## Political Ecology in Anti-Corruption Efforts and Practice



Jennifer Devine, Ph.D.

devine@txstate.edu

Texas State University

Department of Geography



Illegal Cattle Ranching in Guatemala's Maya Biosphere

## TARGETING NATURAL RESOURCE CORRUPTION

Harnessing knowledge, generating evidence, and supporting innovative policy and practice for more effective anti-corruption programming

## **Overview**

- What is political ecology? How do political ecologists understand corruption?
- Narco-deforestation and corruption in Guatemala's Maya Biosphere
- Understanding and implementing a political ecology approach in anticorruption and natural resource management programs



Chicle Tapper, Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve

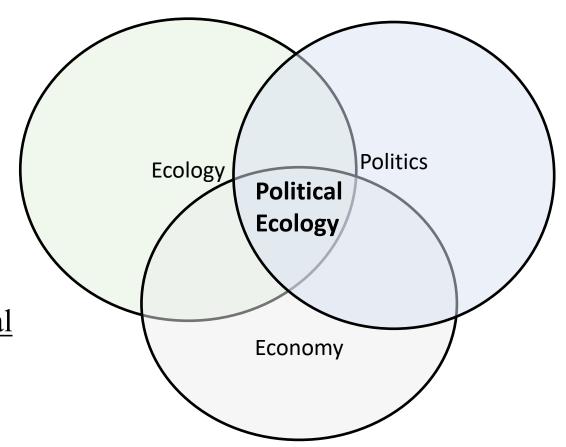
Source: Jennifer Devine

## What is political ecology?

Political ecology (PE) studies how politics, economics, and culture shape environmental change, and vice versa.

PE integrates ecological and social sciences with political economy.

PE focuses on how <u>power relations</u> impact the distribution of <u>costs and benefits of environmental</u> <u>change</u> and how <u>inequality and unequal resource</u> <u>distribution drive conservation crime</u>.



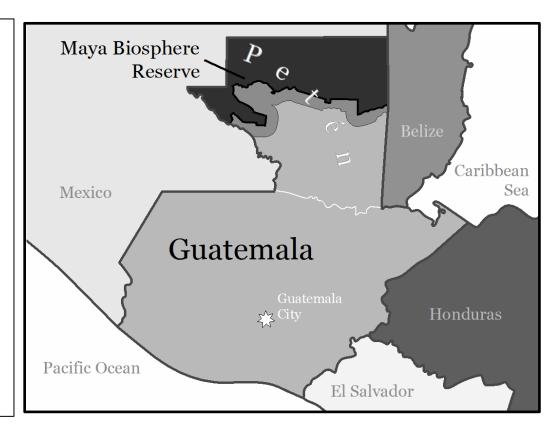
Source: Bryant and Bailey 1996, West 2016

## How do political ecologists understand corruption?

Political ecology understands corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain (transparency.org), but also as a system of governance that reproduces acute inequality and injustice through dispossession in ways that are often legal.

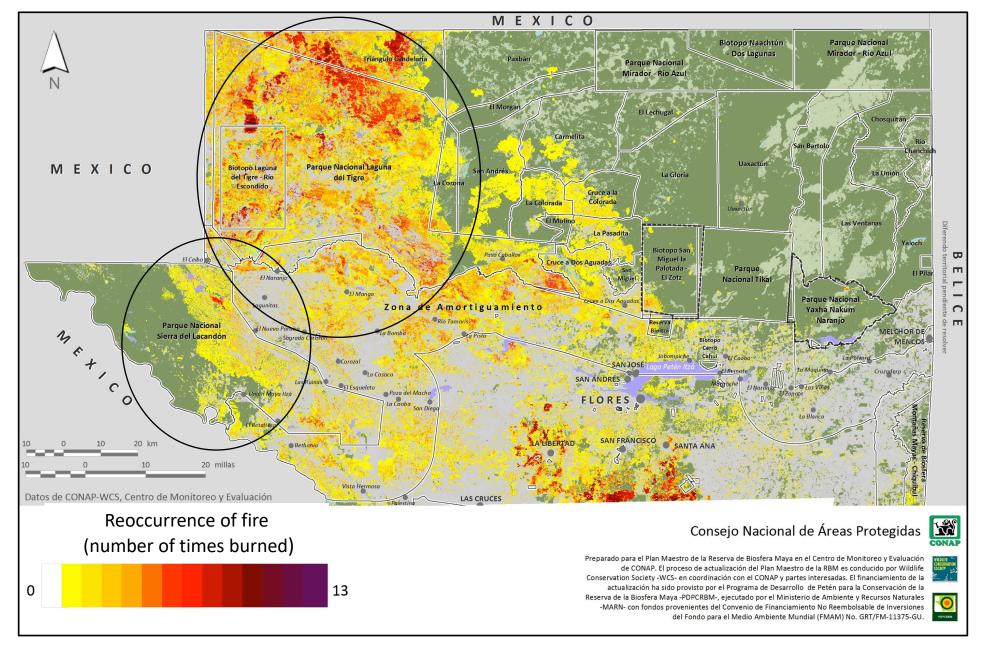
### Examples of corruption in Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve:

- Traffickers paying bribes to law enforcement
- Impunity for environmental crimes
- Criminal organizations funding political parties
- Laws that criminalize ancestral land uses in protected areas
- Foreign and national elites misusing development and conservation funds for personal enrichment



Source: Jennifer Devine

## **Manmade Fires: 1998 - 2016**



## Narco-Cattle Ranching in the Maya Biosphere

TRASIEGAN DROGA, CRÍAN GANADO Y CONTRATAN A POBLADORES

### Narcos buscan área fronteriza

velan que grupos de nar-cotraficantes utilizan finde áreas protegidas de Pe-tén, para cometer diferen-

tes ilícitos. Trasiego de drogas, la-vado de dinero, crianza de ganado y trata de personas son algunas de las acti-vidades a las que se desar desapercibidas por las

Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas (Conap), para vivir y cultivar por perio-determinado que estos

Zonas bajo la lupa EL Ministerio Público y la Policía Nacional Civil han detectado siete puntos rojos en áreas protegidas en el departamento de Petén, donde los PETÉN

vendan.

De acuerdo con fuentes del MP, las familias camoltogran inigún documenoltogran inigún documenoltogran inigún documenoltogran inigún documento legal que los acredite como propietarios, arro-ción y tráfico ilegal de flo-

fin de sembrar maiz, frijol 18 caballerías, solo para o paga, pero tos matos ses citaliza de ganado. En ex-compran las parcelas a tensión, estas representa-costo de QIO mil a Q20 mil, rían unos cien campos de formantes. Les proporcio-gidas en Petén proceden

LA TIERRA reses. El principal fin de Los narcotraficantes se este negocio es el lavado convierten prácticamente de dinero.

ejecutar órdenes de alla-namiento, pues no en-

No todas las norsonas defende de la un'eccación futrou, agregan investiga-la defendación de la unicación futrou. Las auto-parecials está may escon-dida, tiene mejor preció-, es talar árboles y sembrar dide cun investigador. por para alimentar a las entre Q mil y Q mil. Los . Zacapa y lutiagida.

voca los contratos otorga-

### Narcopistas

han sido utilizadas

"Narcos look for frontier area"



Source: prensalibre.com, anonymous

## Narco-Cattle Ranching in the Maya Biosphere





Source: www.plazapublica.com.gt

### **AMÉRICA LATINA**

# Avionetas con cocaína entre pirámides mayas: cómo un paraíso arqueológico se convirtió en la más reciente ruta narco

En 2019, las autoridades encontraron 50 aviones abandonados y decomisaron 18.910 kilos de droga en la Reserva de la Biosfera en la zona del Petén, en Guatemala. en medio de ruinas milenarias

1 de Agosto de 2020



"Airplanes with cocaine in between Maya pyramids: how an archeological paradise turned into the most recent route of narcos"

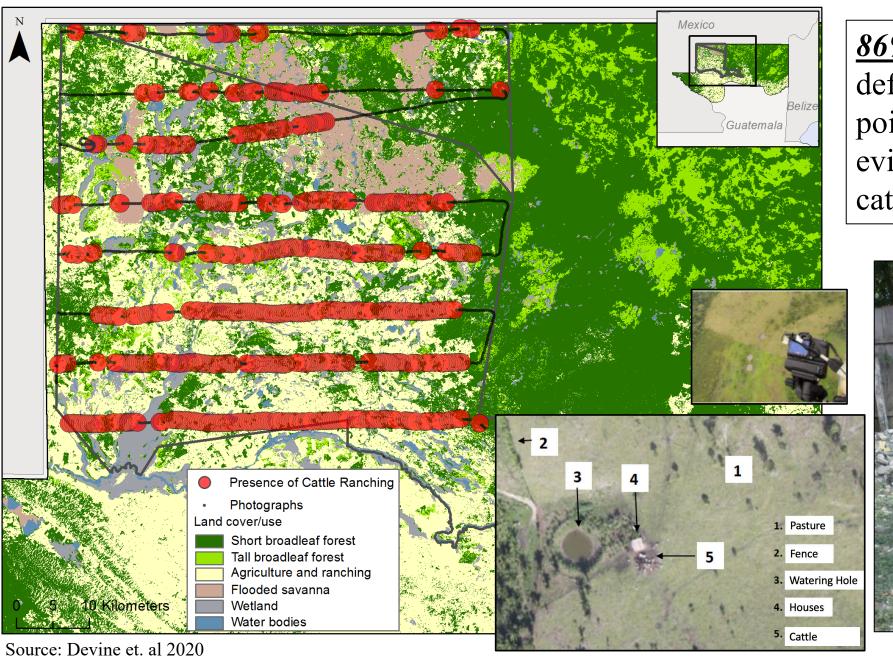
Source: Infobae.com



Uaxactún, Guatemala Source: Jennifer Devine

Socio-Natural **Environmental** Sciences Sciences **Synthesis** 

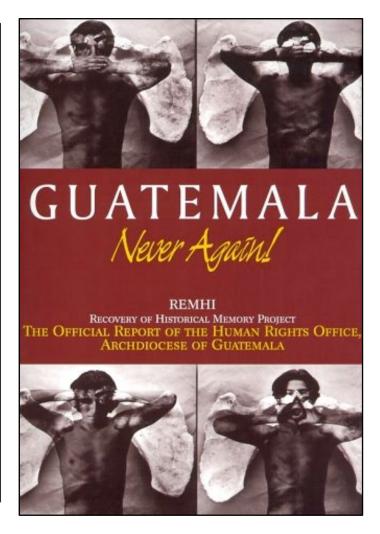
Understanding Corruption with Political Ecology	Implementing A Political Ecology Approach
Integrate social and environment analysis	<ul> <li>Take nature seriously!</li> <li>Build multi-disciplinary teams that integrate social and environmental sciences</li> <li>Implement mixed methods</li> </ul>
	approaches to understand socio- environmental change and clandestine activities



86% of our deforested data points display evidence of cattle ranching



Understanding Corruption with Political Ecology	Implementing A Political Ecology Approach
2. Interrogate taken-forgranted and <i>de jure</i> definitions of corruption and illegality	<ul> <li>Define corruption through analysis not <i>a priori</i> as a term of reference</li> <li>Analyze local meanings of corruption and conservation crime, especially among local resource users, using interview and oral history methods</li> <li>Distinguish between legality and legitimacy</li> </ul>





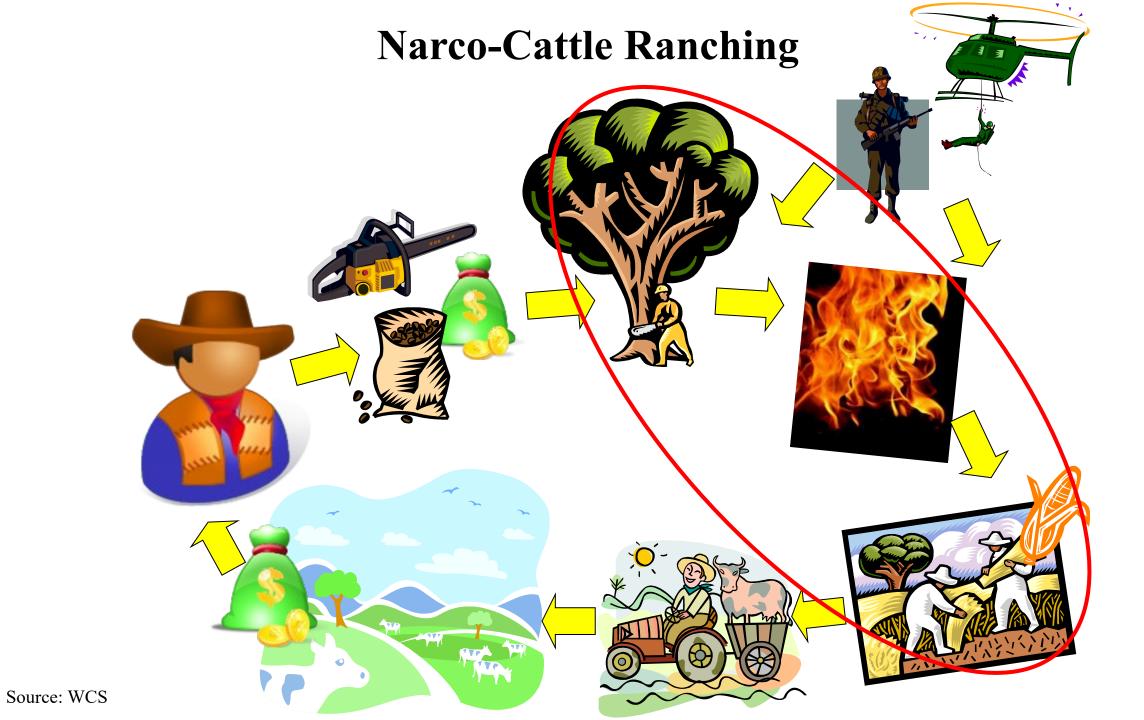


"They burned down our houses and the sacks of corn we had, without explanation.

We are not cattle ranchers, but agriculturalists"

Source: www.bosques-lacandon.org

---Maya Biosphere Evictee, interview



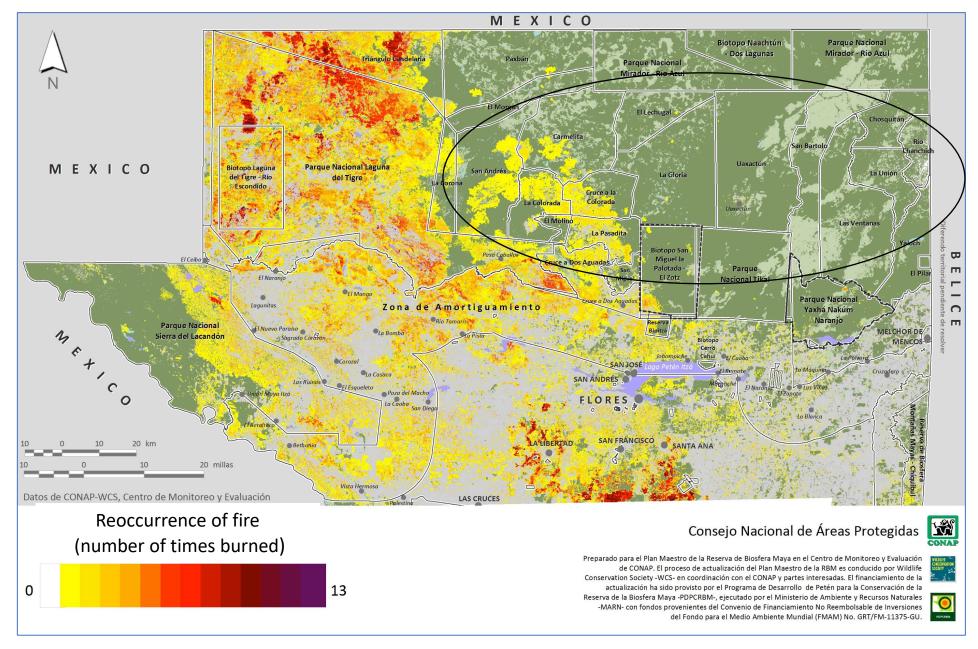


Understanding Corruption with Political Ecology	Implementing A Political Ecology Approach
3. Seek alliances with local social movements	<ul> <li>Involve and compensate local representatives as project protagonists in all phases</li> <li>Fund Indigenous and peasant land tenure and communal resource management</li> </ul>

"Guatemala's Forest Guardians"

Source: Jessica Long

## **Manmade Fires: 1998 - 2016**



# Asocación de Comunidades Forestales de Petén Association of Petén's Forest Communities

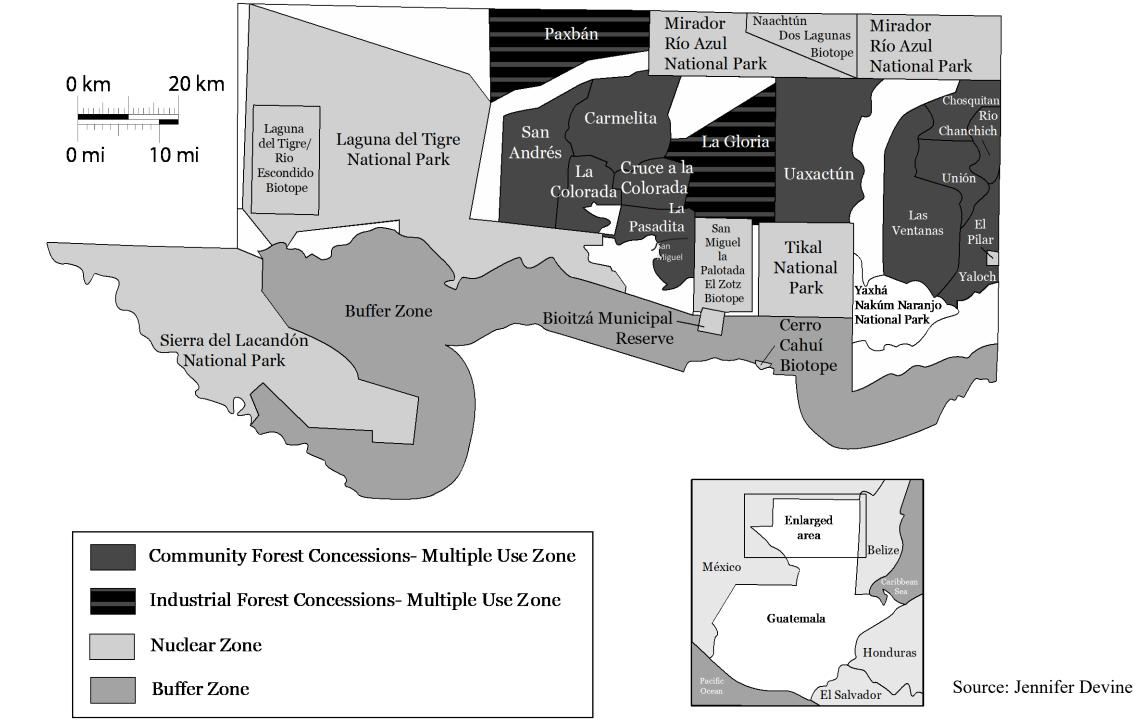
"You are in the Maya Biosphere Reserve Protected Area: Prohibited Activities"



Source: ACOFOP and Jennifer Devine







## Forest Guardians: Community Foresters









Guardarecursos y comunitarios, Protegiendo y Conservando la Rerserva de la Biosfera Maya.

Source: ACOFOP

Understanding Corruption with Political Ecology	Implementing A Political Ecology Approach
4. Focus on extreme inequalities in land and resource distribution that often drive conservation crime	<ul> <li>Reconsider the definition of effective program outcomes when working with marginalized populations to reduce land tenure inequality and poverty</li> <li>New indicators of project success in resource management</li> </ul>



Village in the Maya Biosphere Reserve

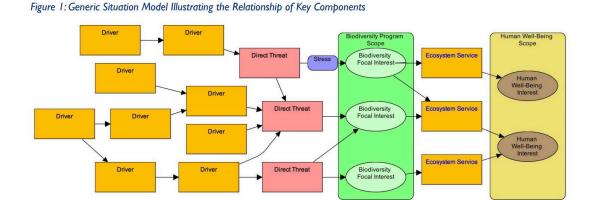
Source: Jennifer Devine

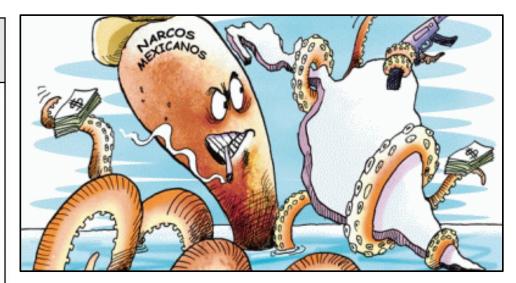
## Understanding Corruption

5. Analyze drivers of corruption and environmental crime at local, national, and global levels

# Implementing A Political Ecology Approach

- Conduct and map multi-scalar analysis of drivers of corruption and their links to environmental crime, starting with local level
- Produce policy recommendations at national and global scales to address structural drivers of acute inequality







Source: USAID, McSweeney et. al 2014, www.worldmeets.us

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