Political ecology: a synthesis and search for relevance to today's ecosystems conservation and development

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Abstract
Africa is facing problems of deforestation, desertification, loss of soil fertility, loss of wildlife habitats and biodiversity, and the deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and lack of accessible, good quality water. Governments have formulated policies, enacted legislation and established various institutions addressing these issues. African countries are yet to arrest the environmental problems they are facing, due to, among others, the ineffectual theoretical analysis of the problem of ecosystems degradation. This study argues for the adoption of the political ecological framework in the analysis of sociopolitical sources, conditions and ramifications of ecosystems change and also highlights the explanatory power of this conceptual framework as far as the explanation of the problem of ecosystems degradation is concerned, and shows how it can enable us deal with the multi-layered causality rather than the symptoms of the problem of ecosystems change.