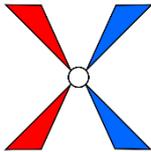


144 DB

bncdoc.id	APN
bncdoc.author	Blaikie, Piers
bncdoc.year	1987
bncdoc.title	The political economy of soil erosion in developing countries.
bncdoc.info	The political economy of soil erosion in developing countries. Sample containing about 39913 words from a book (domain: world affairs)
Text availability	Worldwide rights cleared
Publication date	1985-1993
Text type	Written books and periodicals
David Lee's classification	W_ac_polit_law_edu

<144/c>	<p>works, training programmes, aerial photography, mapping sub-projects and so on. (b) The build-up of trained personnel and institutional development also usually goes according to schedule. (c) The development of agronomic research into soil conserving practices also (in four cases where the search discovered projects with this component) seems to have occurred at the research station, and on the land of a handful of farmers. Outreach to land-users in the project area was in all cases 'slower than expected', or seemed to have been forgotten altogether in the evaluation. (d) Where conservation was part of a wider package of rural development programmes (e.g. in integrated rural development projects), the physical outputs were achieved on target such as construction of storage facilities, target areas planted under some improved varieties of crops, the planting of trees in big plantations, the establishment of sawmills, agro-processing plants, mills and packing stations. However, other more ambitious targets such as reducing the rate of soil erosion, improving the offtake of pastures and the diffusion of soil conserving land management practices almost always were not achieved. Benefits were distributed socially and spatially less widely than anticipated. This summary of findings does not refer to all foreign aid projects. It is the combination of the particular elements required by successful conservation projects with the particular political, economic and logistic constraints under which foreign aid has to operate, that limit the fulfilment of objectives. The problems discussed in this section are not necessarily separate from those outlined as deriving from the colonial model, indeed they frequently overlap. When they do, the results are all the more dismal. Some explanations for failure, and some reassessments Chapter 3 has suggested that many soil conservation policies fail, and section 2 of this chapter has identified an historical model of the conceptualisation of the soil erosion problem and its policy solutions. Although many elements of that model still exist today, there is also quite widespread dissatisfaction with it, and there has been some attempt to find out why, and to modify these elements. Although this effort has been piecemeal and has occurred in widely differing contexts, the direction in which it is moving can be identified. Still, many of the most fundamental 'social factors' behind the conceptualisation of the causes of soil erosion and the role of government have still not been analysed coherently, and remain at best labelled and hidden in a number of black boxes. Here are some of the reasons that are commonly found in contemporary documentation for failures in conservation programmes. (a) Conservation techniques do not conserve soil in practice because of technical failures through inadequate or misapplied research. These range from the collapse of concrete-walled and widened terraces constructed by the Israelis in occupied territories (Bunyard 1980) to repeated failure of inflexible concrete check dams (nowadays frequently replaced by gabion), breached bunds, inadequate storm channels and</p>
 <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	

inadequate knowledge of the requirements and performance of grasses and trees. Other examples include Nobe and Seckler for Lesotho (1979); Robinson for Zambia (1978a 1978b); Coulson (1981); Rapp (1975) and Rapp et al. (1973). (b) Conservation techniques do not fit into agricultural and pastoral practices and therefore are not applied by farmers or pastoralists. An extended example of local conservation techniques being neglected or even discouraged and government initiated ones being encouraged (and later on forced upon the local population) is given by Berry and Townshend (1973). Table 4.2, adapted and added to the original (ibid: 246) indicates the techniques, their origin and their acceptance. One or two extra and up-dated pieces of information are supplied (Eco-Systems 1982). Inspection of Table 4.2 shows that those techniques already practised by local farmers, which the colonial government also encouraged and wished to extend, were accepted. Those introduced by government which were similar to those already employed (e.g. contour ridging) were also accepted. Others ran into practical difficulties. For example, contour banks in the Mbeya region led to rat infestation; wide grass strips and contour hedges often used up too much land. Boxed and broad-based terraces required an enormous amount of labour, reduced yields and proved unstable. Coercion had to be used to get local farmers to undertake these (technically dubious) measures. Many conservation schemes in southern and central Africa demanded a reduction in stocking rates and thus in the major form of storage of wealth, capital and prestige (Stocking 1981a, for Swaziland; Cliffe 1964, in Tanzania). In Java, Pickering (1979) reports in detail problems of the same kind. Ridge and tree planting on very steep slopes met resistance when the trees grew enough to shade food crops planted in between and were savagely pruned back. Constant supervision of seedling trees was also a problem. However, this technique was better accepted on poorer lands where food crops were less attractive relative to fuelwood. Bench terraces were technically effective, but ran into problems with the marginal farmer who was unable to sustain the temporary loss of food crops which terracing usually entails. Lastly, a scheme for silvipasture involving quite an intricate technology combining livestock-rearing, fodder grasses and fuelwood, needed considerable capital and physical back-up on the part of farmers, the larger operators of whom were successful. Bonsu (1981) reports the results of experiments to reduce erosion in a savannah soil of northern Ghana by