Sensorveiledning POL1003

The term paper
The paper counts for 50% of the grade. In general, the term paper is evaluated on five criteria:
- First, is there a clear research question and argument in the introduction?
- Second, is the argument supported by theories and academic literature?
- Third, is the argument tested (with empirical data)?
- Fourth, is there a discussion of the results and what implications these may have?
- Fifth, are all the formalities (including correct referencing) followed?

The papers which are original and independent should be rewarded for this.

The exam
The written exam counts 50% of the final grade. It consists of several questions which all should be answered.

1. Explain the tragedy of the commons.

Students should be able to describe what the tragedy of the commons is (TOTC), and how it is relevant for environmental politics. TOTC is an economics theory by Garrett Hardin, who argues that rational individuals act according to their own self-interest, and behave contrary to the group’s long-term interests by depleting common resources. The most popular example used by Hardin is the idea that when peasants are to put their own sheep on the village commons, they recognize that putting an extra sheep on to the field will benefit their self-interest, while the costs are shared among all the peasants that use the commons. This logic makes all peasants put an extra sheep on the field, ultimately leading to the destruction of the commons.

“Commons” within the environmental area include the atmosphere, oceans, rivers, national parks and so on. Suggested mechanisms to control TOTC are privatization or point out a “manager” that allocates the resource which often means international institutions.

Could be placed within the survivalist discourse.

2. Describe shortly the three indicators for evaluation of regime effectiveness? Use the international regime on climate change (CC) to illustrate.

At the lecture the following trade-off was presented and discussed:

1: Validity concerns: Do you measure what you want to measure?
   i) Theoretical concept vs. empirical operationalization
2: Data availability concerns: What data are available?

i) Time-lag between implementation and result

Output: The new set of rules and regulations, which could be at the international level or at the national level. Usually a regime has rules/laws on both levels. This indicator is typically concerned with the formation stage (earliest stage) of a regime. However, political goals are not always achieved. For CC this means that we have the data readily available, but the validity of the data could be low as the laws do not say anything about the implementation.

Outcome: State behavior or sub-state behavior. Agreements at the international level almost always identify behavioral changes. Data on CO2 emissions readily available, and emission reduction is necessary for the regime to be successful.

Impact: Change in nature, which is the ultimate objective. There are some issues with this indicator; i) change in nature is a slow process (time-lag), and ii) scientific certainty changes. Validity is high for changing composition of GHG in the atmosphere. However, there are data availability issues, as described above.

Conclusion is that outcome is the best indicator that balances both validity and data availability.

3. Why is it hard to implement international climate change politics according to Hovi, Sprinz and Underdal (2009)?

Three main factors are brought forward by the authors:

i) Time inconsistency: Main point: Optimal choices at one point in time may not be optimal in the future. Reduction of GHG today will not bring profit for several generations. And a range of other problems are likely to arise over that period of time, such as economic crisis or poverty reduction. Main problem: Need to change the current fossil fuel based economy with a low GHG economy.

ii) Domestic politics: Main point: National governments will be skeptical to enforcing costly long-term environmental policies adopted at the international level. Main problem: Multiple governments will be in power, and will ultimately be most concerned with their own survival. A government will (a) more preoccupied with short term consequences, and (b) more cautious in adopting policies that are perceived to impose costs on, or run counter to the values of, its own core constituency.

iii) International anarchy: Main point: Reduction of GHG emissions benefits all countries (it is a collective good). Main problem: To provide collective goods give incentives for free-riding. The global commons problem means that climate change cannot be linked to emissions from a specific country.

4. Present the main features of the problem-solving discourse.

The discourse is prosaic (Environmental problems solved with established approaches) and reformist (Takes industrialism as given). This group of discourses recognizes environmental problems, but treats them as tractable within the basic framework of the political economy of industrial society.
The focus here is naturally problem-solving, and not overshoots and collapse. Different varieties of discourse reveal different conceptions about how to best organize problem solving, especially when social problems require coordination of large numbers of individuals. The three main ways of organization is administrative rationalism, democratic pragmatism, and economic rationalism.

Students are not expected to elaborate on the three different perspectives, but should be able to say which discourses fits within this category.

5. Discuss the following statement in light of Roe’s development narratives: Overgrazing by pastoralist cattle leads to desertification.

A short description of what a narrative is: “Stories” with a beginning, a middle, and an end; they have a cast of actors, typically “heroes”, “villains” and “victims”; they tell a story about concrete event; and is told in a manner that supports the arguments of a particular discourse; and are normative.

Two development narratives are presented in Roe’s article:

i) Except-Africa, which means that Africa is the exception when it comes to development, this narrative stabilize decision making in uncertain situations, and creates “one-size-fits-all” policies

ii) The Doomsday Scenario for any country in Except-Africa

Overgrazing is seen as: Closed ecosystem affected by humans, which are overused, need top-down policies (remember the great green wall?), and global action.

The students will be evaluated on how well they are able to argue for their point of view.

6. What mechanisms are often brought forward to explain how resource abundance could lead to conflict?

Students should be familiar with arguments from the resource abundance literature, and the evaluation of this statement should rest on this literature. Resource abundance literature emphasizes two hypotheses:

i) Resource curse hypothesis:
   a. Economic arguments: oil wealth shift resources away from other sectors, high level of fluctuation (in the rate of extraction, in price over time), the dutch disease
   b. Political arguments: fewer incentives to bargain economic and political accountability with tax revenues (less trust in institutions), corrupt governing institutions

ii) Honey pot hypothesis:
   a. Resource abundance leads to conflict by encouraging rebel groups to form and fight over valuable natural resources (the looting mechanism). Research by Collier and Hoeffler.

These hypotheses are more relevant for developing countries than for developed countries, particularly the honey pot hypothesis. There are examples of the resource curse hypothesis in developed countries (Netherlands), however, the political arguments of the resource curse is probably less important developed countries.
Critics of the hypotheses: Resource cure: often applicable only for non-renewable resources, exporting countries would be worse off today without natural resources. Honey pot critics: chiefly applicable to non-renewable resources, non-renewable may be abundant locally, but are scarce globally, cannot explain violence alone, not much empirical evidence.

7. Evaluate the following statement: Climate change leads to conflict in the developing countries.

Main idea: Renewable resource scarcity affects less developed countries to such an extent that it is an important contribution to violent conflicts.

Climate change will include i) Long-term change (precipitation, temperature, e.g,) and ii) Short-term change (flooding, drought, cyclones, e.g.). There is reason to expect that climate change will have tremendous impact on human societies.

Key mechanisms:

i) Vulnerable livelihoods: Dependency on (renewable) resources in developing countries. Conflicts typically viewed as farmer vs. herder.

ii) Poverty: Absolute, relative (deprivation) and transient poverty. Young, frustrated men more inclined to join armed groups

iii) Weak states: The state should create conditions for people to pursue their livelihoods (laws and prosecution). Inability of many states to project authority over distance

iv) Migration: Push vs. pull. Can leave people more vulnerable

The answer should be a discussion on the different mechanisms mentioned above and perhaps an evaluation of which aspect of climate change is most likely to have the largest impact.

8. Is energy a strategic resource?

Strategic resources: those resources which without it is almost impossible to conceive social-economic development of a certain historical era. Its possession helps its possessor to protect or acquire other resources.

Energy and energy-related technologies (i) are key conditions for economic development/growth; (ii) have emancipated man from heavy manual labour, and contributed to the production of surplus that is required to lift populations beyond the threshold of minimal subsistence, (iii) are conditions for the locomotion of modern society (tremendous increase in physical mobility), (iv) hydrocarbons are raw-material for the production of goods and chemicals, and (v) hydrocarbons and nuclear energy are vital in defence and in the projection of military power.

Thus, modern states rely upon the abundant supply of energy to implement key policy goals related to (i) the economy at large, (ii) industry and labour, (iii) the transportation of goods and people, (iv) consumption-patterns, (v) social cohesion and political stability, (vi) external security, and (vii) increasingly the environment
9. How did the oil crisis of late 1973 influence the global energy security system?

The current system is born out of the 1973 crisis: Focus on how to avoid disruptions from producing countries.

Key element: The IEA and the emergency stockpiles (used under various international or national crises such as Gulf War 1991, Hurricane Katrina 2005, Libya war 2011) which was established in the aftermath of the oil crises.

Key principles: Diversification (first and foremost of supply, reduced imports from OPEC, more nuclear and coal and some new exporters such as Norway and Alaska), resilience (a «security margin» that functions as a buffer. Can come from spare production capacity, strategic reserves, backup supplies, storage capacity), reality of integration (: there is only one market, all are dependent on stability), information (high-quality information underpins well-functioning markets. IEA is important here).

Students should also be awarded for pointing to how the system was organized before the oil crisis.

10. Will China keep expanding its renewable energy capacity? What are the main reasons for and against?

Short summary in English follows below.

1) Ja, det kommer til å fortsette å gå fort også fremover
   b. Kinesiske myndigheter innsa at Kina kommer til å bli rammet hardt av klimaendringer (og forurensningen er allerede til å ta og føle på…)
   c. Dette er vekstindustrier, og med eksportpotensiale særlig på sol.
   d. Også del av en energisikkerhetsstrategi.

2) MEN; en rekke problemer og utfordringer som må løses
   a. Fornybarvekst drevet like mye av vekst i etterspørselen etter energi som av et ønske om strukturell endring (kull øker også…)
   b. Elektrisitetsnettet må bygges ut. Dyrt! Hvem tar kostnadene?
   c. Provinsene overholder ofte ikke påleggene fra sentralregjeringen. Massive ineffektivitetsproblemer
   d. Opake institusjoner, overlappende ansvarsområder.
   e. Vested interest-problemene ser små ut nå, men i en situasjon med lavere (fremtidig) vekst, lurder det store interessemotsetninger mellom forskjellige energiaktører, og det er umulig å si i dag hvem som vil vinne fremtidens interessekamper, selv om sentralregjeringen i utgangspunktet er klart pro-fornybar. Økonomisk vekst gjør det mulig å la være å prioritere, fordi alle interesser kan tilgodeses. Men det kan neppe vare til evig tid…!

Several aspects are relevant:
If the answer is yes:
- Political unity/willingness
- Chinese government understands that they will be affected by climate change
- Growth industries
- Energy security

If the answer is no:
- Depends on the demand
- Grid cells are expensive
- Government vs. the provinces
- Institutions
- Vested interests