

An integrated approach to changing extractivism

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Pedro Nel Gomez, Colombia
(Anori, 1899 - Medellín, 1984)
*El problema del petróleo y la
energía*, 1936

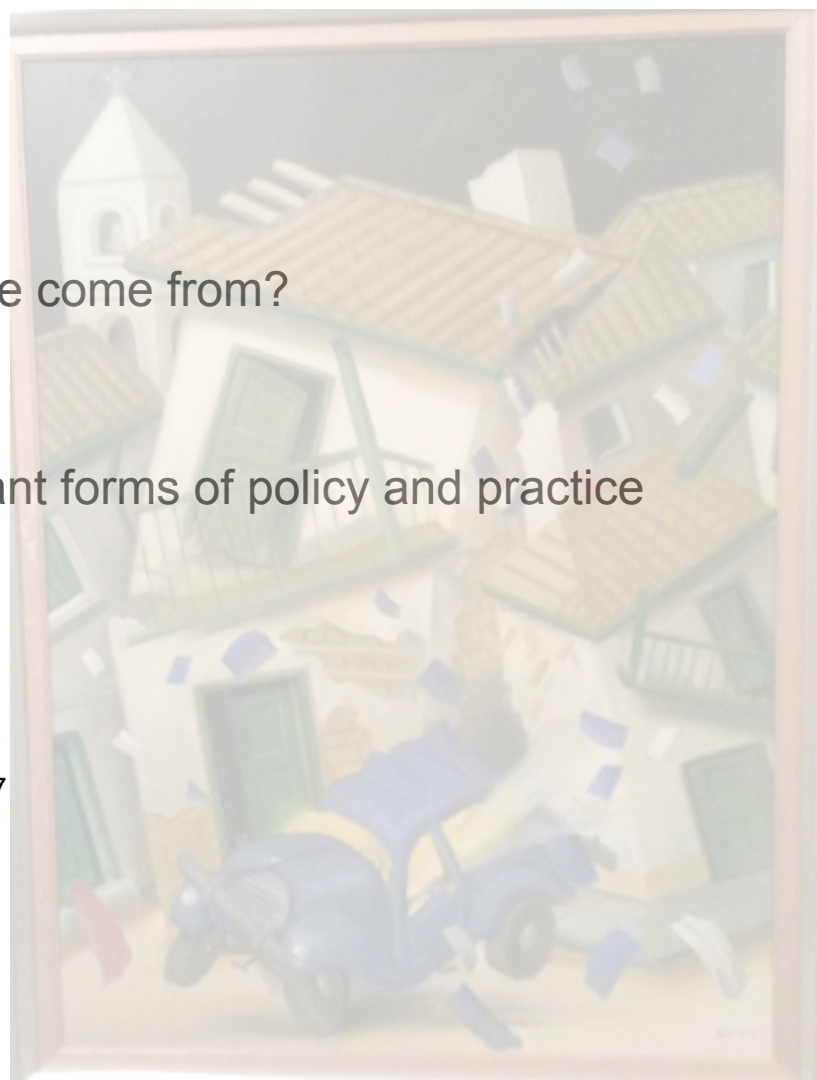
Outline

1. Where does change in policy and/or practice come from?
2. Horizontal relations
3. Institutional/contextual embeddedness
4. An integrated approach to changing dominant forms of policy and practice
5. Select Bibliography
6. Thank you

Colombia

Antonio Caro
Bogotá, Colombia
Colombia Coca-Cola, 2007

Fernando Botero
(Medellin, 1932)
Carrobomba, 1999




1. Where does policy/practice change come from?

- + the myth that research automatically leads to policy/practice change; eg. climate change research has yet to develop serious policy responses
- + in practice, the policy framework perpetuates basic assumptions built into the nation-state structure:
 - + top down government rather decentralized, self-governing approach
 - + each policy sits isolated in its own Ministry silo, where arising contradictions are used to maintain dominant power relations, rather than a holistic or integrated approach
- + rise of the new extractivism, seeking a social license to further relations of domination under globalized capitalism
 - + undermining the nation-state's ability to develop its own policies and practices
 - + annexing and reducing public infrastructure and institutions to serving private interests

⇒ Strictly speaking, *change will not come from the top*

2. Horizontal relations

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- + horizontal relations between diverse social struggles across the Americas is a critical area for study
 - + different contexts affected by top-down policy within the new extractivist development model
 - + what forms of collective resistance are pushing for policy/practice change?
 - + my action-research:
 - + a group of young scholars and activists from Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia working on themes of environment and health, with support from Antipode and EkoSante
 - + a self-organized workshop in Medellin, Colombia, August 18-26 (2015) exploring our roles in democratizing north-south extractive relations
 - + key informant interviews with social movement organizers in Colombia and Canada

3. Institutional/contextual embeddedness

Emerging challenges and learning:

- + building relationships between diverse experiences, across different geographies of capital
- + understanding each other's institutional position and identity possibilities
- + organizing our own group process, developing a parallel space to the official channels
- + publicizing ourselves, opening space for public debate
- + making time as part of our career development
- + managing different expectations, pressures, and measures of success
- + connecting with other groups and past struggles in terms of strategies for solidarity
- + theorizing ecological consciousness in a local/global integrated context
- + exploiting our differences as a way of producing our own knowledge

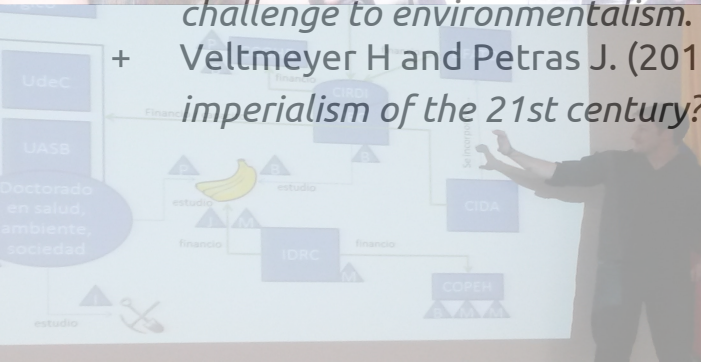
⇒ How to take seriously our different institutional/contextual embeddedness **AND** help each other supersede this through collective intervention?

4. Integrated approach to policy/practice change

- + Change comes from re-organizing the relationship between top-down and bottom-up processes, *it is necessarily an integrated approach*
 - + Strengthening horizontal relations between social justice struggles can help reclaim a new public role for policy and practice
 - + Groundwork for future victories:
 - + (re)politicizing ourselves through collective action
 - + (re)defining leadership through self-organizing efforts
 - + (re)connecting different struggles in person and online
- ⇒ towards a collective approach to public knowledge in the network society

5. Select Bibliography

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6. Thank you for your support

The workshop entitled, “**The Role of Activists and Academics in Addressing Health and Environmental Issues Associated with Extractive Industries in Latin America and Canada**” took place in Medellin (Colombia), August 18-26, 2015. It was made possible with support from an International Workshop Award from the Antipode Foundation, as well as two Internship Awards from the EkoSante Collaboration:

<http://antipodefoundation.org/international-workshop-awards/201415-recipients/iwa-1415-feagan/>

<http://ekosante.uqam.ca/en/>

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