



FINAL CONFERENCE 'ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN' AND ENGOV PROJECT RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

By **Barbara Hogenboom**

The primary aim of ENGOV is to generate new knowledge on how environmental governance is shaped in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The project focuses on new developments and policies that enable or prevent the dual goal of ending poverty and protecting natural resources. Another important aim of ENGOV is to develop a more integrative analytical framework on environmental governance and natural resource use in LAC.

With the conference 'Environmental governance and justice in Latin America and the Caribbean', 10-12 February 2015, the ENGOV project has concluded.

ENGOV - 'Environmental Governance in Latin America and the Caribbean: Developing Frameworks for Sustainable and Equitable Natural Resource Use' - was a collaborative research project between Latin American and European researchers from ten universities, coordinated by CEDLA and funded by the European Union (FP7). The conference was hosted by the City of Knowledge Foundation in Panama and included various parallel sessions, a keynote speech by Edwin Castellanos (Universidad del Valle of Guatemala) on the challenges and opportunities for Latin America in the face of climate change, and a presentation by Guillermo Castro (City of Knowledge Foundation, Panama) on Panama's history of territorial organization and the environment.

This newsletter presents a summary of the conference as well as the most prominent results of the ENGOV project. More information on the event can be found at http://www.engov.eu/conferencia_vivo.php. For all ENGOV project results, you can continue visiting the project website: www.engov.eu.



This Project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement No.266710.



Participants at ENGOV Conference in Panama (photo: City of Knowledge Foundation)



Pre-conference field visit to waste water treatment plant (PTAR-MINSA) and their mangrove restoration project (photos: City of Knowledge Foundation and Leontien Cremers)

WEBSITE

More information on the partners, activities, results and publications of the project can be found at www.engov.eu



Keynote speech by Edwin Castellanos
(photos: City of Knowledge Foundation)

**KEYNOTE SPEECH:
'CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LATIN AMERICA IN THE
FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE', BY EDWIN CASTELLANOS**

By Mariel Aguilar Støen

On February 11, Edwin Castellanos, director of the Centre for Environmental and Biodiversity Studies of the University del Valle of Guatemala, delivered a keynote speech. His speech was based on the main results of the 5th Assessment Report on Climate Change from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), published in 2013, in the preparation of which Edwin Castellanos was actively involved. His presentation focused specifically on the consequences of climate change for Latin America.

The Latin American region contributes little to the emission of greenhouse gases, Castellanos showed, but the effects of the problem are felt more in some parts of this region (especially in Central America) than in other parts of the world, where the problem is generated. At regional and national level, in Latin America there is also inequality between those who contribute to the generation of greenhouse gas emissions and those suffering from the effects of climate change. Among current major impacts is the increase in extreme weather events with high economic costs, mainly for the primary sector. How to cope with this increasing vulnerability to extreme weather events is one of the main challenges faced in Latin America.

Climate change is also a water problem, but the region has abundant water resources, and the challenge is rather how to manage them. How to improve access to water for the poorest populations is work in progress. In urban areas, access to clean water and water treatment are important challenges, especially as urbanization is still ongoing. Climate change is contributing to the increase in the presence of disease vectors, which is costly for poor populations lacking access to good health care. Castellanos stressed that in this sense climate change is making the prevailing inequality in access to public health services in Latin America more evident. Decreasing biodiversity is also a tangible result of climate change. This may have implications for the possibilities of adaptation and mitigation to climate change, as it is narrowing the use of seeds and other elements of agro-biodiversity.

According to Dr. Castellanos, the first step towards adaptation to future climate change is to reduce vulnerability itself. Several examples show that there are potential synergies between development, adaptation and mitigation planning, which can help governments and local communities to allocate resources efficiently in designing strategies to reduce climate vulnerability. The upscaling of such actions at a continental level requires citizens and governments to take the challenge of a new governance model. Reducing inequality seems to be imperative to meet development goals, and to reduce vulnerabilities to climate change. Adaptation strategies addressing inequality must be truly intertwined in that new model of society.

ENGOV CONFERENCE: 'ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN'

By **Michiel Baud, Fabio de Castro, Leontien Cremers** and **Barbara Hogenboom**



Presentation by Prof. Guillermo Castro in Panama Debate (photo: City of Knowledge Foundation)

PANAMA DEBATE:

The conference started with a public session: 'Panama Debate', introducing the project and topic of Environmental Governance. Guillermo Castro, Vice-President of Research and Education, City of Knowledge Foundation, started by giving a historical overview of developments in Panama from a political ecology perspective, using the concept of 'transitismo' to show the changes that have taken place - and continue to take place - in the use of natural resources in the isthmus. He noted that in Panama there is currently no public debate on the effect on the aggregate level of projects in the country, giving as an example the rapidly increasing road construction initiatives in Panama. Manuel Zarate of the Panamanian National Strategic Front (Frente Estratégico Nacional) talked about water management in Panama. Finally, Joan Martínez-Alier of the Institute for Environmental Science and Technology, Barcelona, wrapped up the debate by shedding light on processes of environmental governance in Panama, highlighting the ideas of social metabolism, hydro-social water cycle and urban extractivism.

The Conference featured two modes of presentation: round tables with key actors, and academic sessions, in order to stimulate dialogue between academics and a variety of actors in the public sector, civil society (NGOs and social movements) and the private sector. Below, we give a short summary of these tables and sessions. More elaborate information and the presentations themselves can be found on the website www.engov.eu/conferencia_vivo.php.



Nature and city development: a view on Panama City from its Metropolitan Park (photo: Leontien Cremers)

ROUNDTABLES WITH KEY ACTORS:

Environmental governance in the Caribbean and Central America

This roundtable presented the specific environmental challenges faced by Central America. Different experiences were discussed. Two things stood out. Firstly, that in all Central American countries the water issue is of crucial importance. Due to poor management, pollution and unequal access are the most common problems. And secondly, that the region specifically suffers the consequences of climate change. In that context, it is remarkable that both international organizations like the IPCC and national governments are ignoring the consequences of climate change for the region.

Local solutions for environmental justice

The speakers addressed local strategies to overcome the hegemonic capitalist model of natural resource use. In the discussions, two key points were emphasized. First, the right to be different and the importance to recognize different images of nature and practices of natural resource access and use. Second, the homogenization of practices and relations leads not only to social injustices but also to the socio-environmental impoverishment that leads to vulnerabilities at local and global levels.



Session on Local solutions for environmental justice (photo: Fabio de Castro)



Anti-dam mobilization in the Chilean Patagonia (photo and presentation in roundtable on Environmental Justice: Gloria Baigorrotegui)

Environmental justice organizations: between initiative and criminalization

This roundtable touched on the struggles to ensure effective inclusion of local populations in decision-making processes. The discussions also addressed two key points: the mechanisms driving institutional innovations shaped by excluded groups to overcome the increasing pressure and violence; and the relevance of intermediary actors (experts, activists, media) and tools (maps, video, social media) and how they take part in the configuration of new and emerging resistance movements.

ACADEMIC SESSIONS:

Latin American socio-environmental thinking and conceptual debates

This session demonstrated the origins and development of Latin American environmental thinking. Started in the early 20th century, it developed rapidly after the 1960s. Although it was always connected to global debates on environmental issues, it has maintained its specific characteristics determined by the abundance of resources and the relatively low population density.



Session on Latin American socio-environmental thinking and conceptual debates (photo: City of Knowledge Foundation)

Food sovereignty/security, local knowledge and environmental governance

This session evolved around the question of what indigenous and peasant knowledges in Latin America contribute to food sovereignty and security, and to the reconfiguration of environmental governance. Results from studies in Mexico, Brazil and Chile point at a series of problems with government programs for food and farming. They often badly accommodate the wide variety of local needs and hardly take traditional practices into account. Furthermore, rather than being guided by knowledges, these programmes are often guided and limited by administrative and institutional logics.



A study on the conservation of creole maize in Mexico (photo and presentation in session Food Sovereignty: Jean Foyer)

Studying poverty and sustainable development

Society-nature relations and the relations between production, sustainable development and ending poverty and marginalization were at the core of this session. Experiences with the oil and mining sectors show that the environmental governance of these resources is very challenging, as it involves a number of different actors and interests. Simultaneously, development models based on extractive sectors have been quite rigid, and so have socio-environmental problems. Improving the quality of life requires integrated science and development, based on the potential and protection of both natural and human resources.



Conference program (photo: City of Knowledge Foundation)

Impact of new regimes, elites and institutions on environmental politics

This final session discussed the changing composition of Latin American elites. It stressed the agrarian roots of most Latin American elites, which continue until today. However, elite families in Central America have diversified enormously and are now active in many other sectors of society. In the process, they have turned their enterprises into transnational corporations. In Ecuador, the new Rafael Correa administration continues to have strong links with agrarian interests, which led to a rejection of a bill against GMO (genetically modified organisms) crops in 2013. In all cases presented, elites tried to bring about agricultural modernization, which is considered much more important than environmental issues or better labor conditions. The session made it clear that the study of environmental governance should also focus on agrarian issues.

Presentation: 'The return of the rentier State and real forms of environmental governance'

In this presentation, Pablo Andrade (UASB) analyzed the impact of the commodity boom on environmental governance. On the one hand, resource rents have allowed the state to again take on the role of provider of social services. On the other hand, expanded state control has also limited more pluralist, democratic and bottom-up forms of environmental governance.



Roundtable 'Knowledge Production and Environmental Governance' (photo: City of Knowledge Foundation)

Roundtable: 'Knowledge Production and Environmental Governance in Latin America and Europe: Transatlantic Interdependencies and (Mis)Understandings'

As a closing activity, this roundtable dealt with the connections between socio-environmental challenges in Latin America and Europe, and the ways in which academics, social groups, NGOs, and public and private sector agencies from both regions deal with these transatlantic interdependencies. Key themes were discussed by a number of representatives from the EN-GOV project but also other bi-regional and international projects, programs and organizations.

To the question of how to better respond to the global race for resources and the related environmental and social pressures, the panel and the audience mentioned the inclusion of new research themes, but also the need for a better systematization and use of existing research outcomes. Another point for the discussion concerned how to create more room for preserving and initiating local sustainable practices that go against dominant global production, consumption and conservation patterns, and bring calls for equality, justice and democracy into projects and policies for environmental studies and protection. Finally, the participants reflected on future possibilities for cooperation, indicating some important topics such as 'Social technologies' and the possibilities to work in networks instead of time-limited projects.

FINAL RESULTS ENGOV PROJECT:



Gobernanza Ambiental en América Latina

Coordinators: F. de Castro, B. Hogenboom and M. Baud

1st edition, Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2015

The ENGOV book '*Gobernanza Ambiental en América Latina*', written by the key researchers of the project, studies the nature of contemporary environmental governance in Latin America and the possibilities for more sustainability and socio-environmental justice. The book makes a distinction between the historical and current social and economic context in which the use of nature takes place. Important contemporary political changes in environmental governance are discussed, and new initiatives are analyzed.

The book will be available online and in print soon and will also be issued in Portuguese and in English (with Palgrave editors).



Environmental Politics in Latin America: Elite dynamics, the left tide and sustainable development

Editors: Benedicte Bull and Mariel Aguilar-Støen of the Centre for Development and the Environment of the University of Oslo

Published by Routledge. See website:

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9781138790261/>

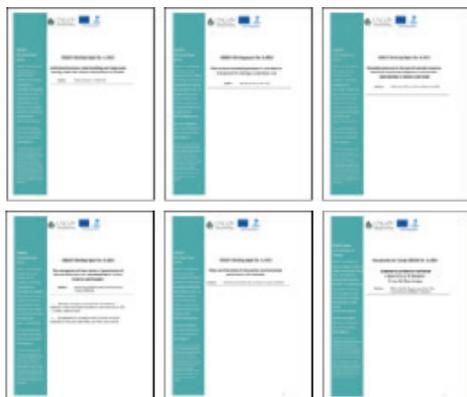
For more books and other publications related to the ENGOV project, please visit the

ENGOV Virtual Library:

COLLECTION SOCIETY, POLITICS AND NATURE

Society, Politics and Nature is a collection of publications on the possibilities and obstacles for achieving sustainability, social justice and local development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Central topics are the social, economic, political, cultural and historical dimensions of natural resource use, and the impact of interactions between local, national and international actors on the environment.

See: http://www.engov.eu/biblioteca_en.html



ENGOV Working Paper Series

The ENGOV Working Paper Series serves to communicate the results of ENGOV research, with the aim to stimulate the exchange of ideas and debate at different levels. The Series covers a wide range of environmental governance related subjects in different parts of the region. See: <http://www.engov.eu/en/project-reports.html>



ENGOV Policy Briefs

ENGOV's Policy briefs aim at introducing a number of key policy-relevant findings from the ENGOV project. These concise documents explain their subject in straightforward language and recommend a course of action to those who make and carry out environmental policies in Europe and Latin America.

See: <http://www.engov.eu/en/policy-briefs.html>

ENGOV Opinion Articles

The ENGOV researchers did not only publish articles for a scientific audience. They also published articles in newspapers and magazines concerning their research efforts and results. In these articles, the researchers give their ideas on different subjects, mostly in their own countries and regions and occasionally in their mother language, in order to reach the local audience. Here you can find the opinion articles that have been published by ENGOV participants: <http://www.engov.eu/en/opinion-articles.html>

ENGOV Databases

The ENGOV project has created two open access databases:

- **Inventario de bases de datos sobre conflictos de Justicia ambiental en América Latina y el Caribe (Environmental Justice Conflicts databases)**
- **Database building and exchanging knowledges on natural resources**

See: http://www.engov.eu/bd_justicia_ambiental_en.php

For all ENGOV output, including publications, please visit: www.engov.eu