



SEMINAR: DOING POLICY ANALYSIS: A REPORT FROM THE FIELD -- BY PIERS BLAIKIE & JOSHUA MULDAVIN

This is a listing of *older East-West Center events* (newer listed first). See [Events](#) to get the list of current or upcoming events.

Brown-Bag Seminar presented by Joshua Muldavin, Visiting Scholar, East-West Center, Professor of Human Geography, Sarah Lawrence College; Visiting Scholar, China Academy of Social Sciences; Executive Director, The Action 2030 Institute

Where: John A. Burns Hall, Room 3012, East-West Center

When: Fri, 2012-06-15 12:00 - Fri, 2012-06-15 13:00

What:

There has been a large output of literature on “policy studies” in the last twenty years. This includes the anthropology of institutions, bureaucracies and bureaucratic behavior, policy discourse analysis, policy narratives, planning manuals, advocacy techniques, and the politics of policy. On the one hand are *ex ante* approaches to policy that are strongly normative and aim to contribute directly to *improve* policy. Drawing mainly on dominant theories and methodologies of policy formulation taught in policy and management schools, these take a rationalist and instrumentalist view of the policy making process. On the other hand are *ex post* approaches that are analytical and strongly critical. Drawing mainly on critical theory—materialist and discursive—these do not aim to improve as much as critically analyze existing policy. The approach to policy reform presented here, while drawing on both mainstream and critical literature, distances itself from both. It is separated from the normative literature through recognition that policymaking is not a purely rational-choice process, although certain actors may claim it to be so. It also is distinct from the policy studies and critical approaches to analysis of policy *ex post*, as it uses analytical insights of current policy processes, fed back into spaces of ongoing policy negotiation to influence policy *ex ante*. Finally, this paper suggests ways in which actors who lie outside the formal policy making process can deepen their understanding of the policy area in which they work and thereby develop more effective strategies to improve policy outcomes in the future. It is also asserted that it is possible for the approach to contribute to institutional learning by building up a cumulative archive from which to access past experience in policy work and engagement.

Joshua Muldavin earned his BS, MA, PhD, from University of California-Berkeley. His interests include China, Japan, Asia, policy, environment, rural development, international aid, agriculture and food, climate change, political economy, and political ecology. Current research projects analyze international environmental policy and impacts on local resource use and vulnerability in the Himalayan Region; climate change policy; socialist transition’s environmental and social impacts in China; sustainable agriculture and food systems; global resource and development conflicts via capital flows to Africa, Latin America, and South/Southeast Asia; and aid to China since 1978. Thirty years field research, primarily in rural China. Recipient of grants from National Science Foundation, Social Science Research Council, Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, and Fulbright. Invited lecturer at Princeton, Yale, Oxford, Johns Hopkins, U.S. Congressional Commission, European Parliament. Contributor to a wide range of academic journals as well as international media outlets including the BBC, *New York Times*, and *International Herald Tribune*.

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