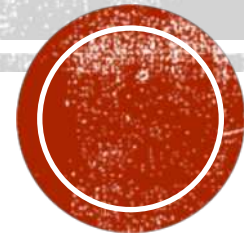


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MULTIDISCIPLINARY METHODOLOGY IN THE TEACHING AND RESEARCH OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

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THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS SESSION IS

- Introduce the participants to the environmental research being undertaken in other disciplines –

Political Ecology

- Overview of the academic research on environmental issues in your discipline and even highlight specific contributions in this regard.



WHAT IS POLITICAL ECOLOGY



LOSS OF HABITAT IN KENYA AND BUT NOT IN TANZANIA?





Cross-border analysis shows that the decline in habitat and wildlife in Kenya is far higher than in Tanzania.

Private holdings and investment in export cereal grains on the Kenyan side of the border have led to intensive cropping and the decline of habitat.

Less developed agricultural markets and less fully privatized land tenure systems in Tanzania mean less pressure on wildlife



- The wildlife crisis in East Africa is more political and economic than demographic
- This undermines the widely held apolitical views about ecological relations
- It also challenges the image of nature being wild and without people
- For example in east Africa the Massai have inhabited the Central Rift Valley for thousands of years
- They have been marginalised and tea and coffee plantations have taken over this region. These products are consumed by people in the developed world and as world prices fall, more and more area is brought under cultivation to make it cost effective. Further changing the ecological conditions.



WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT POLITICAL ECOLOGY?

- Nature and conservation of the same does not occur outside of the influence of broader political economy
- The difference between a *political* and an *apolitical ecology* is – the difference between identifying broader systems rather than blaming proximate and local forces
- Viewing ecosystems as power-laden rather than politically inert
- Taking a normative approach rather than claiming objectivity



- The field of political ecology is based on the assumption that any tug on the strands of the global web of human-environment linkage reverberates throughout the system as a whole



**Environmental change and ecological conditions are the product of political
process**

(Bryant and Bailey 1997)



ASSUMPTION OF POLITICAL ECOLOGY

- Political ecologists: “accept the idea that costs and benefits associated with environmental change are for the most part distributed among actors unequally (which inevitably] reinforces or reduces existing social and economic inequalities [which holds] political implications in terms of the altered power of actors in relation to other actors” (Bryant and Bailey 1997, pp. 28–29).



CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL ECOLOGY

- Addresses the condition and change of social/environmental systems, with explicit consideration of relations of power
- Explores social and environmental changes with an understanding that there are better, less coercive, less exploitative, and more sustainable ways of doing things
- Finding causes rather than symptoms of problems
- Stresses not only that ecological systems are political, but also that our very ideas about them are further delimited and directed through political and economic process



PIERS BLAIKIE - CAPE INAUGURAL LECTURE POSES THE QUESTION “SHOULD SOME POLITICAL ECOLOGY (PE) BE USEFUL?”

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Shifting sands: Legal dispossession of small-scale miners in an extractivist era

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AJIT MENON AND MANASI KARTHIK (2017)

- Political ecology's main aim is to critique the discourses and practices of development and conservation, be it in relation to humans or non- humans, by examining the workings of political economy and power.
- It is, in other words, an analytical approach – not an ideology.



Thank you

