

RODRIGUEZ, IOKIÑE [S19-P82]

STUDYING ENVIRONMENTAL (IN)JUSTICES IN COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT WITH THE CHIQUITANO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF LOMERIO, BOLIVIA

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The University of East Anglia, the Universidad NUR and the Union of Indigenous Communities from Lomerio (CICOL), are jointly carrying out the "Conservation, Markets and Justice Project" in the Indigenous Territory (TCO) of Lomerio, in Bolivia, an area of 257.000 hectares of land legally owned and managed by the Chiquitano Indigenous Peoples since 2006. Using a combination of social research methods (ethnography, participatory videos, surveys and economic games), the project is examining environmental injustices in community forest management in this area in a context of market oriented conservation initiatives.

Currently, all villages in Lomerio are trying to establish market-oriented forestry management under local control. There are a total of 23 communities in Lomerio that have set aside areas for this kind of management. Developing a communal forestry model in the area was a strategy used by the Chiquitanos to gain property rights over the territory and control illegal forestry in the area. Lomerio is the first case of forest certification in Bolivia, based on their communal forestry model. The Lomerio Chiquitanos are also known as one of the first indigenous peoples in Bolivia to fight for territorial indigenous autonomy.

Despite the success in obtaining territorial property rights and the existence of a communal forestry model, the collective management of this vast territory is complex due to the diversity of actors and public policies pressuring for access and use of its rich natural resources. CICOL, the indigenous natural resource organization of Lomerio with legal stewardship over the territory, is finding it increasingly difficult to regulate the management of the resources in the area due to the persistence of environmental injustices at different scales and levels, which are acting as deterrents for the consolidation of autonomy and sustainable development in area. CICOL saw in the CMJ project an opportunity to explore possible solutions to the current environmental justice struggles in the TCO and was happy to participate as a local partner in the study. The organization has had a central role in the study, with four of its members acting as community researchers in all of the project's activities and a continual engagement from its board of directors in decision making in all the stages of the study.

This paper examines the contribution that a practice based approach to study environmental justice struggles can play helping to bring to light current tensions in the management of a common good, such as forests. It shows that a multi-methods and participatory research approach not only allows indigenous peoples to self-critically analyze current tensions in communal forest management, but perhaps most significantly creates opportunities for making public claims about issues that still need to be resolved within the community and with outsiders in order to ensure a just, equitable and sustainable management of forest. Thus, as a research method it has great potential for contributing to the transformation of forest management conflicts by helping to foster dialogue and to make latent conflicts come to the open so that injustices can be dealt with.