the integrity of legal documents and formal decisions became entangled in shaping the kind of socio-ecology materialising by the shores of Lake Mälaren. Evident is thus how the development shapes and is shaped by political and legal action in a never-ending dialectical play between economic, social, ecological, and political forces.

Bro Hof Slott is, however, not merely the result of a present day ordering. It is also the reshaping of a landscape made through four centuries of nobility

ownership. The Space of Brogård, the estate whose manor house is restored and now turned into Bro Hof Slott's club house, enshrines the leisure space. Bro Hof Slott is superimposed on what could best be described as a remarkable machinery for enriching estate owners through their power to fully direct the activities undertaken in the rural landscape. The development draws on an allure of manorial life. But turning the manorial landscape into leisure space has simultaneously 'pre-modernised' the landscape in a way that almost fully obliterates the memories of those crofters, dairy cows, tenant farmers and rural labourers in one way or another shaping the manorial landscape. Place marketing suffices to merely display the result of these processes, by utilising the manor house and by marshalling the names of well-known noble families. But to grasp how this space was shaped necessitates scrutinising how the nobility was empowered through far-reaching control over land, which for long only they could own - and through becoming state officials in an increasingly powerful Swedish state. The landscape these shaped (if certainly always in contested ways) subsequently 'offered' the developer both a space big enough to fit dreams of a high-end golf facility, and a kind of landscape which planning explicitly framed as desirable to withhold. Hence could several centuries of labour cumulative shaping the manorial landscape become Bro Hof Slott's precondition (see Ollman, 2003)

But as the way Bro Hof Slott re-organised municipal visions suggests, upmarket golf landscapes are not only based in past transformations and present-day orderings. As Bennett (2010:32) remarks "things in the world appear to us at all only because they tantalize and hold us in suspense, alluding to a fullness that is elsewhere, to a future that, apparently, is on its way". As the coast north of Aberdeen in north-east Scotland became subject to plans for a large scale golf development this sandy landscape underwent an ontological mutation, to (re)borrow Callon's (2007) apt phrase. For developers and proponent politicians a rather remote rural space suddenly appeared as an economically valuable resource. A landscape of freely floating sand dunes was hurled into (highly contested) dreams of regional prosperity.

With TIGLS came an overhaul of the coastal landscape, and the way this was governed. TIGLS was rescaled into a national planning issue and a wide range of actors thus became involved in determining what could be done with a sand dune system erstwhile protected through its designation as SSSI. New bodies and organisations explicitly aiming at defining, debating and thereby shaping the landscape were initiated in the process. Protest groups such as Sustainable Aberdeenshire and thereafter Tripping up Trump were formed and

became entwined in the struggles to define what the landscape meant to them, what it could be, or should become.

TIGLS' establishment thereby became a question of how 'resources' were to be defined and the limits of how particular socio-ecologies could be reshaped. Proponents radically re-made natures discursively in order to remake these materially for upscale golf in a dramatic coastline setting. Proponents supported resort development through downplaying the significance of stabilising sand dunes, instead framing these dunes as an eventual threat if not utilised for resort development. Opponents of the development conversely emphasised the ecological significance of the dune system being transformed as well as the ways 'nature' in the future (in the form of thick coastal fog, sand, or migratory birds) could threaten the development's profitability. Thus specific ecosystems or specific non-humans became political arguments in ways that redrew the political arena (cf. Rancière, 1999; 2006). The process reveals the messy nature of how resources are made, and how ontological mutations are permeated by ideology and rhetoric. The process testifies to the prominent place the ways 'nature' is perceived to act in the future has in debates about environmental transformations, but also to the sometimes problematic shape of debates over environmental transformations. An important normative dimension goes missing if those involved primarily struggle over what the sand dune system is, depicting themselves as neutral experts rather than political actors.

But more problematic still was proponents' reliance on Trump as the one to put Aberdeenshire as upmarket golf destination on the map. Rather than strategic visions concerning what kind of countryside or socio-ecological relations might be desirable, politicians essentially surrendered to the rather controversial visions of a high-profile entrepreneur. Proponents believed that the dune system could justifiably be sacrificed because the development could attract 'top tier' tourists to Aberdeenshire. In light of this Trump became construed as the man, the tycoon, the brand, who could make this happen. He became construed as an integral part of keeping Aberdeenshire prosperous also after the eventual decline of North-Sea oil. Previous planning practices and zoning decisions were cleared away to provide TIGLS with a landscape as blank canvas. Trump was, through state intervention, given extensive freedom to fulfil his entrepreneurial instincts and personal dreams. Thereby, the landscape also became immediately branded as Trump's landscape. This possibility for a high-profile developer to stamp his name on the rural landscape, we have claimed, results from an increasingly taken-for-granted neoliberal mindset permeating

planning. The planning process making TIGLS possible in problematic ways displayed a belief in grabbing entrepreneurial opportunities and a belief in the state's role as enforcing entrepreneurial freedom, even when this freedom is built on radically reshaping land nominally under environmental protection.

Both Bro Hof Slott and TIGLS reveal that when remote rural localities become subject to plans for high-profile, high-end, golf developments follows a radical reconfiguring of their very existence. The particular features of specific sections of the countryside now take centre stage in debates on regional economic growth and the role of planning and environmental legislation. A wide variety of political actors now also take to the stage in new ways. In light of this Bro Hof Slott and TIGLS are not so much placed in existing political constellations as contributing to reshaping these by introducing new issues, new actors, and new visions. Some of these become forces working for the developments while others might become forces working against the developments.

But though it is tempting to primarily emphasise the novel features introduced it must be remembered that the developments are reliant on not only a pre-existing topography but also on a pre-existing political structure only relatively malleable. Like the reshaping of the material landscape, the reshaping of the political landscape is based in its previous form. Therefore Bro Hof Slott became pinned against state bodies whose function the development could not reorder. These should uphold the formal requirements of the planning system regardless of whether politically elected representatives wanted a development or not. State constellations were in other words reshaped, but state action as totality could never be fully remade according to the developer's desires. Likewise do these projects contribute to remaking discourses, but can never completely overhaul discourses far surpassing these developments. Hence TIGLS' establishment (rather than establish a new discourse on the fate of the Aberdeenshire countryside) became intertwined with and reshaped a discourse built on a pre-existing problem formulation concerning what should keep Aberdeenshire's economy afloat post-oil.

Bro Hof Slott and TIGLS appear throughout this dissertation as constituted through a variety of political, economic and socio-ecological relations. These cases, above all, testify to the transformations undertaken to provide spectacular upmarket leisure settings, and to the allure of entrepreneurial promises. They testify to how high-profile developments introduce rural landscapes into new networks of global interconnectivity. As forces reshaping eco-systems they are undoubtedly rather different. Bro Hof

Slott contributed to the erection of a nature reserve whereas TIGLS contributed to the destruction of a sensitive sand dune system. But planning-wise they both set dangerous precedents - concerning the integrity of legally binding documents in the case of Bro Hof Slott, and of environmental protection in the case of TIGLS.

Together, these cases hopefully provide a foundation for a political ecology of high-end golf. Scrutinising how these developments refashion human and non-human lives add to the range both of issues and spaces explored in political ecology, while also opening a vista deepening tourism studies' engagement with the earth. Above all, this dissertation has added spectacular global north landscapes - re-ordered for upmarket leisurely consumption - to a political ecology to date more concerned with the often hidden sites of environmental degradation. It has added the socio-ecological complexities of scenic settings, and the thorough transformations necessary (from the standpoint of the tourist operators) to make and retain these sites as 'scenic'. Such transformations can be just as controversial and contested as those transformations previously studied through a political ecology lens. We should never naïvely believe that pleasurable sceneries are any less thoroughly political, or any less fraught in contestation, than un-pleasurable spaces.

Bro Hof Slott and TIGLS both illuminate how rural landscapes' radical reshaping is *only* made possible through the radical (and always contested) revaluation of these landscapes. This raises key political ecology issues regarding who defines natures, and who profits from their shape and re-shaping. Bro Hof Slott and TIGLS illuminate a world where upmarket leisurely consumption is a significant force in environmental transformation, adding to our understanding of the massive tangible transformations behind seemingly intangible features such as ambience, mood, and seductive settings.





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# Appendix A: Interviewees

Trump International Golf Links Scotland

*(Title denotes position at the time of interview)*

Robert Collier, Chief Executive, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

Martin Ford, Independent Councillor

Ian Francis, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Sonia Galloway, Planner Ellon, Aberdeenshire

Jim Gifford, Scottish Conservatives Councillor

Neil Hobday, Project director, Trump International Golf Links

Sue Lawrence, Scottish Natural Heritage

Rob Merson, Scottish National Party Councillor

Plane Stupid activist

Gordon Prentice, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

Anne Robertson, Liberal Democrat Councillor

Resident, 45 Yrs

Bill Slee, Head of Socio-economic Research Group, Macaulay Institute

Joanna Strathdee, Group leader, Scottish National Party, Aberdeenshire Council

Debra Storr, Independent Councillor

Tripping up Trump activist, 22 Yrs

Tripping up Trump activist, 39 Yrs

## Bro Hof Slott Golf Club

*(Title denotes position at the time of interview)*

Kjell A. Johansson, Left Party, Upplands-Bro municipality

Per-Ola Björn, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, Upplands-Bro

Christina Brofalk, Centre Party, Upplands-Bro municipality

Lars Brofalk, Chairman, Building and Environments Committee, Upplands-Bro municipality

Jan Ekblom, Head of Intelligence/ Chef för omvärldsanalys, Svenska golfförbundet/Swedish Golf Union

Mathias Forsberg, Head of Business Contacts, Upplands-Bro municipality

Johan Hagenfeldt, Managing Director & Club Director, Bro Hof Slott GC

Fredrik Hellkvist, Nordea Masters Managing Director

Camilla Jansson, Social Democrats, Upplands-Bro municipality



Johan Kannerberg, Intelligence/Omvärldanalys Svenska golfförbundet/Swedish Golf Union

David Lanthén, Head of Planning and Development Upplands-Bro municipality

Anna Norberg, Green Party, Upplands-Bro municipality

Irene Seth, Moderates – Chairman of the Municipal Assembly, Upplands-Bro

Jan Stefansson, Christian Democrats, Upplands-Bro municipality

Yvonne Stein, Liberal Party, Upplands-Bro municipality

Kerstin Åkare, Left Party, Upplands-Bro municipality

Björn Örås, Founder and Chairman, Bro Hof Slott Golf Club



# Appendix B: Medförfattarintyg

Lund, 3 July 2013

To whom it may concern,

The authors hereby certify that the paper entitled "*Because I am who I am and my mother is Scottish*": *Neoliberal Planning and Entrepreneurial Instincts at Trump International Golf Links Scotland*" is based on 75% / 25% contributions by the respective authors Jönsson / Baeten.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Erik Jönsson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Erik Jönsson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Guy Baeten', with a large, stylized 'G' and 'B' at the beginning.

Guy Baeten