



<http://dx.doi.org/10.21527/2317-5389.2017.9.36-64>

# Ideological Challenge For Environmental Governance In Latin America: The Case Of Chile And The Copper Mining Industry<sup>1</sup>

---

## ***Fernando Estenssoro***

Corresponding author. PhD in American Studies. Institute of Advanced Studies of Universidad de Santiago de Chile (USACH ). Address: Román Díaz 89, Providencia, Santiago, Chile. Postal code, 750618. Phone: (56-2) 27181364. fernando.estenssoro@usach.cl

---

## ***Cristian Parker***

Co-Author. PhD in Sociology, Institute of Advanced Studies of Universidad de Santiago de Chile (USACH ). Address: Román Díaz 89, Providencia, Santiago, Chile. Postal code, 750618. Phone: (56-2) 27181351. cristian.parker@usach.cl

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper was supported by Engov Research Project: “Environmental Governance in Latin America and the Caribbean: Developing Frameworks for Sustainable and Equitable Use of Natural Resources (Engov)” is funded by the European Commission (FP7); and Conicyt Chile, by Fondecyt Project N° 1150569: Perspectivas Latinoamericanas en el Debate Ambiental Mundial entre 1992 y 2012. Los casos de Chile, Ecuador y Brasil. Un estudio de historia de las ideas políticas del tiempo presente en el espacio de la política mundial e internacional.

## ***Gloria Baigorrotegui***

---

Co-Author. PhD in Philosophy. Institute of Advanced Studies of Universidad de Santiago de Chile (USACH ).  
Address: Román Díaz 89, Providencia, Santiago, Chile.  
Postal code, 750618. Phone: (56-2) 27181363. gloria.baigorrotegui@usach.cl

### **Abstract**

This paper analyzes the main results of a research on environmental governance in Latin America (Engov Project), held in Chile in relation to copper mining. Different sectors of economic and political elites of the country, as well as actors of civil society linked to the environmental movement were interviewed. The objective was to ascertain their level of knowledge and perceptions of global environmental issues and whether it was possible to perform an extractive activity within the parameters of sustainable development. Results were compared with those of previous studies and given that all social actors show a high and growing level of environmental awareness, it is proposed that ideology is a relevant variable to consider in terms of creating socio-environmental conflicts. Particularly among those who believe that it is feasible to achieve increasing levels of environmental and social sustainability in mining activity, facing those who absolutely reject this possibility.

**Keywords:** Environmental Governance. Chile. Copper mining. Extractivism. Neoliberalism.

### **Desafio Ideológico para a Governança Ambiental na América Latina: O Caso do Chile e a Indústria de Mineração de Cobre**

#### **Resumo**

Este artigo analisa os principais resultados de uma pesquisa sobre governança ambiental na América Latina (Projeto Engov), realizada no Chile em relação à mineração de cobre. Foram entrevistados diferentes setores das elites econômicas e políticas do país, bem como atores da sociedade civil ligados ao movimento ambientalista. O objetivo era verificar seu grau de conhecimento e percepção de questões ambientais globais e se era possível realizar uma atividade extrativa dentro dos parâmetros de desenvolvimento sustentável. Os resultados foram comparados com os de estudos anteriores e, dado que todos os atores sociais mostram um nível elevado e crescente de consciência ambiental, propõe-se que a ideologia seja uma variável relevante a considerar em termos de criação de conflitos socioambientais, particularmente entre aqueles que acreditam que é possível alcançar níveis crescentes de sustentabilidade ambiental e social na atividade de mineração, enfrentando os que absolutamente rejeitam esta possibilidade.

**Palavras-chave:** Governança ambiental. Chile. Mineração de cobre. Extrativismo. Neoliberalismo.

#### **Sumário**

1 Introduction. 2 Overview of the Study Results in Chile. 3 The Ideological Variable: Detractors and Supporters of the Neo-Liberal Capitalist Economic Model. 4 The Ideological Variable in the Chilean Case of the Nineties. 5 Conclusion. 6 References.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In contemporary political administration the idea of governance has become a cornerstone concept for the democratic development of our societies. Thus, if we accept the assumption that it is no longer possible to achieve governance of a nation by the mere action of the government and State institutions, the involvement of other parties is necessary, as are those that make up civil society and the business world, on the basis of an increased horizontal relationship between them (PIÑEIRO, 2004; ECKERBERG; JOAS, 2004; PRATS; CATALÀ, 2005; CALAMÉ, 2009; TREVIÑO, 2011). For this reason, the concept of governance is being applied to the various activities that occupy the political decision making process. For example, when we talk about environmental governance we see it as the ability to establish joint cooperation agreements between all the parties and actors involved in environmental issues both at the level of the Nation-State as well as at the international level, where the relationship of interdependence between the local and the global is continually growing (SPETH, 2002; BULKELEY; MOL, 2003; PATERSON; HUMPHREYS; PETTIFORD, 2003; VOGLER, 2005; LEMOS; AGRAWAL, 2006).

In this latter sense, in Latin America (LA) the issue of achieving environmental governance is an area of increasing interest in political studies, among other reasons, because when the number of socio-environmental conflicts is reviewed in this part of the world, we see that the trend is growing. For example, according to the Global Atlas of Environmental Justice in the World (Agja, for its name in Spanish), carried out by the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology of Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona (UAB), 7 out of the 13 countries with environmental conflicts are in Latin America (ATLAS..., 2014).

Chile is certainly not an exception because, as a developing country, it orients its economic growth under the principles of a social market economy, fully open to the global market, where the foundation of its

growth lies in the exports of natural resources or *commodities* with very low added value. This is a situation that, as has been frequently highlighted, generates permanent environmental stress (SUNKEL, 1996).

This tension is particularly important in the copper mining industry, given its role as the country's main economic activity, to the point that it has been stated that "copper is Chile's salary"<sup>2</sup> and, as it is well known, mining is highly stressful for the environment. This is the case not only due to its extractive nature, but also to the high demand it places on water resources and energy (PARKER; BAIGORROTEGI; ESTENSSORO, 2014; ESTENSSORO, 2009). For these reasons it has been noted that both in Chile and in the rest of LA, the large export-oriented mining industry, has for a long while been "in the eye of the storm" of environmental conflicts (SVAMPA; BOTTARO, ÁLVAREZ, 2010).

Thus, if the major environmental conflicts in Chile are analyzed, we note that most of them are related to mining, particularly copper. For example, of a total of 97 major socio-environmental conflicts listed in the cadastre by the National Human Rights Institute (INDH, for its name in Spanish) between January 2010 and June 2012, twenty-five of them (26%) were mining conflicts, and of these, twelve were related to copper mining. Furthermore, of this total of 97 conflicts, some twenty-four (25%) corresponded to thermo-electric projects, mainly devoted to deliver energy to the mines (INSTITUTO..., 2012). In other words, over 50% of the conflicts were related to mining.

Notwithstanding, as many studies point out, including Eclac, in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) environmental awareness and action to achieve sustainable development are on the rise. This is the case

---

<sup>2</sup> With just 0.3% of the world population, Chile is the largest copper producer in the world with 34% of the total production. In addition to ranking as #1 in copper reserves with 24% of the global total, being also the producer of other important mineral resources (MORANDE, 2012; GONZALEZ LARRAÍN, 2011).

both, within the civil society, as well as among the economic, political, and decision-making elites, as evidenced by the steady increase of environmental indicators in governmental public policies, especially since the nineties in the twentieth century onwards, and further accentuated in the 2000s (QUIROGA MARTÍNEZ, 2007).

Therefore, it appears that it is not because of lack of awareness on the importance of environmental issues for sustaining life on the planet, or the clash between those who have a clear consciousness of the dangers of environmental crisis society against those who do not have it. This is not what would explain the increase of environmental conflicts in Latin America in general and in Chile in particular. In other words, there are no simplistic answers that would explain the increasing environmental conflicts in this part of the world. On the contrary, it is clear that the phenomenon we face is enrooted in a larger and more complex situation, encouraging new and deeper studies on this issue.

Indeed, this article is an aspect of the result of the research developed by the Chilean team of the international project about environmental governance known as Engov. It specifically refers to the analysis of socio-environmental conflicts and problems that affect the environmental governance in Chile, centered on conflicts associated with copper mining. This study focused on various sectors of economic and political elites in the country, as well as between parties and actors of the civil society linked to the environmental movement. It was designed to gather information on their level of knowledge and awareness of the importance of global environmental problems such as climate change, and what was meant by environmentally sustainable mining activity and whether extractive activity would be possible within the parameters of sustainable development.

Overall, as detailed below, a similar discourse was observed in all of those who were interviewed, showing sensitivity to environmental issues, a good knowledge on the subject of climate change and the need to over-

come this threat. All of them were also explicitly conscious of the need to address the negative environmental impacts of mining. Therefore, on the one hand, the study confirmed a positive trend of increasing participation and presence of environmental issues among political and economic elites, policy makers and civil society actors. However, on the other hand, as this article intends to ascertain, it left on the open the need to move on assumptions that emphasize the ideological factor as one of the important variables that make up the complex equation of environmental conflicts. Particularly, it is important to consider the greater or lesser degree of closeness that actors have in regards to the environmental sustainability of the dominant economic model in Chile, and which could also be extrapolated to the rest of the LA.

## **2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY RESULTS IN CHILE**

The study of the Chile-Engov Chapter, focused on social, economic and political actors that interact and are directly related to the exploitation of copper mining, either positively, all those who benefit and promote this activity as well as negative, those who suffer the consequences and negative-environmental impacts. These were defined as “strategic actors” because, through their actions and perspectives, they influence public policy related to both the productive economic phenomenon of copper mining, as much as its social and environmental dimensions. They are also in general integrated into a recurring group of actors who are confronted in environmental conflicts related to mining, with platforms and citizen networks, which have been making visible the need for local participation in the challenges of the Chilean environmental governance (DELGADO; BACHMANN; OÑATE, 2007; PARKER; BAIGORROTEGUI; ESTENSORO, 2014).

Thus, a series of interviews were conducted with prominent businesspeople linked to copper mining (National Mining Society, Sonami, for its name in Spanish); senior managers of the National Copper Mining Corporation (Codelco, for its name in Spanish); senior executives of multinational copper companies (Anglo American); leaders of the various parties in the political system, parliamentarians and heads of the Committees on Environment, Mining and Energy of the National Congress; senior government officials and experts working in specialized branches in the study and projection of copper mining (Cochilco, for its name in Spanish); academic experts; as well as leaders and representatives of the Chilean environmental movement and NGO directors aiming at denouncing the environmental impact of mining activity and supporting those communities that are directly affected by this activity.

Through discourse analysis the search was focused around the rebuilding of their social representations on the global environmental crisis in general, as well as on the environmental impact of mining activity in the copper mining industry, especially on issues relating to the consumption of water and energy. Furthermore, the interviews also sought to gather their views on the environmental sustainability of the country's economic model (Ibid.).

Interestingly, not only the discourse of those who are determined environmentalists, but also the discourse of those representatives of the economic and political elites that support and promote mining, both expressed favourable attitudes towards environmental issues. They all revealed a good understanding of the environmental crisis resulting from the global climate-change problem. Likewise, all demonstrated an awareness of the serious environmental impact that the mineral extraction activity represents, and the need to encourage increasing mitigation measures. In this sense, the findings of this study agree with previous findings

in the framework of other similar studies aimed at deepening the level of environmental awareness of the political and economic elites, as well as that of different social groups in Chile (PARKER, 2011, 2014; PARKER; MUÑOZ, 2012; PARKER; LETELIER; MUÑOZ, 2013).

The analysis indicated that these “strategic actors” in general terms share a common perception that renders important the need for environmental protection and to establish harmonious relations between humankind and nature. However, there were significant differences when they were asked about environmental sustainability or whether it is possible to achieve sustainable development on the basis of the economic and developmental model which has been used in Chile for more than 30 years, known as the “Chilean Neoliberal Economic Model”.<sup>3</sup>

In this regard, two major views emerged: a) On the one hand are those who believe that it is feasible to achieve environmentally sustainable development, protect the environment and achieve a harmonious human-nature relationship on the basis of a model of economic growth open to the market and largely depending on the exploitation of natural resources and the export of commodities such as copper mining; b) On the other hand, those who are strongly critical of the economic model and the inability to raise an environmentally sustainable extractive model, whether in the framework of an open-market model, such as the Chilean case, or a protectionist model with strong State involvement (Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina, Brazil), and they would, therefore, advocated the need for radically changing it.

---

<sup>3</sup> It is identified as the experience resulting from a “transition from a highly centralized economy to a free-market economy” implemented under the military dictatorship. The business model then conceived “had its core in productive enterprises that were consolidated and financially benefited from a macroeconomic policy that privileged the growth of the trade sectors, primarily commodity exporters” (MUÑOZ GOMÁ, 1995, p. 46-47).



Thus, the various social actors interviewed were asked their views on the following statement: “in the context of my country’s needs, *sustainable development* would be a model of economic growth with measures to mitigate the negative environmental and social impact”. In this regard, in the study for the Chilean case a clear majority indicated “strongly agree” (29%), or “agree” (42%), and a minority stated that they “disagree” (17%) or that they “strongly disagree” (12%) (PARKER; BAIGORROTEGUI; ESTENSSORO, 2014).

### a) *Those Who Agree*

The “strongly agree” and “agree” opinions came mostly from business people, as well as senior public and Government officials, in addition to politicians and parliamentarians related to both the political parties on the right, and the center and center-left; on the other hand, the opinions of those who “disagree” and “strongly disagree” were expressed by representatives of the environmentalist world, NGOs and some experts with higher levels of university education.

Indeed, among the most frequent opinions, different nuances were found regarding the depth and speed with which environmental protection measures in mining activity should be implemented. The business sector emphasized that the limit for the remedial and preventive measures of environmental damage, will always have to do with how profitable the activity is. However, there is general agreement in seeing the environmental issue as an integral part and/or incorporated into the economic model of market and commodity exporter. All those interviewed (both public and private) agreed on the need for progressing towards an “environmentally responsible mining” (MINEROS, 2012), favoring water recycling and developing measures to increase energy efficiency and incorporate the use of clean energy (eolic, photovoltaic, etc.), as a supplementary measure (PARKER; BAIGORROTEGUI; ESTENSSORO, 2014).

The large public and private mining companies that were consulted, as well as SONAMI, have an Environment Management body as part of their executive staff. All these actors highlight the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) discourse, understood as the new way to manage and do business, in which the company ensures that its operations are sustainable at the economic, social and environmental levels (YÜKSEL MERMÖD; IDOWU, 2014; REYNO MÖMBERG, 2006). They also note that with regard to CSR, major transnational copper corporations operating in the country, such as the case of Anglo American, have developed more stringent domestic environmental laws and national legislation. This, among other reasons, because they must meet the requirements of their headquarters, located in the First World, which have far more advanced environmental regulations than those existing in developing countries (PARKER; BAIGORROTEGUI; ESTENSSORO, 2014).

### **b) *Those Who Disagree***

The discourse that critically looks at the extractive activity of copper mining is mainly coming from representatives of a varied socio-environmental world, including NGOs, and several experts in economic and environmental issues, some of them politicians. For them, it is not possible to achieve the development of LA in countries with extractive economies guided exclusively by market criteria. They reject traditional theories that seek to reconcile economic growth and sustainable development, stressing the need for a re-conceptualization of the very concept of development and, therefore, a radical rethinking of the economic variables to consider.

Facing *extractivism*<sup>4</sup> and the predominant market criteria, they will favour the concept of environmental justice or environmental social rights, noting that society's most disadvantaged groups, whether they be ethnic minorities or those from low-income sectors, are the most exposed to environmental problems and risks. Moreover, these groups do not either benefit equitably from the positive implications of the implemented public policies and environmental regulations. Therefore, they embrace the concept of environmental justice, with the understanding that it purports that all sectors of society should have equal protection from environmental hazards, as well as on issues of health and quality of life, supporting the right for all to live in a healthy environment, regardless of their social or ethnic background (ARRIAGA LEGARDA; PARDO BUENDÍA, 2011; SCHLOSBERG; CARRUTHERS, 2010; KÜTTING, 2004; DOBSON, 1998). In this sense, they share the belief that environmental justice is difficult to reach in societies that are characterized by consumer values and – furthermore- by *extractivism* (PARKER; BAIGORROTEGUI; ESTENSSORO, 2014).

For these reasons, they either oppose those who advocate environmental sustainability within the framework of the dominant neoliberal model in Chile, or the idea that it is possible, via progressive reforms and technological upgrades, to achieve increasing levels of environmental sustainability. It is therefore much closer to approaches that deal with more complex phenomena such as climate change and the global environmental crisis, supporting the idea of guiding the development of society on the principle of economic de-growth, as stated by Serge Latouche (2009) in Europe, as well as Latin American approaches that seek to establish *post-*

---

<sup>4</sup> Extractivism is understood as “those activities that remove large amounts of natural resources that are not processed (or that are so but narrowly), mainly for export. Extractivism is not limited to mineral or oil. For example, monoculture agriculture is also considered *extractivism* (ACOSTA, 2012, p. 85).

*-extractivist* societies, as per the thoughts of Gudynas Eduardo (2012), and Maristella Svampa (2012b), among others (PARKER; BAIGORROTEGUI; ESTENSSORO, 2014).

### **3 THE IDEOLOGICAL VARIABLE: Detractors and Supporters of the Neo-Liberal Capitalist Economic Model**

The significant differences found around what we call the environmental viability of the Chilean economic model, indicate that an important aspect at the root of environmental conflicts are the different perspectives of the different social stakeholders about what constitutes a desirable society in which they could aspire to live, and how, what are the steps, to reach or approach that desirable society. Therefore, ideological factors must be taken into account when explaining the rise of environmental conflicts in Chile and throughout LA, coinciding with Yearley, stating that “while the ecological threat is physical, environmental challenges take an ideological form (...) social and political forces have played an important role in preparing the way and shaping responses to ecological issues” (YEARLEY, 1997, p. 505).

For example, in LA a significant body of opinion among those who defend the environmental cause share the ideas of those theorists who believe that the global hegemony of neoliberal economic order, “remotely controlled” by large transnational corporations, is ultimately leading the planet and human society to an environmental collapse (STRANGE, 2001; FALK, 2002; MARIN; JIMÉNEZ; GRZYBPWSKI, 2011). This hegemonic neoliberal economic model still provides the peripheral sectors a subordinate role in the global economy, assigning them the task of providing natural resources and raw materials to those centers that demand these resources to fuel their manufacturing industries. Thus, in this fashion, it continues to consolidate in LA an economic system of capitalist accu-

mulation with a mono-productive and extractive character, which began over 500 years ago with the conquest and colonization of America and which, in the current era of globalization, is known as *neo-extractivism*. This global hegemonic model, led by transnational capitalism, keeps peripheral sectors under the over-exploitation of their natural resources beyond the ecological regeneration capacity of ecosystems that generate them (SVAMPA, 2012a; ACOSTA, 2012). In addition, the governments of LA in their ongoing quest to increase its revenue through the export of natural resources, are pursuing policies that de-structure and redirect the use and management of lands, expelling communities from their lands and forcing them out of their traditional ways of life, impoverishing people, encouraging the plundering of their land and stimulating and increasing the destruction of nature and biodiversity. In turn, Latin American political elites both, from the right, left and/or center-left become accomplices of transnational corporations, because by means of controlling the political system and the State, they agree to maintain this economic-developmental extractive and predatory model (LEFF, 2003; PORTO-GONÇALVES, 2006; MARTINEZ-ALIER, 2009; MARIN, JIMÉNEZ, GRZYBOWSKI, 2011; SVAMPA, 2012a).

A consequence of this model, as per these authors, would be the explosion of environmental conflicts, whether of indigenous, peasant and/or settlers, in defense of their communities and ways of life, coming into conflict with the greedy interests of multinationals and their local allies. The same scenario would also explain the civil mobilizations aimed at the defense of natural resources, biodiversity, the environment and quality of life. All these players would, generally, constitute the Latin American environmental movement. It is a diverse and pluralistic movement, but united in their opposition to a development style that is based on a set of consumer values and which forces this region of the world to *extractivism*

and, therefore call the capitalist model to overcome the so called neo-liberalism as it applies in this region (SVAMPA, 2012b; SANTANA COVA, 2005; LEFF, 2003, 2005).

Other authors, such as Joan Martinez Alier, have pointed out that in order to understand the high level of environmental conflicts in Latin America (and other Third World countries), we must consider the existence of an “environmentalism of the poor”, that is a social movement that is typical of the poorest and most disadvantaged sectors of the population who relate their social struggles with their very need for survival, for which they must confront the interests of transnational corporations and/or those of their own States, that try to pillage their natural resources that are necessary for their livelihood, in order to industrially exploit them and place them in the global market place. Thus, the environmentalism of the poor refers to conflicts caused by economic growth and social inequality, where the negative effects on the environment by extraction of resources and evacuation of wastes are suffered and paid by socially marginalized social groups (MARTINEZ-ALIER, 2009). And in these struggles, the poor would be defined as environmentalists as they try to take the natural resources away from the economic sphere of the market and from the exclusive market rationality, therefore the poor, by requesting access to resources against the capital and / or against the State, contribute, at the same time to the conservation of resources (MARTINEZ-ALIER, 1992).

## **4 THE IDEOLOGICAL VARIABLE IN THE CHILEAN CASE OF THE NINETIES**

For the Chilean case, this ideological variable in the environmental issue is of great importance, at least since the country's return to democracy in 1990. At that time, a strong and massive debate on the subject began to take place either as a permanent and systematic public policy by the State authorities; as a phenomenon linked to international trade,

or as a prominent field to create a space for political and ideological discussion, as much as a topic of growing public concern (ESTENSSORO, 2009). In this sense, the environmental debate in the '90s, towards the end of the 20 Century, focused on the question of whether the dominant neoliberal economic model was compatible or not with sustainable development. For example, when we analyze the whole long discussion that arose around the enactment of Law 19.300, Environmental General Basis Law, from the moment President Patricio Aylwin sent it as a Bill to the Parliament in 1992, until it was fully operational in 1997, we can see that three large schools of thought clashed: a) the champions of the model, b) the most severe detractors of the model, and c) the reformers of the model (ESTENSSORO, 2009).

### **a) *The Champions of the Model:***

Those who stand out in defense of the model are specifically some sectors of the political right and the world of big businesses, supported by its main think tank, the Center for Public Studies (CEP, for its name in Spanish), and Freedom and Development (LyD, for its name in Spanish). These study centers, in line with a theoretical debate that had been going on since the eighties in the United States, affirmed that the only guarantee to ensure truly sustainable development was to maintain the economic model and implement an environmental policy based on the theoretical principles of market ecology. This meant that they had to avoid the interference of the State with its excessive regulations and its fiscal policies of taxing the negative environmental externalities of productive activity which, they affirmed, was not only ineffective in combating environmental destruction but also slowed economic growth (OATES, 1989; ANDERSON, 1992; ANDERSON; LEAL, 1993; LARRAÍN, HURTADO, RAMÍREZ, 1995). Therefore, they would always be insisting that the nascent environmental institutions of the country should be governed by the principle of market ecology lest it would become a limitation to economic growth and development.

For example, early in 1993, the Industrial Development Society (Sofofa, for its name in Spanish), a body that brings together the largest industries in the country, raised serious objections to the bill that the government sent to parliament in September of 1992. Sofofa considered that the bill did not explicitly state clear standards ensuring property rights and, therefore, could become a hindrance to real sustainable development. Industry representatives posed that the law had “to include the use of market instruments in environmental management”, arguing “that the alteration of the environment by human action occurs because the property of environmental resources is not clearly defined, thus nobody defends its use and, therefore, there is no expression of its scarcity; that is, a price that reflects usage cost” (SOCIEDAD..., 1993, p. B26). Likewise, Jorge Prado, president of the National Society of Agriculture (SNA, for its name in Spanish), organization that groups the largest agricultural businessmen, criticized the bill because it did not contain “clear, objective and technical rules for the respect of property rights that would prevent hindering development, that would reduce state intervention and prevent public officer discretion” (PRADO, 1993, p. B1). Therefore, the project, according to him, was unreflective of the fact that the values that inspired the social market economy could play a key role in solving environmental problems. This because, as he affirmed, the extended concepts of ownership and responsibility in the production process, including emissions and waste “will ensure that market forces also contribute to an effective environmental protection with economic advantages for the interested parties” (Ibid.).

### **b) *The Most Severe Detractors of the Model***

Opposite the champions of the extreme neo-liberal model, were two large political and social sectors that rejected it outright and proposed immediate and radical substitution. First, the traditional left parties without parliamentary representation (because they did not obtain enough votes), and secondly, the wide and diverse world of the Chilean environ-



mentalism (ESTENSSORO, 2009). They agreed to hold the unfeasibility of the capitalist, neoliberal economic model and demanded its replacement by economically redistributive, egalitarian and environmentally sustainable patterns.

The main traditional left parties without parliamentary representation of the nineties were the Chilean Communist Party (PCCH, for its name in Spanish) and the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR, for its name in Spanish). Both organizations participated together in the presidential elections of 1993 and 1999, through the alliance called Allende Democratic Left Movement (Mida, for its name in Spanish). In 1993, the presidential candidate was the priest Eugenio Pizarro, and the presidential program had indicated that they supported the theory of sustainable development, but under a socialist perspective. They explained, for example, that the protection of the environment and the ecological balance both locally as well as at the global level, could only be achieved from a humanistic vision that would seek, in a pressing manner, progress and social justice for all, particularly for the social classes and sectors of society that were subjugated, poor and excluded from the vast benefits that a few enjoyed as a result of economic growth. To that end, the first and essential political step was to end the hegemonic capitalist model (MIDA, 1993; ESTENSSORO, 2009). Meanwhile, the Chilean environmentalist movement also expressed a very critical view to the neoliberal economic model, noting that it was guided by a greedy economic criterion and developmental model seeking only economic growth and private enrichment at the expense of an accelerated deterioration of the environment. In this sense, the main social adversary that was identified was the entrepreneurial sector, considered the quintessential exponent of this economic view of the world. But they were equally calling upon the *Concertación* governments to demand that public policies regarding the environment were not dominated by economic criteria and that they were instead re-directed to a true sustainable development.

For example, Manfred Max-Neef who, supported by the environmental movement, was a presidential candidate in the 1993 elections advocated a social development model alternative to neoliberalism, noting that there was an inherent incompatibility between the type of growth that is intended in the country and the economic model we follow. The country will fail to develop if for that purpose it exhausts its natural resources and becomes a desert (MAX-NEEF, 1995). Similar to the environmental leader Manuel Baquedano, who in 1994, arguing against the government of President Frei regarding the way in which he was conducting the talks with the US government regarding the signing of a Free Trade Agreement, stated that these did not take into consideration the necessary protection of the country's natural resources, which would compose 90% of the total exports. This, in addition to the lack of environmental law would lead to an overexploitation that "might end with the destruction of our entire national habitat" (in GARCIA, 1994, p. 27).

Meanwhile, another prominent Chilean environmentalist leader, Sara Larraín, and who would be a candidate to the republic's presidency in the 1999 elections, expressed in the mid nineties her very disappointed view regarding environmental law in Chile. She stated that there was "a very serious problem resulting from economic growth without environmental regulations. Foreign trade is based on exports of which 90% are natural resources"; therefore, in order to achieve true sustainable development it was essential "to move towards greater political will on the part of the State and the private sector in order to internalize environmental costs and so that long-term development be assessed. It cannot be like it was in the past, that you just take whatever you wish and leave. The planet unfortunately, is not unlimited" (in BROWNE, 1995, p. 6).

Although, this Chilean environmental movement is characterized by its permanent attempts to influence public policies in order to guide the socio-economic development of the country towards what they consider

a “real” sustainable development, it must be remembered that it shows a great ideological heterogeneity and diversity, in addition to the lack of a single and centralized political control. According, to the economist and political environmentalist Marcel Claude, the Chilean environmental movement is divided into three main branches, according to the degree of political distance they have with the dominant neoliberal economic model: the conservationists, environmentalists and ecologists. The conservationists do not guide their main efforts to change the dominant political-economic model, but their motivation is directed to specific conservation issues such as the rescue of certain species and/or some endangered ecosystems. The environmentalists aim to improve the model, to make it environmentally more efficient without totally rejecting it. Finally, the ecologists consider deep and radical changes in the dominant model because, it is not environmentally feasible (CLAUDE, 1997).

Therefore, the ecologists in believing that by definition, the Chilean neoliberal is predatory to nature and prejudicial to the environment, they raise the need to discard it as soon as possible thus, coinciding politically with the non-parliamentary left. Instead, the conservationists and environmentalists will point out that it is possible to environmentally improve the dominant economic model by emphasizing education and environmental awareness of the general public and the decision makers in particular , and in this regard, they will be much closer to the centre positions that remain between the two extremes already described (ESTENSSORO, 2009; CLAUDE, 1997).

### **b) *The Reformist Center***

As can be clearly seen from the above, between these two poles stood a political center occupied by the governments of the *Concertación* and their respective political parties. Equally embracing the concept of sustainable development, they also pointed out that they were seeking

for environmental institutions to take over the deterioration of nature and the environmental problems they faced. They stated also that in no case they could fall into the extreme or utopian environmentalist positions that would stop or hinder the process of development and economic growth. With this discourse they saw to weight again the most extreme neoliberal pole, seeking to defend the State's necessary regulatory action to defend the state in environmental issues. But, given the positions of the environmental movement and the extra-parliamentary left, they claimed that such State control should not hinder economic growth based on the free market and which fundamentally depended on the export of natural resources or commodities.

For example, Patricio Aylwin, in the presidential message that he sent to Congress with the drafted bill of Law on General Principles for the Environment, noted that the environmental reality of Chile was strongly pressed and compromised by the demands of economic development and growth, a situation that poses the challenge to "create the means to restore the balance between man and his environment", and for this, "the notion of sustainable development is very useful". Notwithstanding, the President added, "Environmental conservation cannot be raised in a restrictive sense. Our country needs to meet the growing needs of housing, health, education, energy, etc. This involves producing with the resources that it can count on" (AYLWIN, 1995). Meanwhile, on the same occasion, the then Executive Secretary of the National Environment Commission (Conama, for its name in Spanish) Rafael Asenjo, explained that the Law came to support the successful resolution of one of the main problems facing the Chilean society was "continue to grow economically, in the context of increasing international competitiveness, to meet our needs and eradicate poverty, ensuring a socially just distribution of the benefits of this growth and ensuring a healthy environment and natural resource base adequate to project the future "but should bear in mind that this

challenge, known as Sustainable Development, while permanent and long-range needs to be addressed gradually and realistically” (ASENJO ZEGERS, 1995).

These approaches were permanent during all the *Concertación* governments that occurred between 1990 and 2010. For example, when Ricardo Lagos, assumed the presidency of the country on March 11, 2000, called to stress the most economic and productive capacity of the country, that is, lead Chile “to its fullest potential to reach the Bicentennial in 2010, as a fully developed and integrated country”, and for these reasons he again insisted that environmental institutions could not become a hindrance to development for which it was related to “Environment with intelligence and futuristic vision”, thus the political and social forces should “agree on a common approach to the preservation of our natural wealth, one that is not seen as an obstacle to development” (LAGOS ESCOBAR, 2000, p. VIII-XVI).

The government environmental discourse, although seeking to reconcile economic growth with protecting the environment, in practice was completely subjected to the accelerated economic growth variable, one that exists on the basis of an extractive model, with the conviction that, where there is more growth, there will be more environmental protection and poverty alleviation. That is, its position in the environmental field center, was always more inclined to neoliberal pole of the political spectrum (ESTENSSORO, 2009).

## 5 CONCLUSION

In Chile, from the return of democracy in the early 90s to the present days, the environmental discourse has been increasingly taken over by the political, economic, social and decision-making actors.

Thus, at the end of the first decade of the 2000's, the strong corporate, public and private sectors, linked to the large-scale copper mining industry -one of the most environmentally predatory economic activities in Chile-, along with the political authorities, both parliamentary as well as those in the government, agree on the idea that it is possible to achieve sustainable development under the economic model that has been defined as dominant.

Among them, the differences are less pronounced in the discourse because while businessmen emphasize that environmental mitigations have their limits in the profitability of production activities and are constantly warning the government that it is dangerous to get too close to that limit, from government and its body of experts, they argue that gradual but uninterrupted, the mining industry is incorporating environmental protection criteria in the production process. In fact, all major mining companies, national and multinational corporations, public and private companies, have incorporated environmental and sustainable development managers, have engaged biologist and ecologist consultancies and exhibit internal environmental policies.

Therefore, the largest discrepancy between the different actors that interact in environmental conflicts associated with copper mining, mainly among those who do not believe in the viability both environmentally and socially of the Chilean neoliberal and extractive economic model, and express the need to abandon it, along with the consumerist values of society, against those who believe that, with greater or lesser reforms, this economic model is environmentally sustainable. This discrepancy has existed in Chile since the environmental debate publicly surged with the return of democracy.

Hence extrapolating the situation studied in Chile to the rest of LA, we can raise the hypothesis that ideological factors can be transformed into one of the main sources of environmental conflicts and, therefore, a serious obstacle to environmental governance in the region.

## 6 REFERENCES

ACOSTA, Alberto. Extractivismo y neoextractivismo: dos caras de la misma maldición. In: GRUPO PERMANENTE DE TRABAJO SOBRE ALTERNATIVAS AL DESARROLLO. *Más allá del Desarrollo*. Quito: Abya Ayala, 2012.

ANDERSON, Terry L.; LEAL, Donald R. *Ecología de mercado*. Madrid: Unión Editorial, 1993.

ANDERSON, Terry L. El proceso de mercado y las amenidades del Medio Ambiente. *Centro de Estudios Públicos*, n. 45, p. 147-174, 1992.

ARRIAGA LEGARDA, Alicia; PARDO BUENDÍA, Mercedes. Justicia Ambiental. El estado de la cuestión. *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, v. 69, n. 3, p. 627-648, 2011.

ATLAS GLOBAL DE JUSTICIA AMBIENTAL. Agja. 2014 [on-line]. Available from: <<http://www.ejatlases.org/>>. Accessed: 30 July 2014.

ASENJO ZEGERS, Rafael. Intervención del Secretario Ejecutivo de Conama en Acto de Promulgación efectuado en el Palacio de la Moneda el 1° de marzo de 1994. In: CONAMA. *Ley de Bases del Medio Ambiente*. Santiago: CONAMA, 1995.

AYLWIN, Patricio. Mensaje presidencial n° 387-324. In: CONAMA. *Ley de Bases del Medio Ambiente*. Santiago: Conama, 1995.

. BAIGORROTEGUI, Gloria. Gobernanza y participación en energía. Modos alternativos para la mediación y la deliberación socio-técnica. In: LÓPEZ CERESO, José; GÓMEZ GONZÁLEZ, Francisco. *Apropiación Social de la Ciencia*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2009. p. 215-235.

BAIGORROTEGUI, Gloria; PARKER, Cristian; ESTENSSORO, Fernando. Visiones sobre los tránsitos socio-técnicos hacia patrones de consumo sustentable en agua y energía en la minería sudamericana. Dos controversias argentinas”. *Sociologías*, 16 (37) sept./dec., p. 72-111, 2014.

BROWNE, Magdalena. Entrevista a Sara Larraín Ruiz-Tagle: “La Ley del Medio Ambiente es un chiste”. *Qué Pasa*, July 15, p. 6-10, 1995.

BULKELEY, Harriet; MOL, Arthur P. J. Participation and Environmental Governance: Consensus, Ambivalence and debate. *Environmental Values*, 12, n. 2, p. 143-154, 2003.

CALAMÉ, Pierr. *Hacia una Revolución de la Gobernanza*. Reinventar la democracia. Santiago: LOM, 2009.

CLAUDE, Marcel. *Una vez Más la Miseria ¿Es Chile un país sustentable?* Santiago: LOM, 1997.

DELGADO, Luisa; BACHMANN, Pamela; OÑATE, Bárbara. Gobernanza Ambiental: una estrategia orientada al desarrollo sustentable local a través de la participación ciudadana”. *Ambiente y Desarrollo*, 23(3), p. 68-73, 2007.

DOBSON, Andrew. *Justice and the Environment. Conceptions of Environmental Sustainability and Dimensions of Social Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

ECKERBERG, Katarina; JOAS, Marko. Multi-level Environmental Governance: a concept under stress? *Local Environment*, v. 9, n. 5, oct., p. 405-412, 2004.

ESTENSSORO, Fernando. *Medio Ambiente e Ideología*. La Discusión pública en Chile, 1992-2002. Antecedentes para una historia de las ideas políticas a inicios del siglo XXI. Santiago: USACH; Ariadna, 2009.

FALK, Richard. *La Globalización depredadora*. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2002.

GARCÍA, Hernán. Ecologistas refutan al Presidente sobre el ingreso al Nafta: Si hay mal ambiente habrá más pobreza. *La Tercera*, Santiago, 10 dic.e, 1994.



GONZÁLEZ LARRAÍN, Santiago. *Impacto Económico y Social del Desarrollo de la Minería*. Ecuador, 2011 [on-line]. Available from: <<http://www.cme.org.ec/attachments/article/32/PONENCIA%20-%20SANTIAGO%20GONZALEZ.pdf>>. Accessed: 8 may 2013.

INSTITUTO Nacional de Derechos Humanos. *Mapa de Conflictos Socioambientales de Chile*. Santiago: INDH, 2012 [on-line]. Available from: <<http://www.indh.cl/mapaconFLICTOS/assets/pdf/libro-web-descargable.pdf>>. Accessed: 8 may 2013.

KÜTTING, Gabriela. Environmental Justice. *Global Environmental Politics*, v. 4, n. 1, February, p. 115-121, 2004.

LAGOS ESCOBAR, Ricardo. *Mensaje Presidencial*. 21 de mayo del año 2000. Santiago: Secretaría de Comunicación y Cultura del Ministerio Secretaría General de Gobierno, 2000.

LARRAÍN, Luis; HURTADO, Javier; RAMÍREZ, Pedro; *Ecología de mercado*. Santiago: Libertad y Desarrollo, 1995.

LATOUCHE, Serge. *Pequeño Tratado do Decrescimento Sereno*. São Paulo: WMF Martins Fonte, 2009.

LEFF, Enrique. Vetas y Vertientes de la Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana. Una nota metodológica y epistemológica. *Varia Historia*, Rio de Janeiro, n. 33, p. 17-31, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. La Ecología Política en América Latina. Un campo en construcción. *Polis*, n. 5, 2003 [on-line]. Available from: <<http://polis.revues.org/6871>>. Accessed: 9 may 2013].

LEMONS, Maria Carmen; AGRAWAL, Arun. Environmental Governance. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, v. 31, p. 297-325, 2006. MARÍN, Gustavo; JIMÉNEZ, Ricardo; GRZYBOWSKI, Cándido. *Documento de Trabajo, después del Taller Internacional: Biocivilización para la Sustentabilidad de la Vida y del Planeta*. Rio de Janeiro: Ibase 30, 2011. Foro para una Nueva Gobernanza Mundial (FNGM).

MARTINEZ-ALIER, Joan. *El ecologismo de los pobres*. Seminario-Taller de la Nueva Izquierda Latinoamericana, Lima-Perú, febrero 1992 [on-line]. Available from: <[http://www.ecologiapolitica.iepe.org/ver\\_articulo.php?id=386](http://www.ecologiapolitica.iepe.org/ver_articulo.php?id=386)>. Accessed: 9 may 2013.

\_\_\_\_\_. *El ecologismo de los pobres, veinte años después: India, México y Perú*. 2009 [on-line]. Available from: <[http://www.ecoportal.net/Temas\\_Especiales/Economia/el\\_ecologismo\\_de\\_los\\_pobres\\_veinte\\_años\\_despues\\_india\\_mexico\\_y\\_peru](http://www.ecoportal.net/Temas_Especiales/Economia/el_ecologismo_de_los_pobres_veinte_años_despues_india_mexico_y_peru)>. Accessed: 9 may 2013.

MAX-NEEF, Manfred. En Política Ambiental: Max Neef critica al Estado por Ambivalencia. *El Mercurio*, Santiago, august 24, 1995.

MIDA. Por un Chile justo, independiente y democrático. Un proyecto de programa de gobierno para el pueblo de Chile. *Pluma y Pincel*, n.162, august, 1993.

MINEROS, S. A. Minería Responsable: Aliada del desarrollo de Colombia. *Notas Oro*, n.127, February 15, 2012 [on-line]. Available from: <<http://www.mineros.com.co/pdf/NotasOro127.pdf>>. Accessed: 8 may 2013.

MORANDÉ, Felipe. ¿Sería posible un Chile sin esta actividad? *QuePasa Minería*, 6 ago. 2012 [on-line]. Available from: <<http://quepasamineria.cl/index.php/noticias/item/819-%C2%BFser%C3%ADa-posible-un-chile-sin-esta-actividad>>. Accessed: 8 may 2013.

MUÑOZ GOMÁ, Oscar. *Los Inesperados Caminos de la Modernización Económica*. Santiago: Editorial Universidad de Santiago-Instituto de Estudios Avanzados, 1995.

OATES, Wallace E. El mercado como agente de la descontaminación ambiental. *Centro de Estudios Públicos*, n. 34, p. 147-163, 1989.

PARKER G., Cristián. Global Warming, Elites and Energy in Latin America: The Chilean Case. *Journal of Environmental Science and Engineering*, v. 5, n. 12, dec., p. 1.702-1.714, 2011.

\_\_\_\_\_. El Mundo Académico y las Políticas Públicas frente a la urgencia del desarrollo sustentable en América Latina y el Caribe. *Polis*, n. 39, p. 1-18, 2014.

PARKER G., Cristián; MUÑOZ, Juan. Elites universitarias y cambio climático. *Ambiente & Sociedad.*, v. XV, n. 2, p. 195-217, 2012.

PARKER G., Cristián; LETELIER, Mario; MUÑOZ, Juan. Elites, climate change and agency in a developing society: the Chilean case. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, v. 15, n. 5, p. 1.337-1.363, 2013.

PARKER, Cristián; BAIGORROTEGUI, Gloria; ESTENSSORO, Fernando (2014). Agua-energía-minería, consumo sustentable y gobernanza: visión de actores estratégicos sudamericanos. In: HOGENBOOM, B.; BAUD, M.; DE CASTRO, F. (Ed.). *Environmental Governance in Latin America: conflicts, projects and possibilities*. Buenos Aires: Clacso; Engov, 2015. p. 201-232.

PATTERSON, Matthew; HUMPHREYS, David; PETTIFORD, Lloyd. Conceptualizing Global Environmental Governance: From Interstate Regimes to Counter-Hegemonic Struggles. *Global Environmental Politics*, v. 3, n. 2, p. 1-10, may 2003.

PIÑEIRO, Diego E. Movimientos sociales, gobernanza ambiental y desarrollo territorial rural. *Rimisp*, Montevideo, 2004 [on-line]. Available from: <<http://www.fiaes.org.sv/library/gobernanzaydesarrollorural.pdf>>. Accessed: 5 dec. 2012.

PORTO-GONÇALVES, Carlos. *El Desafío Ambiental*. México D.F: PNUMA, 2006.

PRADO, Jorge. Serios reparos de SNA a Proyecto Ambiental. Entrevista a Jorge Prado Presidente de la SNA. *El Mercurio*, Santiago, 11, p. B1, jan. 1993.

PRATS, I.; CATALÀ, Joan. *De la burocracia al Management, del Management a la Gobernanza*. Madrid: Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública, 2005.

QUIROGA MARTÍNEZ, Rayen. *Indicadores ambientales y de desarrollo sostenible: avances y perspectivas para América Latina y el Caribe*. Serie Manuales, nº 55 de la División de Estadísticas y proyecciones Económicas. Santiago: Cepal, 2007.

REYNO MOMBERG, Manuel. *Responsabilidad Social Empresarial (RSE) como ventaja competitiva*. Tesis (Grado para optar al Grado de Magister en Gestión Empresarial) – Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María, Viña del Mar, 2006.

SANTANA COVA, Nancy. Los movimientos ambientales en América Latina como respuesta sociopolítica al desarrollo global. *Espacio Abierto*, Maracaibo, v. 14, n. 4, p. 555-571, oct. 2005 [on-line]. Available from: <[http://www2.scielo.org/ve/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S1315-00062005000400003&lng=es&nrm=iso](http://www2.scielo.org/ve/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1315-00062005000400003&lng=es&nrm=iso)>. Accessed: 4 dec. 2012.

SCHLOSBERG, David; CARRUTHERS, David. Indigenous Struggles, Environmental Justice, and Community Capabilities. *Global Environmental Politics*, vol. 10, n. 4, p. 12-35, nov. 2010.

SOCIEDAD NACIONAL DE MINERÍA. Sonami. *Memoria Anual, 2001-2012*. Santiago: Sonami, 2012 [on-line]. Available from: <<http://www.SONAMI.cl/digital/memoria/memoria20112012/>>. Accessed: 8 may 2013.

SOCIEDAD DE FOMENTO FABRIL. Sofofa. Observaciones de Sofofa a Ley de Medio Ambiente. *El Mercurio*, Santiago, 16, p. B26, jan. 1993.

SPETH, James Gustave. The Global Environmental Agenda: Origins and Prospects. In: ESTY, Daniel C.; IVANOVA, Maria H. (Ed.). *Global Environmental Governance*. Options & Opportunities. New Haven: Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy, 2002.

SUNKEL, Osvaldo (Ed.). *Sustentabilidad Ambiental del Crecimiento Económico Chileno*. Santiago: Programa de Desarrollo Sustentable; Centro de Análisis de Políticas Públicas; Universidad de Chile, 1996.

STRANGE, Susan. *La Retirada del Estado*. La difusión del poder en la economía mundial. Barcelona: Icaria, 2001.

SVAMPA, Maristella. Consenso de los *commodities*, giro ecoterritorial y pensamiento crítico en América Latina. *Osal* (Buenos Aires: Clacso), año XIII, n. 32, p. 15-39, nov. 2012a.

SVAMPA, Maristella. Extractivismo neodesarrollista y movimientos sociales. ¿Un giro ecoterritorial hacia nuevas alternativas? In: GRUPO PERMANENTE DE TRABAJO SOBRE ALTERNATIVAS AL DESARROLLO. *Más allá del Desarrollo*. Quito: Ediciones Abya yala, 2012b. p. 185-216.

SVAMPA, Maristella; BOTTARO, Lorena; ÁLVAREZ, Marian Sola. La problemática de la minería metalífera a cielo abierto: modelo de desarrollo, territorio y discursos dominantes”. In: SVAMPA, Maristella; ANTONELLI, Mirta A. *Minería Transnacional, narrativas del desarrollo y resistencias sociales*. Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2010.

TREVIÑO Cantú, Jesús Antonio. Gobernanza en la administración pública. Revisión teórica y propuesta conceptual. *Contaduría y Administración*, n. 233, p. 121-147, jan./apr. 2011.

VOGLER, John. The European contribution to global environmental governance. *International Affairs*, v. 81, issue 4, p. 835-850, 2005.

YEARLEY, Steven. Environmental Challenges. In: HALL, Stuart et al. *Modernity an Introduction to Modern Society*. Massachussets: Blackwell Publishers, 1997. p. 504-532.

YÜKSEL MERMÖD, Asli; IDOWU, Samuel O. (Ed.). *Corporate Social Responsibility in the Global Business World*. London: Springer Science & Business Media, 2014.

Recebido em: 31/10/2016

Aceito em: 19/12/2016