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БАЙДУЖНІСТЬ, ЗАБРУДНЕННЯ І НАСТУПНІСТЬ У ЗДІЙСНЕННІ ВЛАДИ: РАЦІОНАЛЬНИЙ ВИБІР ТА НЕОІНСТИТУЦІОНАЛІЗМ У КОРДОН- ІНДУСТРИАЛ (САНТА ФЕ, АРГЕНТИНА)

Резюме

Ця стаття про знання особливої реальності, що характеризується забрудненням, викликаним різними компаніями, розташованими на території площею 589 км², відомої як Cordón Industrial Gran Rosario (провінція Санта-Фе, Аргентина). Досліджуються проблеми стабільності роботи місцевої влади, підтверджені виміри забруднювачів повітря в двох основних містах, Пуерто-Хенераль-Сан-Мартін та Сан-Лоренцо, а також численні скарги до судових інстанцій на порушення з боку різних компаній з інших населених пунктів, що складають Кордон, головна цінність якого полягає в його виході до ріки Парана, джерела морського транспорту.

Феномен забруднення аналізується на основі двох теоретичних напрацювань: теорії раціонального вибору, що підтримує інтереси людей як їхньої переваги при прийнятті рішень, включаючи пошук можливих пріоритетів; і, з іншого боку, неоінституціоналізм, інституту як складові політики держави, законодавчої влади, правових норм, правил або процедур, прийнятих у політичних відносинах. Висновок з цього аналізу відзначений суперечністю між рішеннями громадян про обрання влади, які стають інструментами для подальшого виживання компаній і тими забрудненнями навколишнього середовища, які вони завдають, загрожуючи здоров'ю людини і суспільства. Це свідчить про неефективність інститутів, що входять до складу державних організацій як контролюючі органи.

Ключові слова: забруднення, раціональний вибір, неоінституціоналізм, наступність політики, неефективність.

Introduction

Pollution in the area of the Greater Rosario Industrial Cordon covers an area extending from the city of Timbúes, Puerto General San Martin, San Lorenzo to Arroyo Seco in the province of Santa Fe [13]. Its strategic relevance lies in the Paraná River as a means of deep-sea transport. This industrial zone is a shelter to different international companies that not only generate sources of employment but also pollution.

The smoke, soot, strong smells coming from the chimneys or silos, chemicals, oils and hydrocarbons thrown into the Paraná River are constant, creating a complex reality for any citizen living in the vicinity. This has always implied a contradiction with the almost uninterrupted permanence of many constitutionally elected officials, who have been unwilling or unable to prevent this aberrant fact, such as the contamination that dates back decades.

Methods

This is why this study has been proposed using the Rational Choice Theory, which allows us to interpret the decisions of the individuals who, in this specific case, have consented to the re-election of the local authorities who, in the end, are tacit participants in the contamination suffered in the cities mentioned below. If an electoral process is a political phenomenon and this is explained in terms of rational, individual interests that lead to a democratic electoral victory, everything leads to the conclusion that, given the results, the majority of citizens in the cities of the Industrial Cordon are not interested in environmental pollution. This is confirmed by the fact that the mayor of Puerto General San Martin has been in office for five terms and the mayor of the city of San Lorenzo for four. In view of this, the following unanswered question arises: How is it possible to elect the same person to govern for more than ten years and yet nothing can be done about pollution?

Thus, Rational Choice would relate to Neoinstitutionalism, because of the importance of institutions in any constitutional and political regime; recalling Hugh Ward (1995), a good institution is one that effectively performs the task assigned to it. Again, then, we ask whether in this particular case, institutions fulfil this requirement, or whether they are merely a formalism. While they are pillars of policy, they have not changed the underlying reality in these cities, the pollution continues [1, p. 5].

This article aims to approach from the study of Rational Choice Theories (1950), Neoinstitutionalism (1984) and the entailment with the exercise of authority, through the permanence in power of the different local authorities studied in this article.

Since Anthony Downs (1957) [3] the theoretical application of the study of electoral behaviour began; where the individual expresses his will by voting for a person he finds most useful (Ward, 85). According to Mancur Olson (1965)

in Ward (1995): «self-interested individuals would not always participate in collective actions that furthered a common goal» [4, p. 85].

In addition to Hugh Ward (1995), areas of interest in this theory have included interventions by democratic governments to correct market failures; rent-seeking to generate monopoly and oligopoly group formation, as well as state subsidies; and a number of political scientists have also leaned towards limiting the state and disengaging it from complex corporate relationships (e. g., during Margaret Thatcher's government).

Results

In this way, political phenomena are explained in terms of personal and rational interests, for example, it would be possible to understand the contamination of the Industrial Cordon and the permanence in power of their respective mayors for more than two or three electoral periods, i. e. more than twelve years in the executive office. This would be the case, for example, according to the Electoral Tribunal of Santa Fe (2021) of the Mayor of the city of Puerto General San Martin, Carlos de Grandis (Justicialist Party) who has begun his fifth term in office in 2019, that is, he has been governing since 2001 [5, p. 5]; while according to the Municipality of San Lorenzo (2021), the Mayor of the city of the same name, Dr. Leonardo Raimundo (Progressive Civic and Social Front Party), has begun his fourth term in office in 2019. For its part, the city of Rosario, according to the page of the City Hall-Municipality (n/d) of that city, has been governed by the same political party, Progressive Civic and Social Front Party, beginning this period of two consecutive governments with the former Mayor Hermes Binner (1995–1999/ 1999–2003); succeeded by Miguel Lifschitz (2003–2007/ 2007–2011) and then by Monica Fein (2011–2015/ 2014–2019) and finally, Pablo Javkin.

According to Ward (1995), «rational choice is both a positive way of approaching the explanation of politics and an overtly normative enterprise, whose strength lies in its ability to bring together, under one heading, a considerable variety of phenomena and concerns of political theorists» [1, p. 87].

The main theoretical connotations of this postulate are: that individuals are guided by self-interest; every individual has the rational capacity, time and emotional independence to choose the best course of action; individuals are assumed to be able to prioritise outcomes; preferences respond to the transitive property: if a is better than b and b is better than c; a is better than c: «rational individuals choose one of the actions or one of the outcomes within a list of priorities within what is feasible» (1, p. 88).

However, this can lead to complications, as any action can lead to a different outcome, as can any event or decision.

As stated in the abstract, this article is only a brief approximation to a tangled reality where rules, procedures, institutions merge in a sea of political

and citizen decisions that seem to have other priorities than clean and pollutant-free air.

This study consists of different subsections taking into account the search for information and method, i. e. the theoretical contribution of Political Science from Rational Choice Theory, Neoinstitutionalism and the permanence in power of some authorities. Then, the context and the geographical situation of the studied area were developed with the aim of circumscribing the results and the discussion of consequent debate and finally, the conclusions.

The most substantial effect would be to achieve Strategic Balance; perhaps this is a political goal pursued by the rulers of the day. Perhaps it is valid to infer that, if a company is operating (despite the fact that it produces polluting facts), it continues to generate local sources of employment, which means that the authorities control through public tax policies (since all municipalities have offices with this specific objective), while they remain in administration, as long as local regulations allow (and-or choose them).

Within the Rational Choice perspective, institutions are intended to overcome identifiable weaknesses in the market or political system and are seen as means to produce collectively desirable outcomes. Therefore, in this context and according to Ward (1995) «a good institution is one that efficiently performs its assigned task, usually while maintaining a commitment to other powerful norms, such as democracy» [1, p. 94].

In this way, Rational Choice Theory is linked to Neo-Institutionalism, since all political phenomenon should be analysed from multiple angles, which is why this joint perception is proposed.

Institutions are the pillars of politics as a discipline, as Ward (1995) mentions: «the state is a human group in which a certain power relationship exists between its individual and asocial components. This relationship is framed by political institutions» (1, p. 53).

Institutions express choices about the form that political relations should take, and this leads us to reflect on and define political institutions in terms of their normative component. The first proponents of this current were March and Olsen (1984), who propose a new institutionalism with an object of study that deals with rules, procedures and formal organisations of government and the effectiveness of democracy that uses the cleavage of the jurist as well as the historian.

Both New Institutionalism and Rational Choice Theory pursue a methodological individualism, in line with Peters (2003): «in political contexts actors are individuals and therefore the only appropriate perspective for political enquiry is to focus on individuals and their behaviours» [9, p. 30].

Thus, according to Easton (1953) [10] they concentrate on voting, interest group activity and legal forms of articulation, i. e. outputs from society to the political system. Thus, Peters (2003) explains that «the formal institutions of

government were reduced to a black box where the transformation of inputs into outputs almost magically took place» [9, p. 31].

It is worth asking whether an example of this would be the continuity in power and the uninterrupted continuity in the exercise of executive functions of any of the mayors of the localities of the Industrial Cordon, who have been re-elected for the exercise of their functions, as mentioned above.

In parallel, one can highlight the contextualism of Neoinstitutionalism, which in line with Peters (2003), March and Olsen (1984) describe the subordination of political phenomenon to contextual ones, such as economic growth, class structure and socio-economic cleavages [9, p. 33]. Which leads us to consider whether the effectiveness and efficiency of local elected constitutional institutions and powers could be measured according to the degree of control of pollution by companies located in the Industrial Cordon and their consequences. This leads us to think about whether the effectiveness and efficiency of institutions and constitutional elected local powers could be measured according to the degree of pollution control of the companies located in the Industrial Cordon and the consequences that a real control and sanction on the level of pollution of the companies could cause or not. However, bearing in mind that all institutionalism is bidirectional, any concrete political decision would condition a company located in the area and these, on the executive functions.

Following Peters (2003), the institution represents both formal and informal instruments of a society, they can be legislatures, legal frameworks or networks of organisations; they are stable over time and, in turn, affect individual behaviour, i. e. every decision or inaction by someone or some of them affects the whole [9, p. 36–37].

In short, for institutional change to take place, there must be a change in decisions and there must be signals from society as a whole and from all its individuals; as long as the same choices are maintained, nothing changes and in this way any action, including pollution, is endorsed and legitimised. On this point, we agree with Peters (2003):

Can we explain the behaviour of individuals by the structures within which they function or must we look at individual action to explain the behaviour of structures? [9, p. 59].

Thus, it can be argued that one source of change is dissent; for something to change, we must all change our decisions; if we are to transform an area, we must change our decisions, for as Peters (2003) argues, the «roots of political behaviour are collective rather than individual» [9, p. 67].

The so-called «Cordón Industrial Gran Rosario» is made up of an urban agglomerate that arises as a consequence of the expansion of a series of cities since 1950; which were located on the banks of the Paraná River (Province of Santa Fe), extending from north to south, from the locality of Timbúes, passing through Puerto General San Martín, San Lorenzo, Fray Luis Beltrán, Capitán

Bermúdez, Granadero Baigorria, Rosario, Villa Gobernador Gálvez, Alvear, Pueblo Esther, General Lagos and Arroyo Seco; covering an approximate surface area of 589 km².

The greatest development is in the northern area, that is, in the city of Puerto General San Martín, where the waters of the Paraná River are deeper and allow the transit of deep-draught ships. According to the last 2010 Census, the total population of the Cordon was 1.236.089 inhabitants.

This industrial zone is home to different companies, according to the Santa Fe government website (2015): Termoeléctrica General José de San Martín, Renova, Louis Dreyfus, Cofco, Cofco Agri (ex Noble), Profertil, Minera Alumbrera Limitada, Terminal 6, Alto Paraná (Resinford), Cargill, Petrobras, Nidera, Bunge, YPF Gas, Axion Energy, Oil, Akzo Nobel, Vicentin (in bankruptcy proceedings), Río de la Plata Mills, ARZINC, Electroclor (now closed) and Celulosa (CASA), among other [17, p. 33].

These companies have not only generated sources of employment, but have also been added to and inserted into the urban mass already installed in the area and, over time, have proliferated with the consent of the governments in power.

According to the Faculty of Medicine of the National University of Rosario and the publications of Jorgelina Hiba for the newspaper La Capital (2017), the Cordon Industrial has a pollution map created in 2011, drawn up by its own inhabitants, with only 157 complaints filed up to 2016 [11]. The territorial map was in charge of the aforementioned Faculty and could not continue with its functions due to a lack of financial funds. Among the constant and permanent irregularities are the presence of soot, smoke, strong smells, dust (coming from the silos of Vicentin, among other companies, even installed between the different family houses), hydrocarbons and chemicals, waste from cleaning machinery, arsenic, oil in the waters of the river (from different ships and companies), methane gas, among others in a long history of polluting facts, which affect the water, air and groundwater as well as all living beings.

To cite examples, in the city of San Lorenzo, according to the newspaper La Capital (2013), an environmental monitoring study commissioned by the provincial government was carried out for fifteen consecutive days in the area of Molinos Río de la Plata; the results were largely negative. From the measurements, it was shown that air pollution exceeded the maximum permitted level on 10 days, and that on the remaining five days it was close to the same limit. Different residents of different neighbourhoods, such as 2 de Abril, Rivadavia and Morando, all located in the southern part of San Lorenzo and bordering the two sites occupied by Río de la Plata Mills (port terminal and factory headquarters, on the one hand, and a car park for trucks, on the other), have been fighting for some time to improve the environmental conditions in that sector and in the region in general.

Following an imaginary line from south to north, Fray Luis Beltrán follows San Lorenzo, where the controversial industry Ar Zinc was located and from Route 11 (where one drives from city to city), mountains of sulphur could be seen at a glance, uncovered and in the open air. According to Rosario Plus (2017), Environmental Workshop of the Faculty of Medicine) states that since its closure, there has been no progress in a plan to eliminate the environmental liabilities, «zinc substances as a property are corrosive and destroy everything».

Following Beltrán is Capitán Bermúdez, where something similar happened since the closure of Petroquímica (Ex-Electroclor) in 2013. According to the newspaper *Página 12* (Page 12) (2021), the structure has not been dismantled and there are still liquid chlorine pipes which, when they come out, would change their state and affect the whole area. In this regard, it should be noted that the Criminal Chamber of Santa Fe ordered an indictment hearing against the former regional prosecutor Patricio Serjal, for ordering the closure of an investigation against the former petrochemical company Ex Electroclor. This decision was fundamental because of the serious environmental damage caused and that could still be caused since, as reported in the newspaper *La Capital* (2021): «The levels of contamination are alarming», based on administrative complaints made since 2016. Serjal is in prison and charged with collusion with illegal gambling and will soon be charged again. It has even been reported that 850 tubes of chlorine (one tonne each) have been buried on the premises.

The other important company in the city of Bermúdez is Celulosa Argentina (CASA). According to Notife (2006), the courts ordered the measurement of liquid and gaseous effluents discharged into the air and the river to determine the environmental level of contamination, a situation that dates back to 2007, but whose complaints are even older [15].

From the long history of existing pollutants, the corollary for the year 2020 was the constant smoke from the burning of the vegetation, flora and fauna of the islands in the province of Entre Ríos, which are located across the Paraná River from the city of Rosario. It is not only the pandemic, the use of masks, the confinement in the face of the Covid-19 virus, but also the almost always nocturnal smoke that has plagued the islands. Its intensity is such that it makes the atmosphere unbreathable, but even more so if we count the time that has elapsed, since the first criminal complaint dates from 3 March 2020, according to the City Hall (Municipality) of Rosario (S/D). It seems illogical, and even a mockery, that all citizens are locked in the middle of a pandemic and must submit to this systematic and constant attack of the burning of the islands in front of Rosario, under the impassive gaze of the authorities and which still persists.

As explained in the previous section and as stated by the government of Santa Fe (2019) on the Environment and Climate Change page, Programme for Continuous Monitoring of Air Quality, different measurements have been

taken over the years, the last one recorded and/or published being those of 2019, coinciding with the change of provincial government authorities, the last period of the Frente Cívico (Civil Front) and the first of the Partido Justicialista (Justicialist Party).

According to Resolution 02–02/2004 of the Government of Santa Fe (2004), it is understood that air pollution is any chemical, physical or biological agent or combination of both, generated by human activity (Art. 2); these pollutants can be: carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, sulphur dioxide (SO₂), oxidants, suspended particulate matter (PM 10), lead, chromium, benzene, hydrogen sulphide (Annex 1). The methods and samples to be used for their measurement shall be carried out in accordance with IRAM Standards [18].

In view of the above, the Air Quality publications for 2018 and 2019 were analysed for PM10 concentrations only, clarifying that Resolution 02–01/2004 establishes a maximum of 0.50 mg/m³ for twenty minutes and 0.15 mg/m³ for twenty-four hours, so as not to affect the health and property of the community.

According to the Summary of Environmental Assessments PM10 (2019) of the government of the Province of Santa Fe (2019), the concentrations obtained during the days 13/01–15/02–18 and 29/06–20/07- 3 and 17/08 of 2019 in Punta Brayco in the city of San Lorenzo, were above the guideline level of 150 mg/m³ (24hs) established by Resolution 0201/2004. As for the Summary of Environmental Assessments of PM10 on measurements in Oil Workers Union Puerto General San Martin, carried out on 04–06–09–11–15 January 2019 were 21, 12, 79, 67 and 25; that is, they also exceeded the established levels.

While the Summary of PM 10 Environmental Assessments at the Brayco Group in San Lorenzo on 19–21–27 March 2019 were 108,71 and 104.

The PM10 Environmental Assessments (2018) of the government of the Province of Santa Fe, established that PM 10 measurements taken from July to November in San Lorenzo for that year, were always oscillating between 50 and 137 (maximum recorded in November 2018) and in Puerto General San Martin, the values were also high reaching a maximum of 129 (in September 2018) [19].

Comparing the statistics, the measurement records for the two cities are very high, however, those of Puerto San Martin are more constant and permanent than those theoretically taken in the city of San Lorenzo.

Conclusions

The Greater Rosario Industrial Cordon is an area of vast land extension where families dwelling coexists and lives side by side with chemical and agro-exporting companies. Apart from this, the existence of the Paraná River as a means of maritime transport and an instrument of foreign trade has been its main asset. The existing pollution is not news to any inhabitant of the area. But

somehow, they coexist with polluted air and with a river that changes its colour depending on the product thrown into its waters.

The smoke, the soot, the persistent smell of grain silos, are parts of daily reality, although the citizen should not resign himself to such abuse.

For this reason, if the theory of Rational Choice allows us to infer that an individual expresses his will by voting, in this case, in a democratic system that assumes the representation and expression of a majority, we wonder if the prevailing criterion would not be «irrationality», since how can one elect an authority (who, despite having provincial government reports confirming the state of pollution, continuously and permanently) does nothing or has an attitude of indifference to such a situation, according to the published reports. This apparent irrationality of the citizens at the moment of the election, with the expression of his vote does nothing more than generate a detriment to their own. Olson (1965) said that man was moved by his own self-interest, then, from a Weberian comprehensive view, we infer what his interest can be if he lives or survives in an almost unbreathable place and even the soil with the air and even the water, are polluted and in some places, even the presence of arsenic has been proven, as is mentioned in Ginex (2017) thesis [12, p. 5].

Therefore, following this line of thought, we ask ourselves how a rational choice criteria and personal interest can be sustained when the environment is contaminated to such an extent. In this way, an uninterrupted election legitimizes a situation of abnormality, as the cities of Puerto General San Martín or San Lorenzo, generating an erosion of the political system, even if the authorities only intend to perpetuate themselves in power. Perhaps this situation can only be understood if we recall Ward's (1995) postulate that preferences are transitive in nature, i. e. if a is better than b, and b is better than c, a is better than c. In a word, of all the (perhaps poor) options, I choose the best or the least poorest. Thus, as the author claims, an adverse outcome in the Industrial Cordon is fulfilled. Illuminated and asphalted streets are not enough, this is a humble and miserable objective for the economic characteristics of the cities alluded to and even more so if one takes into account their strategic position.

Further, since the institution is a pillar of politics, such as state or legislature, in other words, the form of political relationship it acquires; in this situation they represent failed instruments of government because they should exercise a real, concrete and efficient function of control as a means of disciplining. But how can they achieve this objective if they are part of a system of uninterrupted re-election for more than ten years, i. e. a weakened political system. In a way, they are, as Peters (2003) would say, black boxes, because in each institution the same officials succeed each other, as long as they respond to the same political perspective, a sort of clientelist circle, undeniable with the unending stay of the same authorities. Recalling reflections already made, in order for structural change to take place, individual transformation is required;

if this does not happen, society, cities and ways of life continue unchanged. This will probably never occur in the Greater Rosario Industrial Cordon.

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INDIFFERENCE, CONTAMINATION AND CONTINUITY IN THE EXERCISE OF POWER: RATIONAL CHOICE AND NEOINSTITUTIONALISM IN THE CORDON INDUSTRIAL (SANTA FE, ARGENTINA)

Abstract

This article is a brief approximation to the knowledge of a singular reality characterised by the pollution caused by different companies located in an area of 589 km² known as Cordón Industrial Gran Rosario (province of Santa Fe, Argentina). It combines the almost uninterrupted permanence of different local authorities and confirmed measurements of air pollutants in two of the main cities, Puerto General San Martín and San Lorenzo, as well as multiple complaints in judicial instances for irregularities by various companies from other localities that make up the Cordon, whose main relevance lies in its outlet to the Paraná River, a source of maritime transport.

Therefore, this phenomenon is analysed from two theoretical contributions of Political Science: the Theory of Rational Choice, which supports the interest of people as their preferences when making decisions, as well as the search for rents as possible priorities; and on the other hand, Neo-institutionalism, institutions as pillars of politics, which refers to the state, legislature, legal forms, rules or procedures adopted by political relations. Finally, the corollary of this analysis is marked by the apparent contradiction between citizens' decisions to elect authorities who exercise power for more than two constitutional periods, who in turn become instruments for the continued survival of polluting companies that threaten the individual and societal health of all the cities of the Industrial Cordon studied, and ultimately, the consequent ineffectiveness of the institutions that form part of the government organisations as a control body.

Key words: Pollution-Rational, Choice, NeoInstitutionalism, Policy Continuity, Ineffectiveness.

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