

Immersion Lecture: Sustainability through the Lens of Human Behavioral Ecology

Time of Event:

Tuesday, March 1, 2016 - 09:00 to 09:45

Video:

In this lecture, Dr. Monique Borgerhoff Mulder overviews the focus, history and approaches used in the subdiscipline of human behavioral ecology. She first notes its roots in Darwinian evolution, as the goal is to apply models about change and difference from ecology to human behavior in order to understand adaptive decisions. Human behavioral ecology uses simulated and empirical tools to identify transmitted traits and tried to understand the function of those traits. She uses the example of conservation as restraint, as one early test of these theories. The conservation hypothesis suggests that human decision-making about prey selection focuses on maximizing prey growth through foraging, which stands in contrast to the efficiency hypothesis, that the goal is to expend minimal energy for maximum gain. She also offers examples of conservation as cooperation, when human decision-making for other humans benefits the environment as well. She ends by describing human behavior ecology as seeking to better understand human tendencies, how they vary, and potentially how they can be contained or harnessed.

Reading List

Penn, D.J. 2003. The evolutionary roots of our environmental problems: Toward a Darwinian ecology. *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, 78(3), 275-301.

Presentation Slides

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[Monique Borgerhoff Mulder](#) [2] is a Professor of Anthropology at the University of California Davis. She uses the theory and methods of behavioural ecology to address aspects of human behavioural variation, engaging in focused ethnographic research, quantitative demographic analysis, and systematic comparative studies. Her research focuses in three distinct

areas: life history variation (including patterns of marriage and childrearing), the distribution of cultural traits across societies, and the links between conservation and economic development, and she is increasingly engaged in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of applied projects in East Africa. She co-directs a program on the intergenerational transmission of inequality with Sam Bowles at the Santa Fe Institute, and is co-founder of Savannas Forever Tanzania - Data for Development.

Event type:

Immersion Speaker

Event Attendance:

Private Working Group

Source URL:

<https://www.sesync.org/events-announcements/thu-2016-02-11-1702/immersion-lecture-sustainability-through-the-lens-of-human>

Links

[1] https://www.sesync.org/sites/default/files/education/monique_hbe.pdf

[2] <http://anthropology.ucdavis.edu/people/fzborger>