

CHUSS SEMINAR SERIES

Presenter: Dr. Adam Branch
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Date: Friday 13th April 2018

Time: 12.30 pm – 2.30pm

Venue: Conference Hall, School of Women and Gender Studies

Title: *Charcoal Power: The Political Violence of Non-Fossil Fuel in Uganda*

The politics of global energy are subject to increasing academic interest. Most work focuses on oil, based upon a normative vision of an energy modernity of fossil fuels and a coming transition to renewable energy. In most African countries, however, the most prevalent source of energy is not oil, but woodfuel. Charcoal is of particular importance due to its centrality to urbanization: charcoal is the primary energy source for up to 80% of urban Africa, and its consumption is expected to continue increasing with expanding urbanization. This work-in-progress explores the politics of charcoal through an in-depth study of charcoal extraction in northern Uganda. The paper argues that, by placing charcoal in its political and historical context, we can understand its extraction as a continuation of the violence of the twenty-year northern war. By focusing on the political violence of energy, the orthodox academic and policy narrative about the charcoal industry in Africa can be called into question, as can broader narratives of energy modernity and global energy politics.