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# Political ecology: An emerging research agenda in Third-World studies

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### Abstract

This paper is a preliminary exploration of Third-World political ecology. In the first part of the paper, a framework for understanding the emerging research agenda is developed that embraces three critical areas of inquiry. These are: the contextual sources of environmental change; conflict over access; and the political ramifications of environmental change. Each of these areas of inquiry is addressed by way of a two-fold strategy—the relevant literature is first reviewed, and then central analytical issues are discussed. Throughout, it is suggested that Third-World political ecology represents an attempt to develop an integrated understanding of how environmental and political forces interact to mediate social and environmental change. In a world where environmental problems assume growing political significance, this form of integrated understanding is long overdue.



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