Mainstreaming Morality:
An Examination of Moral Ecologies as a Form of Resistance

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Abstract

In this article, we ask how considerations about moral (and immoral) ecologies have motivated and shaped ecological resistance movements. The concept of 'moral ecologies' involves expectations of reciprocal, just, and sustainable relations between society and environment, which we consider a central concern of environmental movements. We analyze the cultural, material, and political importance of moral ecologies as a form of resistance by examining social movements in Alaska and Turkey, as well as ideas about *sumak kawsay* ('good living') in Ecuador and historical precursors in the form of the 'righteous ruler' in early medieval Ireland. Our analysis demonstrates that a focus on moral ecologies has often resonated widely, facilitated new and cross-cutting coalitions, and in some cases garnered elite support and significantly influenced national politics and landscapes.

Keywords

Introduction

In seeking to understand the interconnections between religion, nature, and culture, scholars have examined 'nature-related spirituality and practice' (Taylor 2007: 18) and 'indigenous nature reverence' (Snodgrass and Tiedje 2008),[1] which relate to prior analyses of 'moral ecologies' proposed by Dove and Kammen in 1997 and expanded upon below. However, few scholars have linked human–nature interdependence, spirituality, and reciprocity to resistance movements.

In this study, we address a gap between literatures that analyze human–environment relations and epistemologies (such as those referenced above) and those that examine ecological resistance movements (ERMs). Twenty years ago, Taylor (1995: 2) described a relative dearth in literature about ERMs, but there has since been a proliferation of articles and books that have analyzed diverse ERMs, such as that of the tree huggers in the Chipko movement, protests by the Penan to protect their homelands from logging and oil palm expansion in Borneo, and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya,[2] or the many other movements and forms of resistance that Martínez-Alier (2002) describes as 'environmentalisms of the poor'.[3] These movements are largely analyzed in

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1. See also Wright 2009; Kent 2010; Spoon and Arnold 2012; and Zaleha 2013.
2. See, for example, Akula 1995; Guha 2000; Brosius 1999; Taylor 2013.
3. See also Gedicks 1993; Adeola 2000; Byrne, Glover, and Martinez 2002.

human terms and metrics. For example, in the conclusion to the edited volume *Ecological Resistance Movements*, Taylor found that 'self-interest' and 'human-centered motives provide the most common basis for ecological resistance' and that most ecological 'resistance movements are fundamentally anthropocentric in orientation' (Taylor 1995: 335). This is not to suggest that human-centered motives are the sole driver of these movements, but considerations about issues such as distributional or procedural justice have often served as a primary lens for understanding the goals and motivations of ERMs.[4] Thus, scholars have drawn on political science, political ecology, and social movement theories to analyze power relations, political opportunity shifts, resource mobilization, identity politics, and the benefits or constraints of strategic collaborations.[5] We believe that such interpretations overlook an integral dimension of many environmental movements: namely, they are not driven solely by disagreements over who pays and who benefits, or even by disagreements as to how costs and benefits are defined, but also—and sometimes primarily—by differences in the perceived morality of environmental relations.

We argue that increased attention should be paid to the role of moral ecologies in motivating and shaping environmental movements. The concept of 'moral ecologies' involves expectations of balanced, reciprocal relations between society and environment. Dove and Kammen (1997) suggested that a 'moral ecology' is one that guarantees the basic sustainability of both society and environment through investment in exchange relations of great time-depth and spatial-breadth.[6] The concept of 'moral ecology' owes its intellectual lineage to the concept of 'moral economy', referring to a mutual social guarantee of subsistence, which was first developed in the work of the historian E.P. Thompson (1966, 1975) on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain. James C. Scott (1976), applying this concept to Southeast Asian peasantries, further argued that the moral economy is one that guarantees basic subsistence through the social investment, as opposed to extraction, of agricultural surplus. Violation of the moral economy, Scott argued, was an important source of peasant unrest and resistance.[7]

Dove and Kammen expanded the concept of moral economy to encompass not just social relations (i.e., relations between humans) but relations between society and environment, between culture and nature.

4. See, for example, Bryner 2002; Bullard 2005; Peluso and Watts 2001.
5. See, for example, Conklin and Graham 1995; Tsing 1999; Li 2000; Kirsch 2007; Tilly and Tarrow 2007.
6. This section on moral ecology draws on Dove and Kammen (1997, 2015).
7. A more recent development of the concept includes Martínez-Reyes (2016).

Whereas the moral economy guarantees economic livelihood, Dove and Kammen argued that moral ecology guarantees the sustainability of environmental relations. In this study, we propose to take their argument one step further to link normative expectations about moral relations of humans to the environment to expressions of resistance when those norms are violated. We make explicit the links between moral ecologies and resistance.

A moral ecologies framework is a valuable tool for analyzing ERMs because it draws attention to cultural and spiritual connections between people and their environment. This obliges scholars to look beyond debates over risk assessment, benefit sharing, and public participation, toward core conflicts that have to do with rifts in values and beliefs about human–environment relations. A moral ecology approach toward ERMs allows scholars to look beyond assessments of movements in terms of simple binaries like success and failure to understand the ways in which they may promote consideration of alternative views of nature and culture, knowledge and authority, and temporality.

In our discussion of moral ecologies below we focus especially on how the morality and sustainability of a natural resource-use system is affected by the way its boundaries are drawn in time and space. Central to many ERMs is a rejection of narrowly drawn boundaries (i.e., those that focus solely on short-term economic gain for a limited set of stake-holders) in favor of attention to viability of wider landscapes over the long-term. This argument speaks to Lawrence Taylor's work on the role of 'moral entrepreneurs [in] conjuring a new moral geography'—'its meaning, and possibly, moral valence' (2010: 302, 306).

In the course of our analysis, we will present a series of case studies that illustrate the role that moral ecologies have played in a wide variety of ERMs. We first analyze several ongoing ERMs in which claims about moral ecologies have taken center stage in debates about current or expected degradation from development projects, including mining in Bristol Bay, Alaska, and hydropower development in Turkey. We then examine two moral ecologies that have been explicitly articulated in opposition to policies and behaviors of states and ruling elites considered to be unsustainable and/or unjust. One is the concept of *sumak kawsay* ('*buen vivir*', 'good living') in Ecuador—a concept that derives from indigenous Runa understandings of nature/culture reciprocity and has become widely known and popularized in Ecuadorian discourse and state policy, even having been articulated specifically as a form of resistance against state extraction-based development policies. A second example is that of the 'righteous ruler' in early medieval Ireland—an understanding that a king must act morally toward people and the land

and failing to do so will result in poor harvests, inclement weather, and social instability. The enduring potency of this concept over a period of centuries points to the staying power and sway of moral ecologies for resisting unsustainable (immoral) behaviors.

Our case studies examine environmental resistance in different geographic areas and historical epochs, and yet in each one, moral, spiritual, and cultural ties to the environment are articulated as part of a conscious effort to counter hegemonic approaches to the management, mismanagement, or appropriation of natural resources. The movements we study generally reject instrumental views of nature that prioritize short-term, geographically localized, economic gains. They rather emphasize alternative environmental epistemologies, encompassing relations with and affect toward ecosystems and non-human species. We find that moral ecologies often resonate widely and facilitate the expansion of broad coalitions in ERMs, which in turn puts pressure on ruling elites and policy makers, and, in some cases, results in significant policy changes.

Moral Ecology: The Concept

Dove and Kammen (1997) developed their concept of moral ecology through a comparison of three natural resource use systems: the exploitation of mast-fruiting[8] in Borneo, the practice of swidden agriculture[9] in Borneo, and the cultivation of high-yielding variety (HYV) 'green revolution' rice in Java and elsewhere around the globe. They found stark differences in the way these three systems account for bounty versus shortfall. The indigenous Dayak people of Borneo viewed both mast-fruiting and bountiful swidden harvests as recurring but unpredictable and temporary boons, the product of good relations between human society and the spirits of the forest (Fig. 1). Further, according to the moral ecology of the Dayak, any benefit that came in had to be reciprocated with one going out; any benefit—like mast-fruiting or a good swidden harvest—bore a cost.

In contrast, green revolution scientists viewed the elevated harvests of HYV crops as the expected norm, the natural result of getting the technology right. They denied that its benefits bore a cost; they viewed any problems attending the cultivation of HYVs not as systemic costs,

8. Mast-fruiting refers to the synchronized or 'gregarious' fruiting of a number of different tree species at the same time.
9. Swidden agriculture refers to a diversity of agricultural systems in which fields are cleared and prepared using sword, adze or axe, and fire and are cultivated for a short period and then fallowed for a longer one (Conklin 1957: 1).

but as ad hoc technical problems or 'externalities'. The green revolution was justified in terms of 'feeding the world', but its supporters were notorious for ignoring the question of distribution, as a result of which global hunger persisted even in the midst of green revolution-driven record crops. The green revolution ideology introduced a discontinuity between surplus and shortfall through artificially isolating its benefits in time and space—namely, the good harvest and the immediate field that produced it—while displacing its costs onto other times and spaces— viz., the failed harvests and the wider social and physical environment that is impoverished and degraded by its technology (see Hornborg 2007; Yapa 1993).
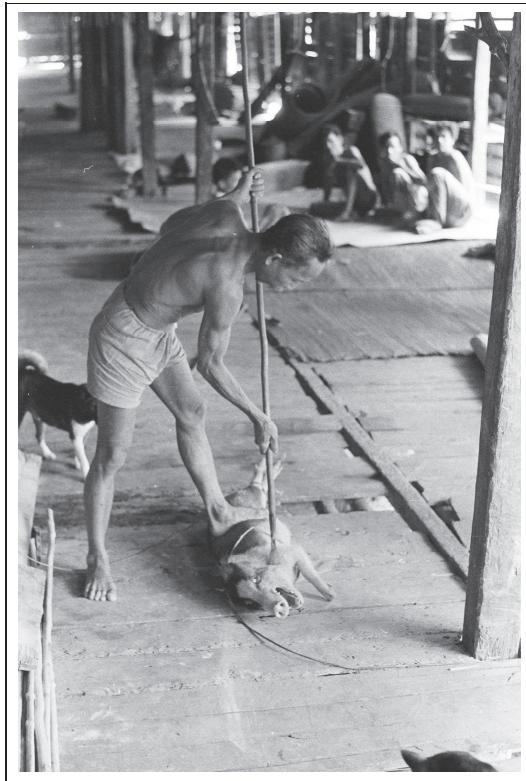

Figure 1. Dayak man sacrifices a pig to spirits as thanks for a good swidden harvest (M.R. Dove, 1976).

The narrow boundary-drawing of the green revolution belongs to a wider set of phenomena that has drawn increasing attention from scholars, namely the artificial isolation of the poor, the sick, and the

disaster-stricken from the wider society that is implicated in their impoverishment, illnesses, and catastrophes. The abundance of the green revolution harvest cannot be divorced from the scarcity of famine, for example (Sen 1981). A major, albeit implicit, achievement of the green revolution model of resource management was to create an illusion of abundance through concentrating resources in time and space, which has obfuscated the fact that its high yields have not translated to an abundance of food for all.

   This boundary-making dimension of the green revolution was implicit. Its boundaries were not explicitly articulated or defended: rather, they were presented as given, as 'natural', although they were not drawn from nature; they were cultural constructs. A key characteristic of the ideology of the green revolution, in short, was to self-represent as having no ideology. Disguising its partisan dimensions has been critical to the attainment by the green revolution model of a hegemonic position in global agricultural production because, as Bloch has written, 'It is precisely through the process of making a power situation appear a fact in the nature of the world that traditional authority works' (1974: 79).

   In short, the immorality of the green revolution lay in obfuscating its unsustainability through highlighting short-term, localized benefits, such as increased yields in a single field, while obscuring longer term and geographically distributed harms, such as increased pest outbreaks and socio-economic inequity. In this respect, the green revolution was far from alone. Many mainstream approaches to conservation and development are guilty of drawing system boundaries in such a way as to make them look more successful and egalitarian than they are, and exposing this is the focus of many resistance movements.

Moral Ecologies and Social Movements

Moral ecologies have motivated contemporary social movements in both Turkey and Alaska. In both areas, development projects have put entire landscapes at risk of environmental devastation, and in response, people have joined together to confront the projects through emphasizing their cultural ties and moral valuations of the places and resources under threat. The resulting social movements have forged new and expanding coalitions among unlikely allies (e.g., across urban–rural divides or among those that were previously in competition over environmental resources), who together have organized protest events, initiated legal actions, and otherwise advocated to protect ecosystems important for local livelihoods, biocultural survival, and multispecies justice.

Resistance to Hydropower Development and Protection of 'Living Spaces' in Turkey

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, hydropower construction sites have mushroomed in the river valleys of Turkey, when *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP)[10] came to power by majority vote in 2002 and held the majority status in the parliament for over a decade. The Turkish state under conservative liberal AKP rule (Buğra and Savaşkan 2014) launched a massive hydropower development program that promotes 'small-scale' hydropower plants as renewable energy producers, while making promises that the run-of-the-river technology[11] is environmentally benign because of its low installed capacity and lack of damming or water-holding capacity. The aim of the program is to dam almost all rivers by 2023 (Sekercioglu et al. 2011; Gibbons and Moore 2011; TMMOB 2011[12]) and impact almost every river basin for 'sustainable development of renewable energy' as shown in the official internet site of the Turkish Ministry of Forest and Water Works (Fig. 2). The state allowed the private sector to develop their projects at any location along the rivers in order to generate electricity for 49 years, and approved cascading projects in a river, side by side, completely and continuously interrupting natural hydrological flow (Sekercioglu et al. 2011; Islar 2012; Erensu 2013). Furthermore, the state made a series of legislative changes to promote private investment in the hydropower sector. This shift in national hydropower policy, dominated by 'the liberalization and deregulation of the energy sector' (Baskan 2011: 83), has been referred to as the 'Privatization of Turkey's rivers' (Harris and Islar 2013: 55) and considered as the proof of AKP's strong commitment to economic liberalism (Buğra and Savaşkan 2014).

The impact of this extensive hydropower development program on the livelihoods of the local people and the environment has been immense,[13] particularly in the Black Sea Region of Turkey, where almost half of the state-approved projects are situated. Locals became aware of the hydropower projects near their settlements when construction machines suddenly arrived in their communities (Hamsici 2012). They

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10.   The Justice and Development Party in English.

11.   For the definition of run-of-the-river type hydropower plants please refer to International Energy Agency site at https://www.iea.org/topics/renewables/subtopics/hydropower/.

12.   TMMOB stands for Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği, in Turkish).

13.   See, for example, Nature Conservation Center 2009, 2011; TMMOB 2011; Hamsici 2012; Erensu 2013; WWF-Turkey 2014.

witnessed activities by the hydropower companies, such as cutting trees, excavating soil, channelizing the riverbeds with concrete, opening new roads, pouring debris in the riverbeds, and polluting the river, and they also observed their consequences, such as landslides, drying rivers, and fish deaths (Nature Conservation Center 2009, 2011). The cascading hydropower projects diverted the rivers into concrete-lined chutes to generate electricity in such a way that locals in the Black Sea Region complained, 'Rivers no longer flow in the riverbed; instead they flow in the channels'.[14] They often used the expression, 'If the river dies, the valley dies', causally connecting the fate of the river to the fate of the valley and the fate of their livelihoods. This outlook reflects the moral dimension of their holistic and reciprocal relationship with the river whereby the river makes the valley and the valley supports their economic, social, and cultural livelihoods.
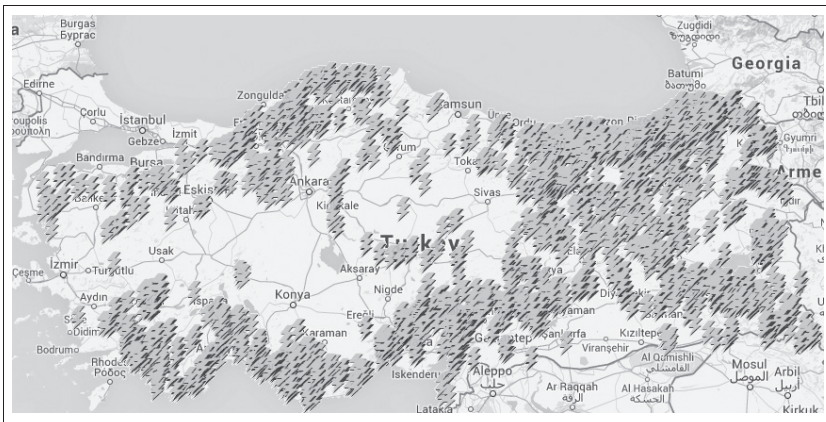

Figure 2. The locations of the constructed and the planned hydropower plants in Turkey.[15]

14. The quotes and many of the findings in this section are based on interviews conducted by co-author Eren during 12 months of fieldwork in the Eastern Black Sea Region, Turkey (supported by Boğaziçi University Research Fund Grant Number 9001/2014).

15. The map, accessed November 2014 at http://geodata.ormansu.gov.tr/index.html?lang=en, the official internet site of the Ministry of Forest and Water Works, shows all hydropower plants including dams, including those that are outside the scope of this article.

In the Black Sea Region, the roots of the local moral ecology are situated in the local culture, as it exists in their relations of great time-depth and spatial-breadth to surrounding nature. In a documentary entitled '*VADİ*',[16] villagers relate that their ancient relatives gave names to the trees that they planted. Naming the trees was analogous to naming babies, which is an act of recognition of a newcomer as an individual and makes that individual a member of the community. Residents perceived individual trees differently and established different relations with them; residents also had interactive relations with rivers and fish. In his doctoral thesis focusing on the hydropower development and the livelihoods in the river valleys of the Black Sea Region, Çağrı Eryılmaz examined the relations of the local people with their environment as roots of their opposition to hydropower projects and identified the concept of 'living space', known as *yaşam alanı* in Turkish, which is used by the local people to describe both their valleys and their interactive relations with their valleys (Eryılmaz 2012). Eryılmaz argued that 'living space' is an ecosystem that local people and all living and non-living elements in their valley are a part of, supporting and sustaining each other's existence. In this sense, 'living space' is a moral ecology in these river valleys that requires and demands protection from degradation and exploitation.

The adverse exploitation of the rivers and the valleys in the region has sparked strong concerns among local people. This has led them to mobilize both collective and individual responses to the hydropower projects. To challenge the rhetoric of the state officials that 'rivers flow for nothing', situating the rivers as idle objects that need to be harnessed for hydropower production, they developed the anti-statements, 'rivers will flow freely', and 'rivers are not for sale', emphasizing an anti-privatization and anti-commercialization aspect of their moral ecology.

For example, villagers in the river valleys of the Eastern Black Sea Region, such as İkizdere Valley, Fırtına Valley, and Fındıklı Valley, under the threat of a hydropower project, spontaneously organized village collectives to stop the project. These village collectives later constituted 'a coalition of village-based solidarity groups and urban-based environmental activism networks' (Erensu 2011: 8) to address the emergent issues, to raise their concerns, and to oppose 'hydropower development' through press releases, street protests, and civil disobedience, such as

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16.   Translates in English as 'The Valley'. This documentary (directed by Nedim Hazar, 2012) narrates the daily lives of the local people of the Senoz Valley in the Eastern Black Sea Region. It was produced for and run on NTV, a TV channel in Turkey. For more information, see: http://www.senozderesi.com/haber_detay.asp?haberID=1210.

blocking highway traffic. 'Urban–rural connectivity' further allowed local people to contact environmental law groups and was influential in developing locals' understandings of their rights as citizens of the state (Erensu 2011: 16). Lawyers formulated strategies to take to the courts the decisions of the state institutions that justified and approved the construction and operation of the hydropower projects, in order to challenge the rationality of these decisions. As one lawyer stated, 'Courts are for the distribution of justice but now the legal system is used as an operational device to protect the environment'.[17]

Citizen Kazım, a villager in the region, became a leading figure in this legal struggle, when he brought several court cases against the state to cancel the hydropower development project that was located adjacent to the river in his village. In order to pay the court expenses, Kazım sold his cow, his only form of wealth that could be converted to money, and he later took out a bank loan. He won the court cases and the court cancelled the project. Kazım saw water as part of the commons, not only of humans but also of the non-human world, and he therefore strongly rejected its commercialization. As a retired Muslim *hodja*, he brought attention to beliefs that water is associated with heaven (as cited in 36 distinct places in the Quran) and that even heaven turns into hell without water. However, Kazım constituted his reasoning about the moral ecology of water in a way that could be communicated to wider audiences, regardless of their religious beliefs, thereby binding people to struggle against water privatization and commercialization.

The struggle of Kazım attracted national attention, and the Turkish Bar Association gave him a prestigious award, the *Avukat Noyan* Environmental and Ecological Struggle Honor Prize.[18] This type of court case is increasing in frequency (Alica 2005) and constitutes one of many collective actions that have been adopted to oppose the hydropower projects (Eryılmaz 2012).

In summary, the economic and political narratives of the state abstracted the rivers from their socio-ecological context and re-contextualized them as an economic resource available for immediate exploitation. In response, local people articulated rivers as ecological systems that supported wider socio-ecological systems. Resistance movement leaders and participants acknowledged that 'we need energy' but argued

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17.   Based on an interview conducted with a lawyer in Istanbul, Turkey.

18.   The *Avukat Noyan* Environmental and Ecological Struggle Honor Prize, known as '*Avukat Noyan Özkan Çevre ve Ekoloji Mücadelesi Onur Ödülü*' in Turkish, is given to individuals or groups who fight with peaceful means against the environmental politics that dominate the environment and people's lives, take risks for the sake of their ideals, and give hope and inspiration to others.

that 'we also need our environment'—a point that resonated with wider urban audiences. Finally, the legal contest of Kazım and the struggle of local people against hydropower development in the river valleys to protect their 'living space' (Eryılmaz 2012) suggest that resistance to hydropower development may, over time, stop or at least halt development projects. However, the state has not at present shifted away from national hydropower policies that are backing privatization and commodification while intensifying pressure on the environment.

The foregoing case study is about an ERM that has contested a major development initiative that has been framed as both environmental and sustainable (because it facilitates domestically produced renewable energy) based on the affinities and attachments that many people have to these landscapes and ecosystems, their affiliated cultures, and non-human species. Our next case study features another social movement that has similarly contested a perceived threat to the survival of a valued landscape—that of the largest remaining wild sockeye salmon run in the world. Much like the previous case study, the ERM in Bristol Bay, Alaska, contests narrow, economically focused metrics of development through the articulation of alternate values and relations with the environment and non-human species.

Resistance to Mining and Protection of Salmon in Bristol Bay, Alaska
In 2007, the Pebble Limited Partnership was created by then co-owners, the Canadian-owned Northern Dynasty and the UK-based company Anglo American, to design, construct, and operate a prospect commonly referred to as 'the Pebble Mine'. For the following decade, the Bristol Bay region of southwest Alaska has been embroiled in a controversy over prospective mineral development. The proposal to mine the largest known undeveloped copper ore body in the world in the headwaters of Bristol Bay instigated heated debate over the area's future.[19] The area is home to the world's largest remaining sockeye salmon runs, a major commercial fishery, and extensive subsistence harvesting by residents of the rural region, most of whom identify as Alaska Native.

The Pebble Mine has galvanized opposition among an unlikely coalition of environmentalist, commercial and recreational fishing, and Alaska Native groups, with US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) involvement and boycotts by transnational jewelry companies placing the issue prominently on the national and international stages. Salmon are at the center of this debate. Most of those opposing the mine have

19.   See, for example, Bohrer 2012; Coil, Lester, and Higman 2012; O'Neal 2012; PBS Frontline 2012.

articulated a special relationship with salmon, be it local residents' long-standing subsistence connection, sport fishers' special connection with the fish, distant consumers' reverence for wild Alaska salmon, or fishery scientists' regard for the species they study. Here, we examine how the connection to salmon articulated by these various stakeholders has been used to frame this battle as moral as well as, but to a lesser degree, economic. This framing portrays salmon both as a resource (thus aligning with Alaska's predominant ethos as a resource state) as well as more-than-a-resource. This dual frame has enabled actors once at odds over this resource to unite to protect the salmon and this fishery, for related but also different reasons.

Bristol Bay is 250 km southwest of Anchorage and home to just over 7,000 mostly (70%) Native Alaskan residents (University of Alaska Fairbanks n.d.). Dillingham is the largest settlement in the area, with just over 2,000 residents. Other settlements in Bristol Bay consist of villages with majority Native populations that are also largely dependent on fisheries as their main source of income (Wild Salmon Center 2013). Currently the salmon fishery is valued at 1.5 billion US dollars annually and provides 10,000 full-time jobs (Knapp, Guettabi, and Goldsmith 2013: 9). Every year, many non-residents flock to the area to work on boats and in canneries. In addition, area lodges host high-end recreational fishing retreats for hundreds of customers during salmon season. Clearly, the economic importance of salmon to both residents and non-residents helps to create a connection to the species. But the way that these various stakeholders discuss salmon reveals that this connection is more than economic.

Significantly, those who used to fight over access to salmon—such as commercial, subsistence, and sports fishers—have now joined forces in their attempt to overcome what they see as a common threat to their interests, namely the detrimental impacts that acid mine drainage is expected to have on wild salmon populations.[20] Recreational fishers, who in past years were often seen as intruders who did not respect the area because of their catch-and-release methods (which were seen as 'playing with your food'), have become important allies given their connections to large foundations and high-level politicians. Commercial fishers, known for their competitive approaches to fishing, often jockeying for spots on the water, pulled together over the issue and many area boats display anti-Pebble Mine stickers or flags. Fishers who may have once been at odds with each other have thus joined forces with tribal

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20. The findings in this section are based primarily on fieldwork conducted by co-author Brock in Bristol Bay in 2013 and 2014.

groups and local and international NGOs and foundations, forging unified environmental identities in the process.[21]

Salmon fisheries are a key part of the moral economy of the region. We argue that the drive to protect salmon is also reflective of a moral ecology that resonates not only with local actors, but with those outside of the region as well. Diverse values are attached to salmon by these coalitions, some of which are economic, but many of which are cultural and spiritual. Furthermore, this place is framed as unique and special given that it is one of the last remaining wild salmon habitats in the world and is 'America's fish basket'. Concerns with protecting salmon and the landscape are intertwined with a focus on long time-horizons because the ultimate desire is for sustainability and productivity long into the future. This framing has enabled these alliances to draw upon the concern and support of influential non-locals, which has greatly raised the profile of the issue. As one local resident jokingly commented: 'We were able through the Russian Orthodox Church to get God against the project, and then, even better than that, NRDC [National Resources Defense Council] was able to get Robert Redford against the project with a full page advertisement in the *New York Times*'. What is it about salmon that has enabled these disparate groups to rally around the species? At the local level salmon are a vital source of food and culture. Salmon permeates most every social gathering in Dillingham—it is an omnipresent meal and also serves as a central topic of conversation, with participants discussing salmon recipes, espousing on the recent fishing season, or sharing updates about the anti-Pebble Mine campaign. Anthropologist Alan Boraas, who carried out the traditional ecological knowledge assessment for the US Environmental Protection Agency's report on the potential impacts of the Pebble Mine, observed that salmon have infused all aspects of people's lives in Bristol Bay, including 'social aspects, spiritual aspects, their very reason for being' (Boraas, quoted in Neyman 2012).

Both locals as well as more distant actors also express appreciation for the 'wildness' of salmon in Bristol Bay, in contrast to the increasingly prevalent farmed or hatchery salmon found in other regions. Citizens in Bristol Bay were particularly supportive of wild salmon in light of recent controversies in coastal British Columbia involving farmed salmon spreading disease to wild salmon as well as fears that escaped Atlantic salmon will out-compete Pacific salmon. In addition, dwindling stocks of wild salmon in other areas, including in Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, and California, the latter of which shut down its fishery

21. See Cederlöf and Sivaramakrishnan (2014) regarding the role of dense ecological networks of relationships in forging identities.

entirely in 2008 (Greenberg 2010), have contributed to this rising interest in wild fish. Pacific salmon 'are now extinct in 40% of the rivers where they were known to exist' and the once-thriving wild Atlantic salmon fishery has all but disappeared (Greenberg 2010). Marketing efforts by those in Bristol Bay and other wild salmon fishing areas have striven to differentiate their product to make wild salmon synonymous with sustainability and health (Hébert 2010). NGOs, fish marketing boards, commercial fishermen's coalitions, and sports fisherman associations alike all invoke Bristol Bay salmon's wildness in their calls to end the Pebble Mine development, using words such as 'pristine', 'pure', and 'natural' to talk about the species.

Beyond their wildness, salmon is spoken about with reverence or nearly so by a number of stakeholders. This is particularly the case with the predominantly Alaska Native population, at least some of whom express a real sense of affection for salmon in Bristol Bay. Many Native Alaskans articulated how salmon connected them to the territory, to their family, and to tradition. One observed, 'It was my grandmother who taught me how to make King Salmon strips. And if we don't take care of our lands and waters, then someday I may never have smoked salmon strip again.' This kind of connection to salmon was also evident among a range of other stakeholders. Scientists in Bristol Bay were no exception to this. One observed, 'We are salmon state. The salmon shouldn't have to prove how much water they need. Anybody who wants to use it should prove that the salmon are okay.' The way that anglers frame salmon fishing also spoke of a more-than-economic connection to the species. The organization Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay refers to fishers as stewards of the fishery, which is 'a national treasure', and talks about the 'glory and wonder' of Bristol Bay; one fisherman stated that it would 'show our failure as a species' to let the mine occur (Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay 2014). The fight against Pebble Mine has enfolded many actors into the moral ecology of Bristol Bay. As Dianne Rocheleau outlines, 'We all live in emergent ecologies—complex assemblages of plants, animals, people, physical landscape features, and technologies—created through the habit-forming practices of connection to everyday life. We both inhabit and co-create these ecologies of home, often without being able to "see" them clearly' (2011: 209). We suggest that habit-forming practices of connection to everyday life can also be understood as value-forming practices that connect people to their ecologies. While we may not be able to see clearly the complex ecologies that motivate the actors in the Pebble Mine dispute, what is clear is that salmon are at the center of the moral ecology that links so many disparate actors to Bristol Bay and, in turn, to

each other. Salmon, and the unique connections they inspire, have enabled ecological resistance in Bristol Bay to draw together a wide array of stakeholders who have put aside past differences to rally in defense of the species they so value.

   Pebble Mine, like many other mining projects, has been promoted as having huge potential to bring revenue and jobs, all while being cast as environmentally friendly and sustainable. This is nowhere more evident than in the Pebble Partnership's encapsulation of their vision of the project, which they suggest has great promise to 'help power our nation's green energy initiatives [and] bring jobs and infrastructure to Southwest Alaska', all while being 'in harmony with the environment' (2015). Despite this discourse of minimal risks, anti-mine activists argued that *any* risk was too great if it threatened the long-term survival and health of Bristol Bay and its salmon run. While the Pebble Partnership presented a case for the benefit of the mine to humans, others opposed the mine through articulating the many ways that people valued salmon as a species and Bristol Bay as a landscape. Their critique was based not on human-centered technical metrics like cost–benefit analyses, risk mitigation, or benefit-sharing, but on biocultural survival and multi-species justice. In addition, mine opponents focused on the long past and potential future of the salmon runs, arguing that the short-term gains of the mine would undermine this longer-horizon moral ecology. By understanding the moral ecology that is motivating this movement, we can better understand why people are highly committed to safeguarding salmon and Bristol Bay above and beyond the economic valuation of the fishery.

   In one regard, this case is distinct from the previous case study. In the Turkey hydropower case, there was an implicit anti-commercialization aspect to the ERM. In Bristol Bay, however, people did not only want salmon to exist as a species, but they also wanted to be able to continue to harvest, consume, and sell wild-caught salmon. Moral valuations of salmon did not exclude their consumptive and commercial values. Rather, economic and consumptive values existed alongside affective, cultural, and spiritual values.

Explicit Articulations of Moral Ecologies as a Form of Resistance

In the previous section we examined environmental movements in Turkey and Alaska. In order to counter threats, activists built coalitions, organized protest events, and, in some cases, filed formal complaints, injunctions, or lawsuits. In this regard, these cases meet the popular visions of what ERMs look like. However, resistance can take many

forms—large and small (see, e.g., Scott 1987, 2009). As Maria Elena Garcia has asked: when the emphasis is placed on certain 'models of what count as political and social movements', such as those that are large in scale (often national) and utilize familiar tactics (e.g., 'coordinated marches, strikes and street protests'), 'what kinds of organizing and politics go unseen, unexplored and undervalued?' (Garcia 2005: 164, 177).

We presently focus on another important but often under-recognized form of resistance—namely, the popularization of concepts that critique immoral ecologies and propose in their stead the adoption of moral ones. We present two case studies in this section, both of which are exemplary illustrations of explicit articulations of moral ecologies as a form of resistance. The first case study examines ideas about *sumak kawsay* (also known as *buen vivir*, or 'good living') in Ecuador, and the second case examines the 'righteous ruler' in early medieval Ireland. In both cases reciprocal relations between humans and the environment are valorized and nature is seen as an actor with agency, with the ability both to reward humans for good behavior and punish them in the case of bad behavior. In both cases, the moral ecologies promote sustainability over long-time horizons and at the landscape-scale through resisting behaviors by ruling elite that are perceived to be unsustainable or immoral. Finally, both cases demonstrate how powerful an idea can be in resisting resource-use patterns through marshaling popular attention as well as elite buy-in; in both cases moral ecologies resonated widely and significantly influenced national politics and the attitudes as well as actions of at least some governing officials.

Sumak Kawsay in Ecuador

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the Ecuadorian Amazon has seen rapid changes, many of them having to do with the expansion of extractive industries, especially oil drilling, since the 1970s.[22] In Pastaza, the central-eastern province of the Ecuadorian Amazon, one of the most politically active communities opposing oil drilling and leading indigenous organizing has been the Runa (Quichua-speaking) community of Sarayaku. In 1989, the town was the site of the signing of the Sarayaku Accords, which temporarily ceased state support for oil drilling in the region. Sarayaku also founded OPIP, the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza, a federation uniting all the region's indigenous nations. In 1991, after 20 years of disputes, OPIP's membership saw the state grant indigenous residents of Pastaza communal title to vast tracts of tropical forest lands, including 135,000

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22.   See Sirén 2004; Sawyer 2004; Whitten Jr and Whitten 2008; Cepek 2012.

hectares for the 1,500-person community of Sarayaku. The community has also been an intellectual hub, producing leaders who have assumed influential posts in national indigenous organizations and in Ecuador's national government.

One of the most influential ideas to emerge from Sarayaku was the term *sumak kawsay*—roughly translatable as 'good living' or *buen vivir* in Spanish—a concept that within 15 years went from circulating in regional activist circles (Viteri et al. 1992; Viteri 1993, 2002, 2003) to becoming a framing concept for the 2008 Ecuadorian constitution. While *sumak kawsay* has a number of potential meanings and uses, its most influential definition was put forward in the impressive scholarly works of Sarayaku Runa author Carlos Viteri Gualinga. *Sumak kawsay*, a term coined by Carlos Viteri's extended family and friends in the early 1990s (see Viteri et al. 1992; Silva 2003), was meant to represent an 'alternative to development' (Viteri 2003; Altmann 2013a), one that incorporated elements of Quichua science and religion. In theorizing the term *sumak kawsay*, Viteri sought to coin a phrase that could encapsulate how people in Sarayaku actually thought about and conducted the development of their land and livelihoods, rather than simply importing Western definitions of 'development' that presuppose Runa forest living to be undeveloped and impoverished.

Most at issue in Viteri's critique was the image of development as a universal process that plays out predictably and linearly, in which a destination is already known, such as in the notion of a transition away from underdevelopment and towards development (Viteri 2003). He contrasted development with *sumak kawsay* by noting that: 'Development…is conceived of only in regard to lack and problems, and is made to appear like the "medicine" or formula for overcoming a behind state by way of a linear transition. *Sumak kawsay* on the other hand functions as a social practice oriented precisely to *avoiding* a fall into aberrant conditions of existence' (Viteri 2003: iv). In this quote, Viteri alludes to a framework in which Runa are not assumed to be already 'behind' other people who are more 'developed'. Instead, Runa life is assumed to be already mature, sufficient, or 'developed', and *sumak kawsay* describes practices for not letting these felicitous conditions 'fall' away or become lost. Viteri's cousin, Franco, some years later summarized the gist of *sumak kawsay* in a simple quip: 'The forest is already developed… What petroleum companies do is destroy what is already developed' (Viteri 2011).

What was it about the *sumak kawsay* concept that allowed it to become so useful and influential not only in Sarayaku but also at the national level in Ecuador's constitution? One important element seems to be the

way in which *sumak kawsay* resonated with Western as well as Quichua traditions of science and religion. To outsiders, the term could be translated as 'good living', fitting into a long Aristotelian discourse on 'the good life', while its Quichua nominalization indexed indigenous roots. In the Ecuadorian Constitution of 2008, the concept's indigeneity was signaled by its definition as 'good living…in diversity and harmony with nature'.

For Sarayaku residents and other Amazonian Quichua-speakers, *sumak kawsay* also indexed a valuing and foregrounding of Quichua religion and science (*sacha runa yachai*), a tradition that is strongly animist and perspectival (Nuckolls 2011; Kohn 2013). From an animist rendering, in which all things are potentially seen as people on the inside, the forest can be represented as *full of people* rather than as a vast and barely inhabited landscape (as settler colonialists often represented it). As Viteri (2002: 2) wrote, the forest is 'peopled by beings analogous to humans, guided and protected by great spirits with whom man is destined to coexist in permanent dialogue'. 'These beings', wrote Sarayaku (2015), 'from the smallest plants to the supreme beings who protect the forest, are persons (*runa*) who inhabit the waterfalls, lagoons, swamps, mountains, and rivers, and who, in turn, compose the Living Forest [*Kawsak Sacha*] as a whole. These persons live together in community (*llakta*) and carry out their lives in a manner that is similar to human beings' (see also Gualinga 2005; Sarayaku 2011).

This vision of a 'peopled' nature was also the basis of Sarayaku's rejection of the claim (key to the state's discourse about Amazonia as *terra nullius* or 'empty lands') that their territories were 'virgin, savage, or empty of civilization': 'Our territory is the result of centuries of social intervention [and] coexistence with the forest. Our relations with the forest are not "natural", as has been erroneously stated, but fundamentally cultural… The forest and the other forms of life within it exist as living subjects' (Sarayaku 2003: 23-24).

Sumak kawsay from its inception was very much an 'applied research' concept, rigorously academic while also continuously useful in defending against oil drilling in Pastaza (and specifically in Sarayaku). *Sumak kawsay* was one of the conceptual tools indigenous Pastaza peoples fought with during the national social movements that transformed Ecuadorian politics in the 1990s and early 2000s (see Altmann 2013a, 2013b, 2014; Cubillo-Guevara and Hidalgo-Capitan 2015). It became part of the platform of Ecuador's pan-indigenous national organization CONAIE, and later came to be cited by non-indigenous scholars who further raised the profile of the concept among academic elites, journalists, and politicians (Acosta 2003). By 2006, it had become integrated

into the platform of the political party *Alianza País* led by Rafael Correa, which would soon win power and usher in a decade of reforms known as the Citizens' Revolution (Altmann 2013a, 2013b). By 2008, owing much to continued indigenous advocacy, *sumak kawsay* was substituted for 'development' and 'progress' in key sections of the constitution, including in its highly aspirational and spiritually infused Preamble.[23]

Because *sumak kawsay* has become a constitutional and widely discussed legal and political concept in Ecuador, hundreds of academic articles have been published about it (Ludlow et al. 2016; Cubillo-Guevara and Hidalgo-Capitan 2015). Sarayaku authors, in their numerous publications in the fifteen years before the new constitution,[24] used the *sumak kawsay* concept to defend their autonomy and promote a vision of development more capable of recognizing the viability of indigenous traditions of nonmarket subsistence production, what Viteri (2000, 2003) called 'the autonomous resolution of needs'. Core to making this argument was communicating to outsiders how swidden horticulture, hunting, fishing, and maintaining communication with various beings of the forest could constitute a desirable and developed social world (Viteri 1993, 2003; Sarayaku 2003, 2015). *Sumak kawsay* was thus articulated as a conceptual critique joined with practical action and resistance. It signified a call for attention to an alternative environmental ontology.

While the state's inscription of *sumak kawsay* into the 2008 constitution seemed to represent a clear victory for the indigenous movement, to the chagrin of many advocates it also enabled the state to interpret *sumak kawsay* in ways more aligned with national sovereignty than regional indigenous autonomy. In the constitution and in national plans for Socialism of Sumak Kawsay (Senplades 2013; Ramírez Gallegos 2012a, 2012b, 2014), *sumak kawsay* was represented as a goal or an endpoint, far off on the horizon, of a development transition. To achieve this endpoint, the state promoted the idea of using 'extractivism to overcome extractivism', a notion spoken about elsewhere as 'ecological modernization' or the Kuznet's curve. This state-socialist rendition of *sumak kawsay* drew almost entirely on the Aristotelian connotations of the term,

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23. Excerpt from Preamble: 'We women and men, the sovereign people of Ecuador; Recognizing our age-old roots, wrought by women and men from various peoples, Celebrating nature, the *Pacha Mama* (Mother Earth), of which we are a part and which is vital to our existence, Invoking the name of God and recognizing our diverse forms of religion and spirituality… Hereby decide to build a new form of public coexistence, in diversity and in harmony with nature, to achieve the good way of living, the *sumak kawsay*.'

24. See, for example, Viteri et al. 1992; Viteri 1993, 2002, 2003; OPIP 2001; Sarayaku 2003; Gualinga 2005.

and ignored Runa scholarship almost entirely. Most ironically, the state began to argue that Sarayaku was against (national) 'good living' to the degree that it continued to oppose oil drilling on their lands. Here we can see that the same multi-traditional resonances of *sumak kawsay* that gave it felicitous portability before the constitution came to work against the weaker parties, namely the indigenous groups, after the constitution, when they had less power to define its legal and political meanings and uses.

Despite these divergent meanings, *sumak kawsay* has remained important for Sarayaku, among many others. In 2012 the community won a case in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights that condemned the state for its impulsion of oil drilling without the community's consent, a ruling that was reaffirmed by the court in 2016. That ruling and the popularity of *sumak kawsay* as a concept in many academic circles has also helped in raising Sarayaku's political profile, enabling international solidarities, for example, and making it more difficult for the oil and mining frontier to be expanded in the Ecuadorian Amazon without intense attention from across the globe. *Sumak kawsay*, despite the difficulties it has encountered for conceptual engagement on its own terms, has nevertheless helped to hold open territorial and philosophical spaces for creative alternatives to emerge, and its presence in the Ecuadorian constitution continues to hold potential for future remakings.

Moral ecologies, such as that indexed by *sumak kawsay*, often have roots in subsistence practices. In the case of *sumak kawsay*, the role of non-human actors and species is also central, given the attention to continual inter-relations or 'permanent dialogue' among many persons, human and nonhuman (Viteri 1993, 2002, 2003; Sarayaku 2003, 2005, 2011, 2015). This view of nature as a social process and actor challenges capitalist as well as socialist philosophical conventions. In this sense, *sumak kawsay* is an example of an indigenous theory aimed partly at resisting and partly at transforming Western theory (Wilner 2013). The case study that follows regarding the 'righteous ruler' in early medieval Ireland provides yet another example of a dialectic between politics and ecological morality that is infused by understandings and assertions about non-human actors and forces.

'Righteous Ruler' in Early Medieval Irish Moral Ecologies
Diverse regions, religions, and cultures have conceived of the natural environment as an actor imbued with a moral or divine animus that plays a role in myriad human political struggles, not least the Runa in Ecuador. Historical antecedents can be found throughout past centuries and millennia, enriching the perspectives by which moral ecologies and

their roles can be viewed today. Here we examine the concept of the 'righteous ruler' in early medieval Ireland, in which nature played the part of a chameleonic actor that was sometimes ally, sometimes adversary, and reflected the qualities of a king's rule. If he did not act and govern according to established kingly ideals of morality and justice, harvests would fail, weather would turn bad, and he would ultimately risk the loss of his kingdom, a punishment that might also apply to his heirs and descendants (see, e.g., Fomin 1999, 2013).

The 'righteous ruler' concept has a long pedigree in Ireland, having existed in pre-Christian Ireland and later been adopted and adapted in emergent and evolving Christianized form by the Church during the first centuries of transition between Celtic paganism and Christianity from the fifth century onward. This can be traced in a range of historical texts, including annually arranged chronicles of important historical events maintained by educated Christian scribes from at least the sixth century onward (McCarthy 2008; Dunphy 2010),[25] alongside wisdom texts, poetry, sagas, and Saints' Lives (Carey 1998; Miles 2011). The repurposing of this long-standing pagan moral ecology was an important part of the Christian ecclesiastics' strategies of political and cultural engagement—both accommodation and resistance—that facilitated the successful Christianization of Ireland's landscapes and sacred sites, inhabitants, elites, and their customs.[26]

During Ireland's early medieval period (c. 400–1200 CE), extreme weather, such as drought or severe cold, and other natural hazards (e.g. epidemics, epizootics) periodically induced harvest failure, famine, and mortality on a scale that promoted societal instability (Adelman and Ludlow 2014). Such instances of extreme weather could trigger violence and conflict between and within Irish kin-groups and kingdoms, sometimes in scarcity-driven pursuit of resources, sometimes opportunistically in pursuit of political, territorial, or economic gain, and sometimes in serving long-standing personal and familial vendettas on resource-weakened rivals (see, e.g., Fitzpatrick 1993). These conflicts were in turn associated with adverse behaviors, including the tactical burning of croplands (scorched earth), the theft or slaughter of livestock, the symbolic destruction of woodlands, groves, and trees that held economic or religious value, and other ecologically destructive conflict and resource appropriation.

25.   See http://www.ucc.ie/celt for the editions of these texts from which the quotes here derive.

26.   For further aspects of this, see Ó Cróinín 1995; Jenkins 2010; Walsham 2011; and Charles-Edwards 2012.

Although they did not always live up to their own ideal, Christian ecclesiastics were obligated to resist such behaviors, which were deeply at odds with their teachings, and to ameliorate impacts on landscapes, resources, and ecologies deemed economically important or (post-Christianization) sacred. To counter such harmful behaviors, Christian ecclesiastical elites capitalized upon malleable or quasi-Christian-compatible elements from pre-existing pagan morality and beliefs, such as the moral ecology conveyed in early Irish epic sagas by which a 'righteous ruler' of 'impeccable character' was understood to make the 'land, sea, people, and animals fertile' (Welch 1996: 291-92). Major efforts were made by Christian ecclesiastics to promote the role of the king as protector and advance the expectation that he was to 'provide a good, stable land for the local inhabitants' (Henken 2003: 28). Failure to do so could result in powerful ecclesiastics calling upon divine favor to punish unjust rulers, an event often emphasized in the semi-fantastical biographies of Irish Christian saints (*Saints' Lives*) that were written abundantly from the early medieval period onward (Bray 2003; Cartwright 2003). Thus, while this emergent Christianized moral ecology still featured a moral reciprocity between a ruler's conduct and the fortunes of his land, this was no longer contingent upon a king's pagan sacral marriage to the land, as formerly conceived, but upon God's will, with the natural world becoming more of a divine vector than divine actor.

In interpreting God's will, Christian ecclesiastics held a mandate and could intercede on behalf of society in times of conflict and stress. The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* (or *Mageoghagan's Book*) provides a colorful example of clerical intercession for the year 764, described as both influencing the behavior of a Christian king and resulting in reciprocal divine succor.[27] Here we read that when 'Niall Frossach…began his reign… there was great famine…in so much that the king himself had very little to live upon, and being…accompanied with seven godly bishops, [they all] fell upon their knees, where the king very pitifully…besought God of his infinite grace and mercy' (Murphy 1896: 121).[28] Given this worthy behavior by a ruler who represented 'the very epitome of Christian kingship' (Wiley 2005: 19), God purportedly responded 'so that [falling from the sky] there was such plenty and abundance of wheat, that it was able to maintain many kingdoms' (Murphy 1896: 121).

27.   This source, also known as the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, misdates this event to 759 CE. Though fantastical in many aspects, the account excerpted here is likely to have some historical substance (Ludlow 2010) and, regardless, exemplifies the Christianized moral ecology of the righteous ruler.

28.   Spellings have been modernized here.

The Christianization of the long-standing pagan moral ecology of the righteous ruler functioned as a key strategy for influencing and regulating secular elite behavior, thereby also acting as a strategy of resistance against destructive behaviors, including conflict in which economically, symbolically, and religiously valued agro-ecological resources were appropriated or destroyed. But cooperation in enacting and promoting this Christianized kingly ideal could also come to serve worldly political goals in promoting and furthering the aims of secular-ecclesiastical alliances. This is illustrated by a report for the year 1050 from the *Annals of the Four Masters* (O'Donovan 1851: 859), in which we read of how 'inclement weather happened in the land of Ireland, which carried away corn, milk, fruit, and fish, from the people, so that there grew up dishonesty among all…until the clergy of Munster assembled, with their chieftains…where they enacted a law and a restraint upon every injustice'. The outcome, we are told, is that 'God gave peace and favorable weather in consequence of this law'.

Here, when inclement weather promotes immoral behavior, a call for cooperation between Christian ecclesiastical and secular elites is again made, and the cooperatively enforced moral ecology rewards those who participate with divine deliverance. Yet the text also hints at underlying political motives for exploiting (and adapting) this prevailing moral ecology. While adverse weather and behaviors are implied to be widespread across Ireland in 1050, it is explicitly the clergy and secular elites of Munster who reportedly resolve to act. In the context of a period in which the High Kingship of Ireland was heavily contested by elites from rival provinces (Jaski 2000; Byrne 2001), the text can be read as a calculated (quasi-propagandistic) attempt to demonstrate for the province of Munster a divinely sanctioned leadership, proven by the deliverance of Ireland from inclement weather, and successful resistance to agro-ecological breakdown, resource appropriation, and social instability.

The persistence of the 'righteous ruler' ideal over many centuries in Ireland, from its pagan roots to its emergent and then established Christianized form (a form that itself was neither static nor entirely divested of pagan shadings), suggests the potency of moral ecologies for influencing behavior, variously promoting social cohesion, and protecting agro-ecological resources over periods of great time-depth and spatial-breadth. In medieval Ireland this was not only relevant as a strategy of resistance during times of intensified resource competition and conflict as might be triggered by extreme weather, but at any time elites created hardship by appropriating and redistributing resources for political or personal gain. Such times were not rare, even in periods of relative peace, with the need to provision and remunerate troops from

local resources or when labor was diverted by elites from agricultural activities at critical times in the agricultural calendar. Even if secular elites (and their allied ecclesiastics) might co-opt or otherwise fail to live up to the ideal of the righteous ruler, this moral ecology was a reminder that immoral actions had divinely wrought consequences, the reality of which must have appeared self-evident during periodic visitations of extreme weather and epidemic disease.

In sum, this case study suggests the potential of historical analyses (see, e.g., Elvin 1998; Meens 1998; Fomin 1999) to reveal how moral ecologies in other times and places have similarly held great sway over regional or national policies and politics. Such studies can usefully complement analyses of modern or contemporary moral ecologies and other (not necessarily unrelated) conceptions of human-environmental relations in which morality, spirituality or religion are embedded and can be identified as playing a role in resource contestation and ERMs (see, e.g., Hill et al. 1995; Henneman and McIntosh 2009).

Conclusion

As we have discussed throughout this analysis, the concept of moral ecology with its emphasis on principles of reciprocal, just, and sustainable society–environment relations has existed in diverse regions, periods, and cultures and is implicit in many ERMs. More than a millennium ago, in early Irish society, moral ecological expectations of the 'righteous ruler' served to temper unjust or unsustainable behaviors by the ruling elite, and helped efforts to restore balance to human–environment relations during periods of crisis. In present times, environmental crises have loomed large or wreaked havoc on ecosystems in many regions, prompting articulations of moral ecologies as in the case with *sumak kawsay* in Ecuador and with the social movements examined in both Alaska and Turkey.

Each of our case studies engaged with morality in at least two ways. On the one hand, ERMs resist the 'immoral ecologies' associated with actual or anticipated environmental degradation, often in the face of official promises of development and sustainability that obfuscate the reality of environmental threats. On the other hand, each movement also articulates what a moral ecology should look like. While moral ecologies vary by place and time, a common feature in all of our cases is belief in the necessity of reciprocity in relations between society and environment, which underpins the mutually constitutive nature of people and places, the importance of ecosystems for livelihoods and culture, and the rights of landscapes and non-human species to survive and thrive in the future.

Our cases all featured visions of the environment and non-human species not just as resources for extraction but as partners in a relationship, worthy of respect and reciprocity, which are common features in many indigenous beliefs about the environment (see, e.g., Grim 2001). It is not just the Runa in Ecuador or the Dayak in Indonesia that have strong moral, cultural, and spiritual beliefs about the environment, but also valley dwellers in Turkey, fishermen in Alaska, and Christian ecclesiastics in early medieval Ireland. Each case reveals either explicit or implicit values relating to multispecies justice and ecosystem-based visions of what it means to live a 'good life'.

Our analysis of moral ecologies draws attention to issues of boundaries and scale. As we noted in the beginning of the article, assessments about the morality and sustainability of a given resource-use system depend greatly on where boundaries to that system are drawn. We find that many ERMs are driven by a desire to rework temporal and geographic boundaries in a way that reinforces their own narratives about the morality (or immorality) of particular resource uses or human–environment relations.

A focus on broad (landscape) scales and expansive temporal frames is consistent with coalition-building and wide-scale resonance. In each of our case studies, moral ecologies played a central role in conversations regarding environmental politics and policies. Each of the ERMs examined gained widespread appeal, facilitated cross-cutting coalitions (including ones that cut across ethnic, class, and rural/urban divides), and exerted political sway.

The purpose of attending to moral ecologies is not simply to judge them right or wrong, but to understand their cultural, material, and political genesis and importance. The role of moral ecologies in shaping environmental movements, policies, practices, and landscapes is therefore a topic that warrants further study.

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