ACHIEVING ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL POLICY INTEGRATION IN THE LATIN AMERICAN CONTEXT

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Short paper prepared for the UN meeting (28-29.01.15) on ‘Policy Integration in Government Administration in Pursuit of the SDGs’
1. Introduction
2. Policy integration
3. The Latin American context
4. Examples of policy integration in Latin America
5. Recommendations:
   - Support the development of a new political culture
   - Create groups of ‘nexus thinkers’
   - Use existing opportunities to integrate environmental and social policy
   - Encourage ‘ecosufficiency’ and nurture rural/urban linkages
   - Support regional initiatives
6. Conclusion
Sustainability science: influencing human behaviour

- Anthropology is not prescriptive or normative.
- Anthropology is very self conscious of its own epistemological biases.
- Values (and power) matter in sustainability debates.
- Bent Flyvbjerg (SBS, Oxford University): to matter, social science must become phronetic.
Whose Values Matter?

- Biophysical demand greater for poor, market demand greater for rich
- One person, one vote or one dollar, one vote?
- Or should we weight votes by need?

(Joshua Farley)
Definitions of Justice

- Procedural Justice
- Just Deserts
- Contextual justice/just outcomes
- Is market allocation just for any of these?

(Joshua Farley)
Anthropology’s approach

- The approach is open-ended & interpretative, not based on hypothesis testing, modeling, or normative frameworks.
- Fieldwork based > ethnography
  - Learning by ‘being there’: what people say (their own representation of their social reality) is our primary source of data; that is what we seek to understand.
  - Learning the vernacular languages, and translate them without distorting the meanings.
- Case study and the importance of comparative analysis of case studies.
- Points of view and narrative (story telling).
Policy integration

- Relates to scientific search for systemic approaches to human environmental relationships
- Policies for systems: how to make them coherent vertically and horizontally?
- Integration means many different things
- EPI/CPI: how to achieve a whole-of-government activity?
- What is gained by looking empirically at 35 years of attempts to implement SD policies
Policy integration in the Latin American context

- Institutional solutions emerge from internal historical processes of trial and error, and political struggles.
- Latin America as a region:
  - Colonial legacies
  - History of trade relations (natural resources)
  - Entrenched inequalities
  - Diverse forms of multiculturalism
- These render coordination, regulation and long-term planning through state-based governance challenging > creative solutions.
Think PI outside the box
Encourage the development of a new political culture

- Many LAm countries have:
  - established formal environmental institutions
  - passed environmental laws
  - claimed SD as core value
  - have democratic, value-oriented debates about SD (led by prominent public intellectuals)

- These debates are crucial for the P.I. process (see ECLAC’s thinking on compacts >> trust, participation, keep coordination alive, conflict not necessarily negative!)
The role of ‘nexus’ thinkers

- ESPA (ecosystem services for poverty alleviation)
- Moving from BAU (business as usual) to SEM (sustainable ecosystem management) pathway
- How this requires meeting of like-minded policy makers: establish groups of ‘nexus thinkers’ at various administrative levels
Existing opportunities for EPI

- Policy design: PES >> ECCTs (environmental conditional cash transfers) and PESPA (payments for ecosystem services and poverty alleviation)
- Better solution: scheme integration at the ground level.
  - Example: research on PES and CCT interactions in Chiapas, Mexico >> codesign the new system with the beneficiaries
Encourage ‘eco-efficiency’...

- Exs of industrial ‘eco-efficiency’
  - based on wasteful sourcing at entry point (wood processing, Ecuador)
  - creating unemployment and not looking at long term land use (bioethanol, state of S. Paulo, Brazil)
... & Nurture rural/urban linkages

- Urban SD challenges best analyzed where majority people live (in small and medium, *not* in megacities)
- Agenda 21 > wealth of experience with green municipalities
- Rural/urban linkages at various scale (ex. State of Minas Gerais/ bioethanol in state of S. Paulo)
How to best support regional initiatives?

- Exist successful examples of sub-national initiatives
  - (ex in state of Amazonas, Brazil)
- Why regional initiatives sometimes unsuccessful or failing in EPI terms?
  - Lake Titicaca
  - IIRSA
- In contexts of institutional weakness, redundancy may help implement environmental regulations. These are better internalized when there are multiple agencies of control and accountability (Lake Titicaca)
IRRSA’s CRITIQUES

- Infrastructure geared to export markets, rather than to regional integration: extractivism and path dependency (more transport & more energy production > more export of I resources, no/little development of industrial products or services)

- Heated debate in Brazil. Belo Monte dam (Altamira) controversy a national issue. NOT a question of foreign vs national interests:
  - Indigenous rights (territories, livelihoods, displacement)
  - Obsolete technology
  - poor C&B ratio (megaproject analysis, Flyvbjerg’s team, SBS)
  - Alternatives to produce needed energy exist
  - Alternative ‘green’ development based on a different calculation/ modelling/ representation of nature’s wealth on the table but not taken into consideration
Kate Raworth’s doughnut economics (OXFAM)