



Poverty and sustainable development in environmental governance in Latin America

Analytical Framework Report

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Leading Author: Prof. Héctor Sejenovich; Agustín Salvia, Ph.D.; Maria C. Rodriguez, Ph.D.; Daniel Panario, Agr. Eng.; Gabriela Merlinsky, Ph.D.; Ofelia Gutierrez, Master.

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WP6: Poverty and sustainable development in environmental governance in Latin America

1. Introduction:

In Latin American territories, historically and currently dominated by powerful politico-economic élites, a number of factors impose a widespread and uncontrolled reproduction of marginalization and poverty at a regional scale: the concentration of wealth, the unequal income distribution, the inefficient and manipulative political administrations, and the overflow of technology platforms exceeding the carrying capacity of ecosystems at the service of accumulating and irrationally exploiting the habitat and natural resources. That is, private overcome social conflicts within the participation process of environmental governance. At the same time, the rich, varied and heterogeneous ecological offer represented by the natural resources is not used in an integral, sustainable way.

The reproduction of poverty is an outstanding result of this structural process, which further deteriorates the socio-environment and limits its economic regulation and political administration. To overcome the structural conditions that generate this particular way of “developing the underdevelopment” in Latin America –as in a great part of the planet-, it is necessary to place the currently less than virtuous relation of economy-society-nature that is supposedly, but only semantically, being revived in the “conflict-power-governance” continuum. Only this way it is possible to attain a better, fair and sustainable quality of life for all the population.

A program with these characteristics, however, requires starting a drastic social change aimed at fully reconstructing the relationship between society and nature. This requires, among others, subordinating the ideal of economic progress to standards of “good living”, grounded in universal socio-environmental rights. Advancing in such an overall change, implies not only to confront the dominant elites in the particular local territories where economic-social-environmental conflicts have historically occurred, but also in the cultural space of the alternative cosmovisions, the formulation of adequate theories, the objective recognition of the real world and the construction of new tools for socio-environmental governance¹. To this effect, in this research

¹ There are many studies that give account of the influence exerted by transnational relationships between local and global agents over the production of socio-environmental rights, and of experiences of socio-political resistance in Latin America (connected to the notions of ethnicity, environment, sustainable development, biodiversity, globalization, etc.). Among others, we can mention [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8].

attention will be paid to all the contributions made, since the 1970's, by the Latin American Environmental Thought, which will be used both to analyze the State of the Art and the conceptual and methodological bases of WP6.

Its huge potential doesn't seem to guarantee sustainable development for the whole population that inhabits the Latin American region. The poor quality of life in wide social sectors emerges as the inevitable result of a heterogeneous, unequal and combined capitalist development that promotes economic concentration, sumptuary consumption, environmental degradation and poor quality of life for a great part of the population. In line with this perspective, WP6 intends to contribute to the process of social change through the interdisciplinary study of the relationships among sustainable development, poverty, social movements, and socio-environmental governance, with particular reference to the Latin American context and with the purpose of superseding the framework of "economic growth – inequality – environmental destruction – increase in poverty" that prevails in the region.

About one out of three Latin Americans is poor (defined as not having sufficient income to satisfy their basic needs). One out of eight is in a situation of extreme poverty (defined as not being able to cover their basic nutritional needs, even if they spent all their money in food)². But the levels of poverty vary substantially, both among countries and within each of them. For example, topped by Haiti, Central American countries tend to have the highest poverty rates. Seven out of ten people live in poverty in Honduras and Haiti, two of the poorest countries in the region. In contrast, only one out eight people live in poverty in Argentina, Chile and Barbados.

On the other hand, the two economically biggest countries in Latin America, Brazil and Mexico, show similar rates of poverty, reaching one out of three of their inhabitants. Now, almost half of the poor people in the region live in these countries, though they are classified as having medium to high income by the World Bank ^[9]. Furthermore, according to the same source, the rates of extreme poverty in Latin America are relatively high given the level of development of the region. In spite of having GDP per capita levels above those of the Middle East and North of Africa, their levels of extreme poverty are much higher.

² The rates and definitions are based on national lines of poverty and indigence adopted by the countries and published by the Economic Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL). The World Bank has lower estimations of poverty and indigence, but it applies a methodology that extracts national lines of poverty and indigence to compare them throughout the regions.

Latin America is the most unequal region in the world. According to the most generally used indicator of income inequality, the Gini index, five of the ten most unequal countries in the world are found in Latin America. One of them, Brazil, comprises almost a third part of the whole population in the region. Even the most equitable countries in Latin America tend to be more unequal than the most unequal ones in Europe^[9].

The prevailing inequality in the region is mostly due to the extraordinary concentration of wealth in the high income sector of the population. This way, the richest fifth part of the population in Latin America receives approximately three fifth parts of the total income, while the poorest fifth part only receives three percent. In any other region of the developing world, poor people receive a higher percentage of the total income.

With this frame of reference, the central interdisciplinary thesis addressed in this WP6 states that environmental degradation is a structural component, not alien to the very process that generates poverty, inequality, and economic and social marginality. This degradation is mainly the result of an accelerated rate of extraction aimed at maximizing short term gains^{[10], [11]}. So, there is a paradoxical coexistence of destructive actions in the environment, and a great non-use of the potentials of natural resources and energy sources for poverty reduction in the midst of highly fragile systems. All this tends to further aggravate the process that has led our countries into poverty and extreme inequality in the distribution of wealth, natural resources and power.

In this context, the floods, droughts, contamination and other natural catastrophes, considerably worsened by the prevailing social relationships, further complicate the situation, increasing the need to intensify research and build in relevant categories that will enable analyzing the current reality and proposing how to change it. This also invites us to integrate to the new common conceptual system studies, the traditional studies of the exploitation of natural resources that have shown both their degradation and their misuse.

The main goal of this analytical framework report is to offer a theoretical and methodological interdisciplinary framework, which can combine in one explanatory-interpretative matrix the economic, environmental, social, political and institutional processes that lead to a vicious circle of reproducing underdevelopment, inequality, poor quality of life and environmental degradation, and relate this also to the research taking place in the other WPs of the ENGGOV project.

1.2 Poverty and environmental governance: the state of the art

Environmental governance has been defined as the “complex and contradictory coordination of manifold practices and representations through which various political agents, acting at different levels, participate with relevant effects and diverse degrees of legitimacy, cooperation and/or conflict, in the constitution of a territory and the administration of its natural resources” ^[12: 76]. Back in 1971, Carlos Matus developed the concept of governability. In 1978, UNEP and Flacso in Quito prepared a document to start a joint research project on the theory of the State and environmental policy ^[13], intended to integrate the advances made by both institutions on this subject.

Considering the modern concept of environmental governance, we must point out that, while there are interactions in the conflicts referred to by this concept, such interactions generally operate within a framework of dominant and dominated forces in a particular social structure. They are therefore influenced by this unequal relationship. This doesn't mean that all the results are pre-defined: they will depend on the relative strength of the political and economic agents involved, which may not necessarily achieve integration, even if they strive for it. This will be an important point in the project.

The issue of equitable income distribution, nowadays must necessarily be complemented by the consideration of a non destructive use of nature. Changes in distribution have to go together with changes in the technology and consumption patterns, or they will fail to occur, thus provoking serious conflicts ^[14]. At CLACSO, a working team specialized in environmental research operated in the Committee for Rural Studies, and later in the Urban and Regional Committee, during the period of 1977/83. This team coordinated actions of a hundred colleagues from different countries in the region to jointly develop a document that was published in Mexico and subsequently transcribed, providing an important basis for the state of the art in the region and incorporating the hypotheses that have guided the present study.

- There is an overt incompatibility, in terms of timeframe goals, between the economic cycles and the ecological ones. While the prevailing economic rationality aims at reducing the timeframe for maximized investments by fostering a high capital turnover and maximum benefits, the ecological cycles usually require a consideration of their long-term behavior that makes it possible to respect its regenerative mechanisms, especially when trying to use only one resource in an ecosystem.
- Short-term economic rationality tends to the sole use of those natural resources that obtain comparatively more benefits worldwide, or even nationally, while an adequate usage of these resources involves their integral use, reverting their current misuses.

- The two points above show the real contradiction between economic and ecological reproduction. The processes examined give some evidence of a growing consideration of different environmental aspects by some of the companies involved. This is leading to a valuable industry of decontaminating products that is looking to expand its market. Environmental demands on commerce will also play a role in accelerating this process. Up to now, however, there isn't an awareness of many of the externalities.
- Every development of the productive forces engenders, at the same time, processes of production/destruction, of usage and non-use. When a resource is used, certain natural elements are destroyed due to the characteristics inherent to the technology currently applied. Parallel to the highly selective productive process, whenever there is usage, there is also non-use. But the economic system of evaluation only counts the phases of production and usage. This requires reformulating the indicators of development. The construction of Environmental Heritage Accounts points at a fruitful path on which important steps have been taken ^[15].
- The economic system does not take into account all the costs incurred in the production process, so it has a negative incidence (external effects) both on the domain of nature (the costs of regenerating or decontaminating renewable resources are not paid, or recomposing tasks are disregarded) and on the population (affecting their health and well-being). The consideration of this situation and the enforcement of policies destined to pay for all the costs, as well as the consideration of all the benefits, propose a controversial arena where strategies have to be defined³. To that effect, economic understandings must open up to all the integrations that are needed, since the point in question should be to reformulate the conditions of capital valorization and reproduction so as to include the economic, social and political impact entailed.
- The sectorialized, partial form taken by development planning, that only reflects the nominal organization of our economic system, makes it difficult to identify the interactions between society and its resources. It requires reformulating each of the economic sectors to introduce environmental considerations and turn them into open sub-systems, including all the incomes

³ The economy known as "green" is currently using the concept of awareness of the negative external factors as a guideline. This is largely a way to be excused in the irreplaceable task that must be carried out as regards reducing emissions.

and expenditures of the overall system. The named primary, secondary and tertiary sectors in which the economy has classified productive activities have established an “unequal” exchange with nature, using its habitat and resources without taking care of the ecosystems’ reproduction. The creation of a pre-primary sector has been proposed, aimed at providing a sustainable ecosystemic offer of resources, with costs to be shared by the productive activity, the State and the countries that benefit from the ecosystemic effects of our resources.

In 1970, a team led by Warsavsky, in a Model National Project of numeric experimentation, systematized the advances achieved since the second decade of the 1960s. At the same time, in the context of the worldwide controversy about the relationship between population and resources, the “Fundación Bariloche”, under the direction of Herrera, developed the Latin American World Model called *Catastrophe or a new society?*. This model underscored the fact that the main problem was not the exhaustiveness of resources, but their distribution.

The creation of UNEP and its regional headquarters in Mexico was a significant event. Most of its funding, after Stockholm, was directed to the processes of decontaminating oceans and cities in developed countries. From 1975 to 1982, the CIFCA *International Center for Environmental Training* was in operation for Spanish-speaking countries, as a joint project of UNEP and the Government of Spain. Training courses were offered, mostly by Latin American staff, in all the countries of Latin America. This was the precedent for the Environmental Training Network in the region, which was started in 1980. In the course of its numerous meetings, many critical issues were addressed from the viewpoint of the members’ own thinking. Its singularity lies in the fact that the environmental ideas proposed were mainly concerned with interdisciplinary activities, complex models, planning and its methods, and, in general, the social aspects. Likewise, the project called *Development Style and Environment* and the subsequent creation of the Environment Unit of CEPAL, played an important role ^[16]. There were two relevant events, initially: the Cocoyoc Conference and the Founex Conference. The criticism of developmentalism made in the latter, prior to Stockholm, is expressed in very clear terms: *“the processes of growth that only benefit the most prosperous minorities and maintain or increase the disparities among countries and in the situation of their people, cannot be thought of as “development”. It is exploitation. And the time has come to start the real type of economic growth, that is, one that makes it possible to achieve a better distribution of wealth and to satisfy basic needs for all the people”*.

The report presented by the Brundtland Committee did not include the contribution of Latin American thinking, so the region took action and produced the book *Our Own*

Agenda, which was sent to the Governments before the Conference in Rio de Janeiro. Here, the issues of unemployment, income distribution, foreign debt and plans for environmental stabilization, were adequately addressed, in contrast with the *Agenda of Our Common Future*⁴. A relevant event was the creation of a *Worldwide Business Committee of Environment and Development* that issued its first report, called "*Changing course*", showing the way in which elites can postulate some important ideas, but are then reluctant to put them into practice^[17]. This report states that natural capital is being used, not only its interests, so that in the future there will be no interests and no capital.

"Our common future" defined "sustainable development" as development that ensures the satisfaction of present needs without endangering the possibilities for future generations of satisfying their own needs. In contrast, (and it is not in addition) as they emphasize different aspects. "*Our Own Agenda*" promoted the involvement of the different social sectors in economic, ecological and socially adequate technology, in the integral and sustainable use of resources and in the interdisciplinary discussions, as a way of improving their quality of life.

Since 1992, almost all the big national and international companies have been appointing environmental managers' offices, many of them derived from the occupational hygiene and health management sector. A controversy about the consideration of the environmental costs emerged. There were those who claimed that considering environmental costs increases and those who say it reduces the total costs on account of recycling some residues and improve the energetic efficiency. A survey carried out by Daniel Yubnosky in Argentina showed that over 50% of the leading companies declared that they had obtained profits, instead of losses, when they considered the environmental problem. However, a diversified production faces additional obstacles.

2. Common conceptual system

2.1. The research purposes and strategy

The main purpose of this WP is to analyze and assess the obstacles and capabilities of production, distribution, exchange and consumption systems in order to direct development in a way that allows for ecological, economic and social sustainability.

⁴ Gabaldon, A., Sánchez, V., Sejenovich, H., and Gallopin, G., were in charge of the group.

Following the identification of such obstacles, we will propose the measures and policies required to overcome them and thus achieve sustainability. This latter stage will be of utmost importance and it will allow talking to the several social sectors that interact with governance, including, of course, the government. This will allow for a more fair distribution of wealth towards poverty eradication, the consolidation of a democratic government in connection with environmental issues in Latin America and the Caribbean and a comprehensive management of natural resources.

For such purpose, a multiple theoretical-methodological approach is applied: a) theoretical developments integrating interdisciplinary knowledges; b) elaboration of typologies, classifications, instruments and statistical records to extend the knowledge about the general and/or specific aspects of such relationships, that means, the ecological-economic and social aspects of sustainable development and c) analysis of “crucial” case studies capable of unveiling new observables, problems and socio-environmental challenges.

This will allow proposing a new model of socio-environmental governance which includes the eradication of poverty and a new society-nature relationship as a strategic purpose to guarantee a fair and sustainable development of the region, further supported by management instruments, and democratic and comprehensive planning and intervention of human and natural capabilities.

As a research strategy, it is included: To collaborate with others WPs in order to compare empirical, theoretical, and normative findings, and design a matrix to articulate main project variables and findings relating development, poverty and environmental governance in LAC. WP 2 to 4 are related to specific ecosystems and resources. In each of them, the ways in which it is possible to carry out comprehensive and sustainable resource management and the associated technological, economic and social changes they imply will be studied. This task has been simplified given the commitment honored by government representatives over the past years. In particular, this applies to the LAC Environmental Ministry Forum which in 2008 issued the “UNEP Work Program Regional Implementation, including Regional Operationalization of the Bali Strategic Plan”. All issues analyzed are explicitly laid out in the action commitments. Moreover, when analyzing different ecosystems or resources, general aspects of environmental management of cities will be included. Already, input has been contributing in addressing poverty and sustainable development. WP 5 will analyze the knowledges on natural resources. WP 7 will include resource extraction conflicts WP 8 will largely apply its knowledge development goals for local solutions

towards environmental justice .WP 9 will focus on complementary activities on climate change compatible alternative energies. Progress has already been achieved by preparing a document for the WP 3 on elites in the case of soy, as well as the basis for supporting the WP 8 on the new operating methods of factories recovered in Argentina, as a case study of association types which are more systemic with sustainable development.

2.2 Conceptual framework and methodology

Next is a general interdisciplinary theoretical framework intended to be used as a starting point to articulate the role of the topics that constitute the main elements of this project a Below we show the variables that interrelate the common conceptual system:

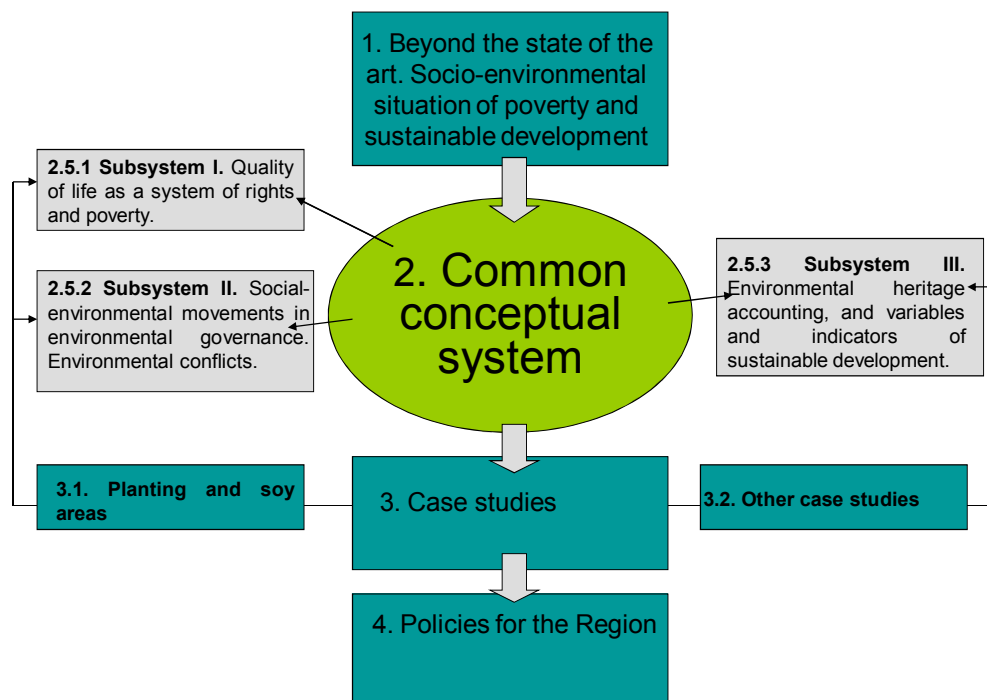


Figure 1.

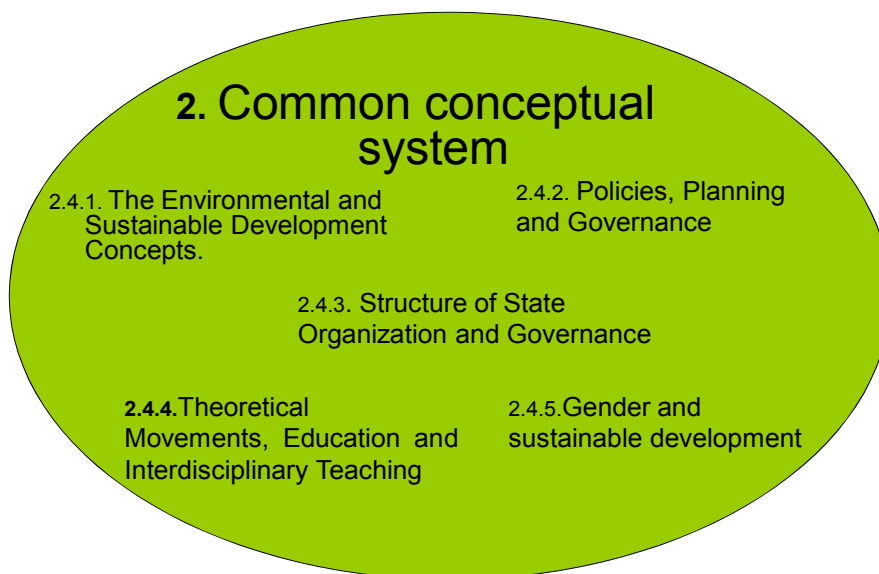


Figure 2.

In line with these principles, Figure 1 presents categories, some of which form analysis subsystems which action and treatment deserve a more specific development later on in this report. Such subsystems have enough identity to be analyzed separately, but are in constant interaction with the global system, which is formed by constituent topics (2.4.1/2.4.5, Figure 2)

The work methodology considers both the processes' (society/nature) unity and diversity, and develops an analysis that is as comprehensive as possible at the conceptual and time-space levels within the budget and team limits given by ENGOV. Case studies have been selected in this WP 6, in order to study . The case studies will be of two types:

- A) On the one hand, to analyze the common area in which all categories interact, those within the common conceptual system and those within the subsystems, to check their operation and systemic interrelationships. Upon determination of both the current findings and the future prospects, the analysis will proceed with the specific (for each case study) and general aspects of them that may be considered for Latin America. For this space, and –partially– conceptual variable, we will count

with the studies of the other WPs that will be checked and researched on a permanent basis.

- B) On the other hand, we will have case studies that will be used as examples of articulation or contradiction of concepts that may be useful to propose alternative approaches. Examples of these analyses are successful social movements in the environmental approach, occupation of the ecosystem that generates environmental and social degradation processes triggering poverty, single-product productions that generate non-used important opportunities compared with multicropped-productions, and Environmental Heritage Accounts that reveals the capabilities and degradation of natural resources (such as was defined for Tafí del Valle, Tucumán, Province, Argentina).

2.3. Theoretical aspects of the society-nature relationship in a context of social-environmental underdevelopment, economic inequality and social conflict

In the past a tendency existed towards assimilating development with the -more limited- purpose of economic growth, as evidenced by the GNP increase. Nowadays, though, it is generally acknowledged that the rapid pace of economic growth, although necessary, fails to constitute *per se*, a certain relief of the urgent social problems. This has been one of the first messages of the Latin American Thought. Moreover, the rapid pace of development has been accompanied by growing unemployment, an increased number of inhabitants being pushed into exclusion and poverty, growing income disparities, both among groups and among regions, and worsened social and cultural conditions, as part of the development process⁵.

The purpose of this WP is to reach a multidimensional definition –both theoretical and political- operational– of the meaning of “quality of life” as part of a more general concept of “economic-social-environmental sustainable development”. This is in opposition to the structural model, in which the economic growth generates inequality conditions, environmental degradation and poverty. This definition can be “claimed” as a social right in different economic-political-cultural contexts.

⁵ Capitalism, as a mode of production, has survived, partially, through the use of space, by producing what Harvey calls an *unfair and combined geographical development* ^[18]. In this framework, the space –the ecosystems and its resources socially-politically changed into territories– becomes an instrument of strategic importance to the *State*: land organization represents the hierarchy of power.

Among other elements, this process's scenario is the battlefield for the acknowledgment of social-environmental rights requiring a comprehensive development in favor of human-social-environmental life. It is precisely the development of social-environmental conflicts in each local space which gives sense to this process, insofar as they gain universal significance and extend the scope of social rights.⁶

At the same time, we have experienced in the last decades the irruption of the social-environmental knowledge, which tends to rebuild the "Dialéctica de lo Concreto"^[21] and attempts to move towards a more comprehensive conception of the contradictions between the environment, the quality of life and their alternatives. Given this impetuous and abrupt movement, we can assert that no conceptual ambit has been left aside. The idea that the entire nature is socially intervened and that social relationships operate in a natural structure with which they permanently interact offers a global framework that allows analyzing the way in which society develops economic activities and changes nature to achieve social reproduction. However, such change is always made through the rationale imposed by a specific economic, political and social idea, which applies a specific modality to the changing process and determines a social destiny of production (to whom it is produced), a technological method (how it is produced), a given place of production (where it is produced) and a specific demand for natural resources and habitats (the natural resources used for production). This process reveals the systemic relationship between production, distribution, exchange and consumption. The concentration of the means of production, land and power determines the production of poverty and exclusion, and waste of wealth, which are then revealed in each subsystem under analysis^[22].

The referred approach, produced by the Latin American Environmental Thought, will be used with an emphasis on its sustainability concept, giving it a much more comprehensive meaning at the economic, ecological and social levels:

- ▶ Economic: by considering all costs, including the cost of nature reproduction, and all benefits, including the results of a comprehensive management.
- ▶ Ecological: by using nature and the habitat in a way that maximizes production, and minimizes degradation, and

⁶ To this respect, Mato's concepts about the "*fetichization of the globalization process*" ^[19] and the emergence of "*cross-border networks from below*" ^[20] prove suggestive.

► Social: by playing a leading role in a social process that seeks to direct production towards the satisfaction of the basic needs, an improved quality of life, and a reduction of the existent high levels of poverty with the key participation of the most vulnerable sectors.

2.4. Topics

2.4.1 The environmental and sustainable development concepts

The comprehensive and sustainable management of natural resources and development in Latin America has been influenced by several movements, based on the use of specific resources or ecosystems. WP6 includes a general study on the topic, including the movement of ideas generated by Stockholm ^{[23], [24], [25]}.

Such movements also reconsider the need for generating an articulated thought as well as theoretical movements, which consist in specific articulations of knowledge and/or sciences aimed at explaining complex realities and showing possible alternatives, as discuss in the relevant bullet points (figure 2)

2.4.2. Policies, planning and governance

The general diagnosis to be made, taking into account the obstacles to achieve a sustainable development, the analysis of the social and theoretical movements and the consideration of the sectors represented in the State, will reveal a need for adopting policies, programs and measures promoting environmental governance in furtherance of sustainable development. These aims beat the prevailing myths of those who praise a traditional development. These new environmental policies become apparent in society in the economic, financial, technological, and scientific, as well as in different cultural and social policies.

The planning process will be analyzed, based on these principles and as adopted to the new problems, that were the manding a more integral vision of development considering the natural and social variables jointly. Undoubtedly, neither market automatism nor the relative price structure allow matching the offer and the demand of products and services, at the time that the social purposes of production are left aside. The resulting unbalances provoke waste, degradation and scarcity of all types while the redistribution processes are postponed and poverty is increased. From a comprehensive and distributional point of view, the process of economic-social and environmental planning, as well as their intense interactions, may certainly constitute an adequate instrument to implement deep changes in our specific society-nature relationship in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is one of the hypotheses of this work. The several methodologies created in the region in connection with the

economic-ecological topic will be analyzed, specially, in the creation of environmental systems for planning purposes.

2.4.3. Structure of state organization and governance

The type of State organization eases or obstructs the fulfilment of sustainable development purposes. Therefore, it is necessary to find the adequate forms. The current criteria are influenced by the developmentalism stage of our economy, which tried to spread the principles of a welfare state reformulated by the effects of neoliberalism, which led to stabilization plans. This organization imposed a passive and residual articulation with the worldwide market. It is necessary, then, to have an active democratic State that promotes social participation. This last category is essential to the operation of the proposed system and plays a significant role relates to the possibility of a successful environmental governance.

2.4.4. Theoretical movements, education and interdisciplinary teaching

Theoretical movements emerge to try to explain the complexity of comprehensive knowledge when critical situations materialize. In general, it involves society-nature conflicts where different sciences intervene. It is, in fact, an interdisciplinary area that frequently fails to be peacefully covered, but which arises out of the need to do so when several social actors demand a comprehensive knowledge. If the aim is to achieve a comprehensive knowledge then the time, space and concept barriers must be raised towards such longed integration: the need to understand the complexity as a way to propose solutions and promote alternatives

2.4.5. Gender and sustainable development

Gender studies cover a wide range of issues. This point is being addressed in all the variables that make the quality of life and other aspects of sustainable development. The considerations that continue is a brief summary of them. The reasoning that must guide our understanding of these studies has to start by acknowledging the theoretical proposal about the identity of the concept of gender and by addressing a myriad of related problems: social, economic, demographic, cultural, etc.

We will approach the subject of gender in the context of our studies made about population, development and public policies.

Our main concerns will be equal rights for men and woman, and no gender stigmatization. For these human right tools to better reflect women's realities and needs, more attention should be paid to aspects related to their independence within

the family, their possibilities of giving birth in the best possible conditions and their having economic resources to support her and her family, ensuring their adequate nutrition, housing and the education of their children, among other things.

2.5. Sub-systems

2.5.1. Sub-system I. Quality of life as a rights system and poverty

2.5.1.1 General aspects subsystem I

A major trend in current studies on overcoming poverty focuses on representing a form of development related to “quality of life.” However, this overcoming-poverty approach will not be enough, unless it is understood that social development is part of each society’s historical- economic- social- cultural- political, and environmental processes, rooted in social struggles and which tend to materialize in laws, safeguards and social rights ^{[26], [27], [28]}. These are the reasons that constitute a subsystem. Based on this approach, poor standards of living -being unjustly deprived of basic satisfiers of human needs- as well as the relationship between poverty and sustainable economic and environmental development, cannot be identified outside a broader epistemological framework setting the minimum standards and thresholds based on which quality of life—within a specific economic, social, and environmental context—can at least be considered as “just” or “satisfactory.”

One of the purposes of this WP is to create a conceptual framework within which to approach a multi-dimensional study of poverty in quality of life through the creation of an ideal model for sustainable economic-social-environmental development. For this purpose, this ideal model incorporates the results of studies on human needs and socio-environmental sustainability and of the progress made in the area of social and environmental rights. Moreover, we expect that research conducted based on this theoretical model will help create an indicator system to identify from a broader perspective the key aspects of the relationship between poverty and development in each local -global area where economic, social and environmental resources are concentrated in the hands of dominant elites. Finally, this model will serve as a starting point to continue studying, monitoring and assessing the extent to which—both in general and in specific case studies—the absence of a sustainable economic, social and environmental development regime in Latin American societies results in even poorer quality of life.

As it has been explained earlier in this Analytical Framework Report, today’s world is a system highly sensitive to the relationships between environmental dynamics, socio-economic processes, socio-cultural trends and the socio-political actions of the actors

subject to them. In this regard, the improvement in people's quality of life depends on the dynamic links between individuals, communities and the environment, in which the satisfaction of human needs is closely related to the extent to which social actors act continuously and creatively to transform their social and environmental realities. This involves a process in which social struggles drive and foster both individual and social development around changing situations.⁷

Along the same line, we expect that a study of poverty and lacking quality of life in our societies, derived from the violation of fundamental socio-environmental rights, will help not only to better identify the problems that environmental governance must face in order to achieve a "good live", but also to visualize and value those economic, social, and environmental rights that are yet to be recognized and legitimized in the context of the socio-environmental conflicts and struggles currently developing in the Latin American continent.

In order to create this socio-environmental model for assessing the quality of life, we first need to determine those fundamental human, economic, social and environmental needs, their satisfiers, and the thresholds that communities must be able to reach and the production methods necessary to meet them, based on each community's specific historical and cultural situation. Hence the need to specify some of the theoretical concepts, interpretation schemes and analysis categories introduced so far to advance our research task.

2.5.1.2 Human needs, satisfiers and quality of live from a rights-based approach

The main difficulty one faces when we try to understand what sustainable economic, social, and environmental development truly involves (as opposed to the considerations and indicators of poverty level and socio-environmental degradation), is being able to identify historically -objectively the economic- social- cultural- and environmental satisfiers that translate into quality of life in general and for each community's historical and cultural situation in particular. However, these needs/satisfiers cannot be identified merely through direct observation of the empirical world, nor through ethical and philosophical postulates. Identifying such needs and satisfiers requires incorporating theories created from definitions backed-

⁷ In this regard, subjects—both individuals and collective —perceive their needs and the satisfiers thereof within the context of specific representations and values based on their position in the social structure, at a given time in a given community^[29]

up by socio-cultural trends, socio-political experiences and the scientific knowledge we have in the world, human life and history⁸.

Proper needs are commonly mistaken for the satisfiers of those needs. In this respect, we believe that it is essential that a distinction is drawn between these two concepts, for epistemological and methodological reasons^[31]. Needs and satisfiers are not the same, nor is there a univocal relation between these two aspects of human life at a given time. A satisfier may satisfy several needs simultaneously, and meeting a need may require several satisfiers. What is more, these relations may even vary based on the historical, environmental, social, cultural and psycho-social contexts in which human needs and satisfiers materialize and gain importance.⁹

An individual/group living in a given economic, social, and environmental area has several needs, the potential satisfiers of which relate to one another based on how the individual interacts with his/her natural and historical context^[29]. Within this framework, human needs associated with quality of life in a sustainable economic, social, and environmental context may arise based on different satisfiers. In this regard, a rights-based approach offers a socially-accepted framework to determine the general standards, specific satisfiers and minimum thresholds necessary to assess a community's quality of life.

The recognition of socio-environmental rights (as a standard to assess the relationship between society and nature in an attempt to overcome poverty and reverse socio-environmental degradation) by politicians and academics is the result of knowledge derived from interdisciplinary dialogues, as well as of the realization that conflicts in communities gradually result in those rights being recognized. In other words, socio-environmental rights are not the result of mere speculation but a broader socio-political effect of concrete social struggles both locally and globally materializing differently in different geographical areas and times but which, through political, academic and communicational actions, are occurring more and more at a global level.

⁸ Therefore, it can be assured, for epistemological reasons, that the (components of) satisfiers related to quality of life (i.e., a life without poverty or socio-environmental degradation) must be identified based on the experience of specific social processes, which, as it has already been mentioned, occur in places traditionally marked by struggles, conflicts of interest and power relations^{[28], [30]}

⁹ Within this context, two additional principles resulting from historical research may be mentioned: (a) the principle that basic human needs are always the same regardless of culture, geographical area or time; and (b) the principle that what changes across cultures, geographical areas and times is the means valued and used to satisfy those needs.

As a result of this, the subject-matter of socio-environmental rights becomes an indicator of humanity's theoretical, ethical, political, economic and institutional progress and regression—based on specific historical situations—in an attempt to overcome domination and guarantee the right to a better quality of life in a sustainable way. Based on this approach, any human economic, social or environmental needs not satisfied will sooner or later create resistance by those having those needs, which will mobilize and claim for the protection of their rights. These claims can be seen as an expression of what each community understands as its own ideal quality of life.

This recognition is further favored by the prominence gained by economic, social, and environmental rights as standards to legitimize the claims, struggles and conflicts derived from political and economic processes attempting against a sustainable development of the quality of human life (from an economic, social and ecological viewpoint).

Along this line of thought, in the last years, various definitions have been given for the concept of global justice ^[32]. Going back to studies made, using development theories as a basis, these definitions promote an approach to poverty based on social rights¹⁰. In this regard, the right to a “decent life” is socially claimed, as it requires that a number of other civil, political, economic, environmental, social, and cultural rights increasingly recognized by the international community be protected.

2.5.1.3. Progress made in the recognition of quality of life from a rights- and an immediate task- based approach

With a view to overcoming the challenges encountered when trying to analyze systematically the social dimensions of sustainable economic, social, and environmental development, at least three theoretical and methodological questions must be answered: (i) What valid and reliable concepts and indicators must be examined to measure improvement in the quality of human life from a social and environmental viewpoint?; (ii) What are the thresholds to judge whether or not the rules established in each case are being followed?; and (iii) What are the measuring problems posed by these theoretical and methodological challenges, in terms both of research strategies and of approaches and techniques for analyses?

¹⁰ For example, the *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights* intends to create a reference framework to assess and design strategies to reduce poverty using a human-rights-based-approach^{[33], [34]}

In order to advance the research and the theoretical and methodological model proposed here, three areas of human needs that are closely related to quality of life based on a comprehensive economic, social, and environmental approach have been identified in this unit: (i) Sustainable Subsistence Needs; (ii) Social Protection Needs; and (iii) Communication and Participation Needs.

Based on this recognition, the conditions reflecting poverty in quality of life can be assessed from a legal perspective—i.e., following a social-rights-based approach—in three economic, social, and environmental areas:

(i) Poverty in subsistence conditions and resources (due to lack of water, food, health systems and shelter);

(ii) Poverty protection (due to lack of living resources, work, social security, and the legal recognition of people's rights); and

(iii) Poverty understanding and participation (due to low quality of education and information and to social and political exclusion).

As it has already been mentioned, identifying the urgency with which these unsatisfied needs/claims need to be met and evidencing their transformation into economic, social, and environmental rights in Latin America require a theoretical and empirical effort achieved through interdisciplinary research. In this respect, the satisfiers to be examined in assessing what we have called sustainable economic, social, and environmental development can be determined by identifying objectively the collective rights claimed by a given society in a given geographical area at a given time.

This WP6 is intended to present the basic elements defining quality of life in the framework of sustainable social and environmental development and the possible methods to assess the evolution thereof (as a model for overcoming poverty and reversing environmental degradation). For this purpose, we will explain the three concepts proposed to define quality of life based on a series of dimensions/indicators whose theoretical validity is supported by socio-environmental rights and the achievements made through economic, social, and environmental struggles.

The following is a provisional list of some of the basic elements considered necessary to assess “poverty in quality of life” in the context of substantive needs, satisfiers, and

economic, social, and environmental rights for the socio-environmental governance in Latin America.

Subsistence Needs

Rights to food and to a sustainable economic subsistence

- Guarantee that people will have the food and nutrients they need under sustainable economic, social and environmental conditions.

Rights to productive work and to household self-support under sustainable socio-environmental conditions

- Access to means of production or to a job in which productive, healthy, satisfactory and creative work is performed in harmony with the environment and for which social security is received.
- A fair income or compensation ensuring the worker's and his/her family's self-sufficiency, as well as the community's self-sufficiency through people's participation in economic and social structures.

Protection Needs

Rights to live in an adequate area and to coexist with others and with nature under sustainable socio-environmental conditions

- Having an adequate place to live without the risk of losing it in a human-inhabited area and in harmony with nature.
- Access to drinkable water, electric power, heating and sewage under sustainable economic and environmental conditions.
- Equal access to and enjoyment of secure health, education, information, safety, transportation and recreation systems and infrastructure.

**Rights to physical integrity and to physical and psychological health
under sustainable socio-environmental conditions**

- Integral health and physical and psychological safety under sustainable socio-environmental conditions.
- Physical and psychological health protection and care through a comprehensive health protection, primary care, and rehabilitation system.

**Rights to personal and group identity and to have one's needs for
special protection recognized by law**

- Legal and material protection against aggression, violence, or abuse due to one's economic condition, race, social condition, culture, gender, or nationality.
- Full integration of women in social, economic, political, and cultural activities and in positions of power, duly recognizing their role as child-bearers.
- Special protection for children, people with disabilities, ill people and race and cultural minorities.

Understanding Needs**Participation Needs**

- Right to speak one's language, to be understood when speaking one's language and to systematic and non-systematic knowledge. Interdisciplinary dialogue.
- Right to information and to communicational and cultural expression.
- Right to become involved and participate in political life and in community and socio-environmental issues through democratic means.

2.5.2. Sub-system II. Socio-environmental movements in environmental governance and environmental conflicts

2.5.2.1. General aspects, subsystem II

Latin America accounts for merely 8% of the world population. Nevertheless, it comprises 23% of the potentially arable land, 12% of the cultivated soil, 17% of the land suitable for stockbreeding, 23% of the forests (46% of the rainforests) and 31% of surface fresh water. (“Our Own Agenda”, Interamerican Development Bank, UNDP). Our resources, then, far outnumber the population ratio. Nonetheless, the region suffers from certain levels of poverty and marginalization. It could be argued that the limited factor leading to this situation lies on the lack of financial resources. The significant flow of currencies sent annually abroad from Latin America evidences the opposite scenario. Therefore, the organization of society and state is one of the essential factors which hinder the attainment of a much higher level of satisfaction of needs^{[16], [22]}. A new environmental governance must emerge as a sort of social organization which allows to sustainably exploit the great potential of natural resources, incorporating the main sectors of the population in an active role, especially low-income sectors. This new social organization must repair the significant disarticulations experienced in our region between society and nature^{[39], [40], [41]}.

In the context of environmental governance, socio-environmental conflicts are seen as disputes around the ways of appropriation and distribution of economic, social and natural resources in each territory, community or region. These conflicts question the power relationships that facilitate access to those resources and imply that their use is decided by some agents while others are excluded from attaining them.

In general, the conflict of socio-environmental interests opens a new space for representations and regulations referred to the governance of the environment. The emergence of new State regulations related to environmental protection, the administration structure and management of natural resources and the creation of new institutional tools for the of management environmental policies, are accompanied by a process of recognizing rights enforced through litigation. But socio-environmental conflicts do not occur in an abstract way, but in historic spaces and through specific actions, agents and social movements able to resist and litigate on issues that the dominant elites intend to maintain or install. It is often those organized, collective agents who raise claims that end up by establishing minimum grounds in the agenda of environmental public policy.

In those conflicts, the dynamics and the evolution of the process of litigation disclose the existence of environmental, economic, social, political and cultural rights that are being violated. For this reason, such disputes cause a strong clash between the economic space and the living space; they lead to different ways of organizing the litigation arena and they have incidence —productivities— on various domains (political, institutional, legal, cultural, territorial)¹¹

Therefore, it is essential for this WP to approach the dynamics of socio-environmental conflict at a local, intermediate and global level as it presents a structural and political connection with the issue of poverty, the impairment of the quality of life and social inequality, bringing into play new ways of representing, claiming, administering and projecting sustainable development at an economic, social and environmental level.

From this standpoint, this WP is aimed at studying and developing a “map” of agents, social movements and struggle experiences concerning poverty and the environment, comprising regional actions within Latin America. In order to draw up this action map, not only social reactions associated with structural poverty, pollution and the destruction of natural resources are considered part of the theoretical framework of the socio-environmental struggle, but also agents, social movements and struggle experiences which raise conflicts in the relationship of human beings among themselves and with nature, in connection with the concretion of socio-environmental rights essential for the reproduction of life. It is fitting that the analysis of these processes will provide theoretical understanding, historical knowledge and methodological tools useful to understand how poverty/inequality/environmental deterioration situations in Latin America: a) transmute into socio-environmental conflicts through litigation between agents and social movements different in nature; b) how the economic, social and environmental arena subject to disputes and clashes with the dominant elites is defined; and c) how administration tools, strategies, methods and devices leaning towards a qualitative change in socio-environmental governance systems arise. Latin America’s specific conditions heighten the urgent need of achieving this goal, since poverty and inequality are, certainly, the main issues facing the region from a social, political and economic standpoint^{[25], [29], [36], [37]}

The hypotheses on which the study, identification, classification and analysis of the “map” of agents, movements and socio-environmental conflicts in Latin America are based are:

¹¹ It is generally collective action which allows to disclose the issue, associate the claim to other social claims, link a specific problem with the logic of the system and, due to its existence, raise the possibility of an alternative model of action or incidence on general interest^{[12], [35]}

- Socio-environmental conflicts arising in areas affected by structural heterogeneity and the effects of poverty have led to changes in the kinds of collective action in terms of a new set of rights which has been recognized with regard to the application of the law on minimum environmental requirements.
- Intermediate public spaces resulting from these conflicts have displayed a considerable amount of influence on the questioning of regional productive and political models of a corporate/ monopolistic/authoritarian nature.
- Among the main social effects of conflicts, changes are expected in the social representations of the participating agents with regard to the cultural value of the land and the environment, the social rights available and, in general, in the acquisition of socio-environmental knowledge.
- Among the main institutional effects of conflicts, the creation of new devices of socio-environmental policy (regulation, planning tools) at a sub-national (regional, provincial and municipal) level is expected.

2.5.2.2. Typology of collective action: explanation of concepts

Taking into account poverty and sustainable development concepts the typology of collective action is described as following:

- ***Agents: interrelations and screen.*** Agents acquire such nature inasmuch as they act with a certain degree of commitment to socially controversial issues at a territorial level.¹² Thus, territorialized social action defines inclusion as an agent within the framework of a political process (whether involving the implementation of policies which affect it and/or the creation of a conflict). Social agents are, therefore, those groups, sectors, classes, organizations and/or movements which have a hand on social and political life in order to attain certain specific or sectorial objectives, without necessarily entailing the continuity of their activity beyond such objective^[42]. This definition encompasses individuals, groups or institutions with different territorial scopes of public action and more or less explicit influence on the reference area of the conflict or policy under analysis.

Not all agents have equal effects on processes. Repetto^[43: 146] describes a *typology of key influential resources*, including political resources (support from the community; formal authority; informal leadership and authority; collective

¹² Socially controversial issues are precisely those which direct the strategies of agents in order to bridge the gaps between the conditions of the context, its consequences on the region and the range of problems towards which policies and programs are oriented.

mobilization capacity; negotiation, argumentation and communication skills); economic resources (budget of their own); technical and administrative resources (legal agency, organizational skills, access to information and ability to process it, bureaucratic experience, resolution and action in situations of uncertainty); and ideological resources (moral reputation and legitimacy).

- *Social movements and political subjects (“sujetos políticos”).* Social movements constitute a specific kind of organized collective action for the study of which different theoretical approaches have been developed. Applying many of those elements and in the words of García Linera ^[37] we consider social movements *“structures of collective action able to establish independent symbolic goals of mobilization, association and representation of economic, cultural and political nature.”*

There is a close relationship between social movement and political subjects, *being a political subject implies being a social actor, but not necessarily the other way around.* They become subjects insofar as they join a broad social integration process entailing the development of their struggles, levels of organization and awareness through encounter and convergence processes with others within a general atmosphere of social and systemic transformation ^[42].

With regard to the issue of classes referred to the characterization of the populations involved in collective action processes which constitute social movements, it seems befitting to assume that social heterogeneity, the result of radical changes in the composition of the working class and intermediate strata associated with the current characteristics of capitalist development, does not necessarily imply the deduction of policy integration or fragmentation processes. The factors affecting and entailing each result must be explained with regard to each process or case under analysis.

Emerging transnational collective action in connection with poverty and the environment. “New” emerging transnational collective action is part of a diversified —and motley— regional map which comprises response, defensive and/or proposal methods with respect to the negative effects of the prevailing production and social development model, unequally distributed in national societies and international relations “in the age of globalization”.

In general, these approaches historically downplay the monistic concepts of globalization and analyze the patterns of relation and transnational action of social movements applying networks which articulate local and global agents

unequally ^{[44], [45]} ¹³ The concepts of “identity”, “culture”, “biodiversity”, “environment”, “quality of life”, “sustainable development”, “civil society” and “community” repeatedly play a significant role in the construction of such transnational relations.

2.5.2.3 Mobilization, environmental conflict and new institutional arrangements

In accordance with the approach adopted in this WP, conflicts set into motion “collective learning and exploration devices”. Therefore, we may discuss the *productivity of conflicts*, that is, analyze their consequences at a political and institutional level. The following aspects are included among the main issues of the analysis of productivity:

- i) *Creation of intermediate public spaces*
- ii) *Environmental knowledge acquisition processes*
- iii) *Regionalization*
- iv) *Institutional productivity*: In this regard, *regionalization* is the clearest expression of this integral process of political dispute.

2.5.2.4 Investigation activities currently under process and immediate goals

Following the classification specified above, the drawing of a map of conflicts, social movements and agents which appeared during the last decades —*with systematic and sustained actions identifiable in Latin America*— is currently in process, including the main aspects of social life and the relationship with poverty, environmental deterioration and governance which articulates each and every aspect, with respect to unresolved issues and which negatively affect the quality of life of significant majorities of the population.

Specifically, our study field comprises: i) environmental or ecological issues (including those whose thematic focuses and controversy exceed national borders and/or local areas), ii) labor conditions (unemployment, precariousness, labor health, etc), iii) the agricultural development model and the issue of food sovereignty, and vi) habitat and life conditions in the cities.

¹³ Current approaches include: i) those works with a historic focus based on political anthropology or the Latin American viewpoint of cultural studies (Mato, 2001) ii) works based on the concept of community and rights ^[45], iii) works based on the theory of “new” social movements and new kinds of political action ^[46], some of which deem them a phenomenon inherent to the contradictions of “post modern” or “post industrial” societies ^[47] and iv) those works which focus their understanding of transnational collective action as part of what they call “counter-hegemonic globalization” ^[49]

An issue subject to special consideration —due to its particular “productivity”— is the study of how current transnational collective action is developed in Latin America. In this regard, a first thematic and qualitative analysis is being currently conducted based on secondary sources (mainly documents and publications issued by the agents themselves) and focused in the establishment of the positions of characters, the identification of their articulation practices, the method applied in their actions and, especially, their opinions with regard to dominant practices and discourses on the use and appropriation of the land and its resources.

2.5.3. Subsystem III. Environmental heritage accounts and the variables and indicators of sustainable development

Environmental heritage accounts are a tool used to physically and in monetary terms quantify natural resources, through estimations of both the managing and the full use brought up by interactions among flora, fauna, soil, water, conservation of basins, conservation of the biosphere and landscape. Finding out the real costs and the necessary tasks to ensure a sustainable and integral use of resources will make it possible to set up the natural grounds for permanent utilizations, more so considering the industrial transformation of a constant eco-systemic supply. Then the estimation of Environmental Heritage accounts allows the basic knowledge for doing hundreds of projects with high possibilities to be implemented.

It must be noted that the aim is the sustainable use of all the resources in Latin America different areas. This is an urgent step to be taken because the agricultural border is advancing to include understudied territories that are markedly degrading as full use considerations are not being applied, with the consequence that market prices of natural resources do not reveal the existing riches and the land is undervalued, which will surely lead to errors when making decisions related to occupying the territory and, particularly, to changing the use of the land.

Environmental Heritage Accounts requires estimating the input-output matrix of natural resources and analyzing the metabolism of the production of raw materials and services, so that the productive sectors can operate thereafter.

MISREN: Matrix of inter- sectorial relationships among natural resources

This is a tool to record the interrelations of the natural system (ecozone), so as to take into account the implications of its productive management. It is integrated with the heritage accounts and its dynamics are similar to the economic input-output matrix, representing the pre-primary sector of economy. MISREN analyzes the integral cost of the sustainable natural resource reproduction. It gives the average cost for evaluating the environmental active environmental heritage accounts

estimate, their stock and flow MISREN was implemented in many places in Latin America, for example in Tafi del Valle, Tucumán, Argentina.

Environmental Heritage Accounts has been set out for an ecozone in Uruguay where Net Primary Productivity (NPA) and biodiversity data are available. Biomass distribution in the composition of flora and fauna will be estimated. These estimations, integrated to the results of the GDP, will make it possible to calculate the patrimonial value of the ecozone.

3. Case studies

3.1. Plantations and soy areas

As mentioned, these case studies integrate all the concepts discussed for the subsystems:

3.1.1. Case study of forest plantations

Forestation with rapidly growing species was implemented in the country as a result of pro-active policies that included subsidies and tax exemptions, among other benefits. Although there were immediate warnings about the possible social and environmental consequences of this kind of forestation ^[49], the prevailing cultural attitudes, as well as the significance of the interests at stake, for a long time prevented –in contrast with other countries- the outbreak of serious environmental conflicts that could not go beyond the protests from environmentalist non-government organizations and academics. However, as was the case in almost all the world, there were soon individual conflicts over the water resource between small famers and the forest development. The fact that the land value had a fivefold increase, or more, silenced the complaints raised by farmers' associations. In any case, it was clear that rural producers were displaced and impoverished, as shown both by research and the Agricultural Census. In Uruguay, on the other hand, farmers under the Water Law have started a conflict in the “Laguna de Rocha” basin. This lagoon is included in the national system of protected areas and the Ramsar Convention, and it is the place chosen for the case study.

The present proposal intends to analyze, in the period between the last census, the situation of small farmers in that area, the evolution of the conflict about the use of water and the presumed damage to biodiversity in this and neighboring areas affected by forestation, comparing the conflictive place with a similar one where no conflict has yet occurred.

As shown by various research studies, rural poverty is associated to ecosystems that are mostly fragile and usually subject to pressures that exceed their carrying capacity.

Taking the conceptual groundwork for an integral, sustainable use of the territory as a starting point, this case study will analyze the huge difference existing with the forest plantations. First, from a graded and comprehensive classification of environments in Uruguay, detailed maps of the potential distribution of the flora and fauna in those environments will be formulated as ground for an integral use of the natural resources in this study area. On those grounds, ecozones will be determined and, within them, the characteristics of rural poverty when, instead of that integral and sustainable use, forest plantations are implemented. Then, an initial estimation can be made of the carrying load that the ecosystems can stand with their present level of productivity, and of the improvement to be expected as a result of applying adequate management and conservation procedures. This will go together with a study of two cases of the input-output matrix of Natural Resources Inter-sector Relationships, (See 2.5.3).

3.1.2 Case studies of soy production

Soy production is widespread in Argentina and Latin America. It is the results of the huge increase in crop production during the Green Revolution. In the case of soy and other crops, technological innovation aimed at an increased domination over nature, that is to say, “the maximum growth possible”.

The characteristics of soy farming, the extended use of strong herbicides and pesticides, together with genetically modified seeds that are resistant to those chemicals, provoke an explosive advance of the agricultural border over the forest, with the subsequent destruction of the native biomes and the displacement of other activities such as farming and livestock, causing human migrations that are a factor in generating poverty. Soy cultivation represents all the features required to be a relevant example for our study. The lands used for the monoculture of soy, swamped with herbicides, undergo a significant degradation. Herbicides are carried by the runoff, affecting the fauna and the people.

Soy exports nowadays amount to approximately 25% of Argentina’s total exports, and to 80% of agricultural exports, covering approximately 20.000.000 hectares and it covers the 50% of all cultivated land. This process has reconfigured the traditional productive structure and caused new elite to emerge, associated to the traditional ones.

Reactions to this impact have been diverse. On the one hand, there are complaints coming from the circle of ecologists who work in conservation and emphasize the loss of natural ecosystems, the natural alteration of ecological processes and the disappearance of native species, mainly due to deforestation and drought.

The present boom of soy monoculture has had a series of negative impacts, both direct and indirect, which, seen as a whole lead us to conclude that the current agricultural model does not improve the people's quality of life. The relevance of this issue pertaining to environmental governance is reflected in a myriad of aspects:

- Soy culture is the number one or two (research will tell us its exact position) agricultural process in Latin America, radically transforming agricultural systems and strongly promoting the widening of what is called the "agricultural border".
- It has incorporated a kind of agriculture that is strongly dependent on technology and can almost fully do without traditional labor.
- It generates processes of environmental and human contamination (85000000 liters glyphosate, 2006/7)
- Foreign capital has highly increased dependency as regards both seed culture and technology.
- This process has not displaced the traditional elite but, by sharing its power, has transformed it. This gives opportunities for accumulation in the leasing fields, having a very reduced future potential.
- It replaces traditional cultures, causing deep alterations and greatly affecting dairy activities. This tendency is very difficult to revert, since it involves a long-traditional production.
- In Argentina, soy production is not only representative but also significant, as it amounts to 50% of crops.
- It has serious social effects on the population: small and medium-sized producers who lease their land are practically expelled from it. They are forced to move to the cities, which deteriorates their family relations, and are getting involved in high and middle class conflicts.
- There are important social movements that protest against soy cultivation because of its contaminating effects on the environment and the population, and defend ecosystems.

A study will be made of the cultivation of basic crops and their transformation into soy. These effects will be analyzed by means of the Environmental Heritage Accounting methodology, based on the natural systems that originated it, on the establishment of an estimation (with its costs and benefits), and on the way these systems have evolve without soy cultivation, to make comparisons.

The main social agents will be explored so as to characterize the "soy elite" (contribution to WP3) and address relevant issues. To explore the impact of transgenic soy monoculture in the territory, we will use a methodology that

compares the valorization in productive activities prior to soy culture, their probable evolution and the differential environmental effects in the ecological, the economic and the social domains. Three alternatives will be discussed:

- **Model 1.** Insertion of a traditional soy culture in a 500 hectares sub-basin, taking into account the environmental elements.
- **Model 2.** Agro-ecosystems consisting of grass, cattle, etc., and diversified cultures that are turned into the 500 hectares soy area,
- **Model 3.** Semi-xerophilous woodland, thinned out for soy growing

3.2. Other case studies

As mentioned (2.2 B), examples will be given of contradictions or integrations detected in the study of the Common Conceptual System.

4. Policies for the region

The case studies show policies that are general for all Latin American countries and studying them, in close interaction with all the WPs will result in recommendations for the entire region and beyond. Specific contributions have been made, and will continue to be made, to WP3 and WP8.

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