

Presentation title:

Do the theories and laws housed within the school of environmental criminology apply in an African context? And does anyone care?

Speaker: Gregory Breetzke (University of Pretoria, South Africa)

Environmental criminology is presupposed on the notion that 'space matters.' The idea is that the underlying places (however operationalised) in which people live and interact create conditions that favour (or hinder) opportunities for crime. The vast majority of theoretical developments within environmental criminology have emerged in the United States with much less known about whether the various theories, and laws apply in other contexts. This is important to ascertain as it provides a measure of academic credibility and international generalizability to theories and laws generally accepted by environmental criminologists as 'fact'. This study provides a brief anecdotal review on whether a number of these theories and laws developed within environmental criminology apply in an African context, using mainly South Africa as a case study. Similarities are noted but a number of important differences are also highlighted. The presentation concludes with commentary, supported by evidence, of the continued marginalization of the Global South within Criminology which limits theory development, and the publication of a wider range of research paradigms, methods, and topics in the discipline. Criminology as a whole, and environmental criminology specifically, cannot continue to be a largely monolithic group lacking diversity – or can it?