

ECOPOLITICS PODCAST: Additional Pedagogical Resources (Episode 3)

[Episode 3: Theory and Method in Environmental Politics](#)

Overview: What are some of the main theoretical approaches and methods used in the study of Global Ecopolitics? In this episode Dr. Raul Pacheco-Vega (FLACSO) provides some very helpful answers and further explains the relationship between theory and method for students of Global Ecopolitics.

Key Takeaways

- Various Theoretical approaches shape how we conceptualize, unpack and interpret what's happening in global ecopolitics. Different methodologies offer different sets of tools to analyse and answer our specific research questions about ecopolitics. Methodological approaches are often shaped by our theoretical foundations.
- There are a wide range of theoretical approaches to ecopolitics, and these have evolved over time, moving from localized issues towards global ones. Approaches to ecopolitics look to consider how these issues may be understood, how global and national institutions are organized to respond, and the specific roles of governments, communities, and individuals.
- The theoretical and methodological frameworks developed to understand ecopolitics are built on previous scholarship in various domains (for instance, some ecopolitics scholarship is heavily influenced by theories and methods of International Relations). At times, however, leading theories and methods do not meet the needs of scholars, and so new frameworks will emerge that will require empirical testing.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you articulate the differences between theoretical, conceptual, and analytical frameworks? What does this mean for how you approach research questions?
2. What do you see as the strengths of a specific theoretical framework you would want to bring to the study of ecopolitics? What might be its limitations?
3. What are the methodological implications of bringing a specific theoretical framework or set of concepts that you know of into ecopolitical research? What does this frame encourage you to look at and look for? What might it leave out?

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Learn more about our Guest

Dr. Raul Pacheco-Vega

- <http://www.raulpacheco.org/>
- <https://twitter.com/raulpacheco>

Select articles, books and videos

- **Pacheco-Vega, Raul** (2014) “The impact of Elinor Ostrom’s research on Mexican commons governance: An overview” *Policy Matters*. Issue 19. CEESP and IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. Pp. 23-34
- **Pacheco-Vega, Raul**. “Six Writing Books to Improve Your Qualitative Methods Prose.” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 17, no. 1. 2018
- **Pacheco-Vega, Raul**. “Writing Field Notes and Using Them to Prompt Scholarly Writing.” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 18. 2019

Explore resources mentioned in this episode

- Dr. **Pacheco-Vega’s** blog post on theoretical frameworks
<http://www.raulpacheco.org/2018/09/writing-theoretical-frameworks-analytical-frames-and-conceptual-frameworks/>
- **Pacheco-Vega, Raul**, and Amanda Murdie. “When Do Environmental NGOs Work? A Test of the Conditional Effectiveness of Environmental Advocacy.” *Environmental Politics* 30, no. 1-2 (2021): 180–201.
- Hardin, Garrett. “The Tragedy of the Commons.” *Science (American Association for the Advancement of Science)* 162, no. 3859 (1968): 1243–1248.
- Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Strom, E., J. Burger, and Christopher B. Field. 1999. ‘Revisiting the Commons: Local Lessons, Global Challenges’. *Science*. 284(5412): 278-282
<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/284/5412/278>

Learn more about theories, analysis, methods, and concepts:

- Jabareen, Yosef. “Building a Conceptual Framework: Philosophy, Definitions, and Procedure.” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no. 4 (2009): 49–62.
- Vaccaro, Ismael., Eric Alden. Smith, and Shankar. Aswani. *Environmental Social Sciences: Methods and Research Design* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

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- Dryzek, John S. *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Dauvergne, Peter, and Jennifer Clapp. "Researching Global Environmental Politics in the 21st Century." *Global Environmental Politics* 16, no. 1 (2016): 1–12.
- Katz-Rosene, Ryan M, Christopher Kelly-Bisson, and Matthew Paterson. "Teaching Students to Think Ecologically About the Global Political Economy, and Vice Versa." *Review of International Political Economy: RIPE*. 28, no. 4 (2021): 1083–1098.

Explore some of the frameworks available through various books and articles:

- Bonney, Rick, and Janis L. Dickinson. *Citizen Science Public Participation in Environmental Research*. Ithaca: Comstock Pub. Associates, 2012.
- Dooley, David. *Social Research Methods*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Prentice Hall, 2001.
- Kanazawa, Mark. *Research Methods for Environmental Studies: a Social Science Approach*. 1st edition. London: Routledge, 2018.
- McGregor, Deborah, Jean-Paul Restoule, and Rochelle Johnston. *Indigenous Research: Theories, Practices, and Relationships*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars, 2018.
- Gisli Palsson, Bronislaw Szerszynski, Sverker Sörlin, John Marks, Bernard Avril, Carole Crumley, Heide Hackmann, Poul Holm, John Ingram, Alan Kirman, Mercedes Pardo Buendía, Rifka Weehuizen. "Reconceptualizing the 'Anthropos' in the Anthropocene: Integrating the Social Sciences and Humanities in Global Environmental Change Research." *Environmental Science & Policy* 28, no. Special Issue: Responding to the Challenges of our Unstable Earth (RESCUE) (2013): 3–13.
- Vaccaro, Ismael., Eric Alden. Smith, and Shankar. Aswani. *Environmental Social Sciences: Methods and Research Design* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Explore Peer-reviewed Journals on Environmental Politics and Research Design

- Environmental Politics <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/fenp20/current>
- Global Environmental Politics <https://direct.mit.edu/glep>
- Journal of Environmental Science & Policy
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/environmental-science-and-policy>
- International Journal of Qualitative Methods <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/ijq>
- Political Science Research and Methods
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/political-science-research-and-methods>