

The socio-ecological crisis up close

CONFLICTS, EXPERIENCES AND ALTERNATIVES IN THE ANDEAN-AMAZON REGION



ABSTRACT

The world must cope with severe effects of climate change such as extreme weather phenomena, increasing scarcity of crucial raw materials, and biodiversity loss in the context of a global socio-ecological crisis. In the Andean-Amazon region in Latin America, the crisis has already manifested in the chronic destruction of people's livelihoods and political struggles in the form of protests. Therefore, socio-ecological conflicts emerge around access to, control over and recognition as well as destruction of resources. The add-on "socio" is crucial as these conflicts are inseparably related to political, economic, and cultural issues involving race, class, gender, poverty, and nation. Regardless, possible coping mechanisms with the crisis on the base of diverse ontologies and local knowledge are debated in this region, most famously the concept of "buen vivir". With an interdisciplinary approach this project investigates structural dimensions of the socio-ecological crisis and the role of specific actors in Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador by focusing on struggles concerning land and resource (over-) use.



DOC-TEAM

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What form is the socio-ecological crisis taking in the Andean-Amazon region and what impact does it have on society and environment?
- Which different social relations to nature are negotiated, both regarding their physical-material and their symbolic-discursive dimensions? How do they contradict each other and how does a certain configuration become dominant?
- Which strategies to cope with the crisis do actors use and which alternatives can be found?



RESEARCH GOALS

- Conceptualizing the socio-ecological crisis
- Empirical findings to crisis dynamics and extractivism
- Contributing to current social debates: land distribution, resource (over-) use and sovereignty/democratization
- Coping mechanisms and learning from the Andean-Amazon region?

APPROACHES

Political and social ecology, relational Latin American state theories, political ontology

Field of conflict:

structural factors of the crisis & contextualization of actors



METHODS

Document analysis, common data base, qualitative content analysis

Extended research stays: participant observation, interviews, focus groups, archive research, visual anthropology

Non-extractive research practices and feedback loops