

# MENDIVE



REVISTA DE EDUCACIÓN

Review article

## Political Ecology as an educational alternative for Sociocultural Management. Study Plan Analysis

La Ecología Política como alternativa educativa para la Gestión Sociocultural. Análisis del Plan de estudio

A Ecologia Política como alternativa educacional para a Gestão Sociocultural. Análise do plano de estudo

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### ABSTRACT

In the international framework, the need for education to achieve environmental awareness based on principles of equity is debated. In this scenario, Political Ecology emerges as an educational alternative, proposing a pedagogical process from collective, reflective, critical, self-critical construction and the modification of attitudes, knowledge and positions with respect to the environment. In Cuba, Higher Education is in charge of becoming deeply involved in sustainable development; In this context, the Sociocultural Management for Development career is developed, which has the potential to respond to the environmental crisis and to include Political Ecology. It is intended, then, to socialize the potential of the study plan of the Sociocultural Management for Development degree from Political Ecology. For this purpose, its educational content was determined, the three study plans through which the degree has passed were compared, with the intention of highlighting the evolution of the treatment of environmental problems and the following were identified in study plan E: relationship, strengths and weaknesses that it presents for the implementation of Political Ecology. The dialectical-materialist approach is used; theoretical methods such as: historical-logical, inductive-deductive and analytical-synthetic; documentary analysis as an empirical method. It is concluded that environmental training in the career has evolved over time and plan E allows for a more complete and holistic training, approaching environmental problems from different angles, tools and scenarios, although still from an anthropocentric vision.

**Keywords:** political ecology; environmental training; higher education; sociocultural management.

### RESUMEN

En el marco internacional se debate la necesidad de que la educación logre una conciencia ambiental basada en principios de equidad. En

este escenario, surge como alternativa educativa la Ecología Política, proponiendo un proceso pedagógico desde la construcción colectiva, reflexiva, crítica, autocrítica y la modificación de actitudes, conocimientos y posiciones con respecto al ambiente. En Cuba, la Educación Superior tiene el encargo de implicarse profundamente en el desarrollo sostenible; en este contexto se desenvuelve la carrera de Gestión Sociocultural para el Desarrollo, la cual tiene potencialidades para dar respuesta a la crisis ambiental y de incluir la Ecología Política. Se pretende, entonces, socializar las potencialidades del plan de estudios de la carrera de Gestión Sociocultural para el Desarrollo desde la Ecología Política; para ello, se determinó su contenido educativo, se compararon los tres planes de estudios por los que ha transitado la carrera, con la intención de destacar la evolución del tratamiento a la problemática ambiental y se identificaron en el plan de estudios E: relación, fortalezas y debilidades que presenta para la implementación de la Ecología Política. Se usa el enfoque dialéctico-materialista; métodos teóricos como: el histórico-lógico, inductivo-deductivo y analítico-sintético; como método empírico el análisis documental. Se concluye que la formación ambiental en la carrera ha evolucionado a través del tiempo y el plan E permite una formación más completa y holística, acercándose a las problemáticas ambientales desde diferentes aristas, herramientas y escenarios, aunque aún desde una visión antropocéntrica.

**Palabras clave:** ecología política; formación ambiental; educación superior; gestión sociocultural.

## RESUMO

No âmbito internacional, está sendo debatida a necessidade de uma educação para a conscientização ambiental baseada em princípios de equidade. Nesse cenário, a Ecologia Política surge como uma alternativa educacional, propondo um processo pedagógico baseado na construção coletiva, reflexiva, crítica e

autocrítica e na modificação de atitudes, conhecimentos e posições com relação ao meio ambiente. Em Cuba, a Educação Superior tem a tarefa de se envolver profundamente no desenvolvimento sustentável; é nesse contexto que se desenvolve o curso de Gestão Sociocultural para o Desenvolvimento, que tem o potencial de responder à crise ambiental e de incluir a Ecologia Política. O objetivo, portanto, é socializar o potencial do plano de estudos do curso de Gestão Sociocultural para o Desenvolvimento sob a perspectiva da Ecologia Política; para isso, foi determinado seu conteúdo educacional, foram comparados os três planos de estudos pelos quais o curso passou, com a intenção de destacar a evolução do tratamento das questões ambientais, e foram identificados no plano de estudos E: relação, pontos fortes e fracos que ele apresenta para a implementação da Ecologia Política. Utiliza-se o enfoque dialéctico-materialista; métodos teóricos como: histórico-lógico, indutivo-dedutivo e analítico-sintético; como método empírico, a análise documental. Conclui-se que a formação ambiental na graduação tem evoluído ao longo do tempo e o plano E permite uma formação mais completa e holística, abordando as questões ambientais sob diferentes ângulos, ferramentas e cenários, embora ainda a partir de uma visão antropocêntrica.

**Palavras-chave:** ecologia política; educação ambiental; ensino superior; gestão sociocultural.

## INTRODUCTION

Currently, education plays a fundamental role in environmental problems, as a result of hegemonic ways of understanding the world. Education has raised the need to think about new styles of coexistence, development and the formation of a new environmental awareness. Since approximately 1950, the topic has been debated in the international context; There are many events with important results that guide how to develop environmental education and

that charge formal and non-formal education with the development of these educational processes.

Recently, the Sustainable Development Agenda until 2030 stands out, where it aims to guarantee education for sustainable development (UN, 2015). Also in UNESCO documents (2018) they charge Higher Education with a position of social leadership to eradicate different problems, from an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach to achieve sustainable development.

In Cuba, in line with the international agenda, Higher Education nowadays has the challenge of becoming deeply involved in sustainable and inclusive development that integrates the social, economic, environmental, cultural, institutional and that contributes to the reduction of poverty and enormous inequalities that characterize the region.

In 2020, the Minister of Higher Education Saborido defines the strategic indicators to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by the Minister of Higher Education, which are consistent with the country's development strategy. Within this, the Universities respond to various tasks in the State Plan of the Republic of Cuba to Confront Climate Change, known as "Life Task".

In this context, and as an alternative towards understanding the environmental crisis and educational solution, Political Ecology emerged in the 60s and 70s and took off in the 90s of the 20th century, as a new discipline of Social Sciences. It is developed from the contributions of Geography, Anthropology, Cultural and Social Ecology, Environmental Sociology, Ecological Economics and Political Economy (Leff, 2017). It studies environmental problems from the power relations that are established and that occur in specific political and socioeconomic structures (Leff, 2017), (Alimonda, 2017) and (Villar, 2017).

Political Ecology has derived more from work in communities than from formal education. In

Cuba, experiences are carried out in the Comprehensive Transformation Workshops promoted by the Comprehensive Development Group of the Capital and the theoretical and methodological contributions are highlighted, mainly from the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), the Department of Sociology of the University of Havana and the "Juan Marinello" Center. Experiences are also carried out at the "Martín Luther King, Jr." Center. (CMMLK) and at the Education and Promotion Center for Sustainable Development (CEPRODESO), in Pinar del Río (Pérez *et al.*, 2022).

Political Ecology, however, can be useful for different teachings, specifically Higher Education, since it proposes a pedagogical process from collective, reflective, critical, self-critical construction and the modification of attitudes, knowledge, thoughts, positions with regarding the environment. It contributes to the formation of political subjects who can participate in decision-making processes and design of environmental, social and public policies, according to authors such as Alimonda (2017) and Leff (2017). Political Ecology uses popular environmental education as its pedagogy, according to Toro (2017) and García (2020).

In this international and national context, the Sociocultural Management for Development career is developed, which has the potential to respond to these needs. It is aimed at the training of a professional with a broad profile, who is currently going through the E study plan. This undergraduate degree is inserted in processes of social transformation, such as: identities, senses of belonging, involvement, participation, commitment, confrontation with prejudices and biased visions, with social asymmetries and in the construction of a more coherent and relevant vision of development and its expression in social and public policies, in attention to individual and collective needs, consultation and mediation of conflict.

It should be noted that the career presents a series of strengths to respond to the need to address the international, national and local environmental crisis. It should also be noted that it has weaknesses, since, for a broad profile career, it does not incorporate training for the solution of environmental problems in its modes of action, especially if related content is worked on in its disciplines and a transversal strategy of environmental education. Taking into account the above, Political Ecology and popular environmental education could contribute to strengthening the training of students studying Sociocultural Management for Development, providing interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary analyses, proposing values such as responsible consumption, environmental justice, consciousness, emancipation, criticism and self-criticism, among others, that contribute to the consolidation of the formation of a political subject, with a different worldview of the Environment, which science demands today.

In relation to the above, the objective of the article is to socialize the potential of the E study plan of the Sociocultural Management for Development degree from Political Ecology. To this end, the educational content of Political Ecology was determined. Subsequently, the three study plans through which the degree has gone (study plans C, D and E) will be compared, with the intention of highlighting the evolution of the treatment of environmental problems.

Authors such as: Moya (2009), who proposes a curricular innovation for sustainability; Borges *et al.* (2019), who investigate the formation of environmental culture and Borges, Riquennes and Zurbano (2022) who study the environmental dimension in sociocultural management. All of these studies have the common characteristic of focusing on curriculum D, prior to the current one, and they do not analyze the curriculum.

For the development of the research, the author of the research methodology López and Ramos (2021) is used. The study is assumed from the dialectical-materialist approach, for the

understanding of the object of study and theoretical and empirical methods are assumed for the study such as:

- Historical-logical: it allowed the determination of the main references of Political Ecology, following the different stages in their chronological succession to know their evolution, development and the fundamental historical connections, revealing the internal logic of development.
- Inductive-deductive: made it possible to determine the educational content of Political Ecology, where from inductive reasoning certain generalizations are reached, to infer or confirm theoretical formulations about our object of study, and which deduce new logical conclusions, which are subjected to checks.
- Analytical-synthetic: allowed to organize the historical-logical findings on the educational content of Political Ecology, taking into account its main theoretical contributions, concepts, relationships and general characteristics based on the results of the analysis.
- Document analysis: to investigate how the training process of sociocultural managers is conceived from the analysis of the study plans through which the career has passed and determine strengths and weaknesses for the use of Political Ecology as an educational alternative. The perfected plan C (2001-2010), plan D (2010-2016) and plan E (2016-present) were analyzed. The analysis was based on determining, based on the educational content of Political Ecology, knowledge, skills, values, methods, techniques, procedures, processes, strengths and weaknesses to incorporate Political Ecology.

## DEVELOPMENT

### 1.1 Political Ecology as an educational alternative

Political Ecology has a long history and very diverse contributions, both from academic research and from citizen practice and its educational content. It emerged as a new discipline in the social sciences between the years 1960 and 1970, driven by the emergence of the environmental crisis, as a field of study and action in close relationship with various disciplines, thoughts, ethics and social movements. Authors such as López (2019), among others, consider that it is still a field under construction.

The Political Ecology approach continues in the process of construction, consolidation and differentiation. It is part of critical humanism and proposes a theory that takes elements from Marxism; but it also includes contributions from ecological economics, environmental law, political sociology, the anthropology of culture-nature relations and political ethics (Treacy, 2020).

Political Ecology has the challenge of deconstructing, rethinking, reorganizing and replacing deterministic and reductionist environmental thinking with one that generates critical reflection and political commitment, based on a pedagogy supported by principles that favor equity, dialogue from diversity and respect for all species. Advocating for a new way of constructing academic knowledge, until now marked by the fragmentation of content and exclusion of popular knowledge; Political Ecology ponders popular knowledge.

Political Ecology must propose a dialogue in the sense of understanding and transforming the environment and the interior of human beings, taking into account values and individual responsibility, to build an ecological culture. It must organize knowledge from an interdisciplinary perspective and the values it transmits must be transversal. It tries to build

new cultural identities around the defense of nature and innovative strategies for the sustainable use of natural resources. Reflect on the effects that our behaviors and practices have on the environment. Collaborates in raising awareness of the ecological imbalances generated by human activity. And it questions modernity, industrial societies and the values and concepts on which they respite (Medeot and Pardo, 2012).

Political ecology allows us to question the sustainability of the development paradigm; understand that the consequences of environmental deterioration are distributed unequally among the different sectors of society and that in this process the understanding of power relations has a lot to contribute. From Political Ecology, then, an alternative way to commercial economic rationality is postulated to govern the mode of production and consumption, since the price system is disbelieved as an efficient mechanism and, likewise, it is questioned from the ethics that promotes (Treacy, 2020, p. 263).

Related to Political Ecology, Popular Environmental Education emerges in Latin America. Political Ecology becomes the theoretical support of Popular Environmental Education, and Popular Environmental Education (EPA) becomes the pedagogy of Political Ecology (Toro, 2017 and García, 2020). Popular Environmental Education is born from the accumulation of alternative pedagogical experiences (Pérez *et al.*, 2022): from Popular Education initiated by Paulo Freire (1921-1997); the sociocritical thought of Leonardo Boff (1938-current), Camilo Torres (1929-1966) and Frei Betto (1944-current); Fals Borda's Research-Action-Participation (IAP) Methodology (1970); currents of Marxism such as that of Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937); the studies of decolonial manifestation and the emergence of the struggles of political environmentalism on the continent. These currents of thought marked and distinguished Political Ecology and Popular Environmental Education in Latin America, the latter daughter of this continent.

The author Torres (2018) determines dialectics as one of her methods, since it is part of the transformative practices of the people, achieving levels of understanding and abstraction that allow us to return to the practice to give it a more strategic and effective character (Torres, 2018, p. 132). García (2020) frames EPA as a socio-constructivist educational current, focused on participatory methodologies such as Research-Action-Participation (IAP). It is based on the guiding principles of learning-by-doing, collective construction and dialogue of knowledge and conscious and self-developing participation, where the subject learns, constructs and develops knowledge through interaction with his or her physical and social environment. It does not prescribe or determine paths, it recognizes the necessary advances, setbacks, changes in direction and the emergence of new needs (Santos *et al.*, 2020) and, in addition, it builds knowledge and problematizes, theorizes and abstracts from the socio-environmental complexity and returns to concrete practice to transform, which means practice, theory, transformative practice (García, 2020).

Popular education also starts with learning by doing, actively involving the participants in each moment, through the use of different participatory techniques (Torres, 2018, p. 134): "these promote environments of trust, analysis, discussion, reflection, planning and organization" (Torres, 2018, p. 134). Pérez (2022) highlights the use of participatory dynamics and techniques integrated into educational purposes "as part of the process of popular environmental education" (Pérez, 2021, p. 515). It is valid to point out that the EPA is aimed at all types of public and the use of these dynamics manages to generate environments of cohesion, commitment, familiarity, cooperation and activism.

Popular environmental education constitutes a counterhegemonic sociocultural response to the complexity and multicausality of the identified environmental problems. In this sense, its philosophical, pedagogical and methodological conceptions are nourished by "sources of

thought that oppose the cultural hegemony of the industrialist development and progress paradigm, which causes poverty, social inequality and natural deterioration" (Figueredo, 2010, p. 81). It should be noted that it carries out a deep analysis regarding the essence of the environmental problem and that it has to do with the hegemonies established towards nature and among men themselves.

Popular environmental education is more than a way of teaching, it is a life practice. Hence the great question: how to live, build, contribute, transform, grow as a human being, dialogue, doing so from the explicit attempt to approach coherence, that articulation between the hands (acting) and the head (thinking), which drives to the car of history, which makes us feel constantly growing as individual subjects and social subjects, active and aware of the moment we live in, and of our roles, because how many roles we play in life, every day, and how much it costs us to be coherent among all of them (Santos, 2013, p. 35).

The approach of Popular Environmental Education assumes the link between teaching and learning as indispensable parts of an educational process that promotes a continuous reconstruction of the lived experience, both of educators and students, and opposes instruction alone. It thus takes sides with expressions of social pedagogy, which place the emphasis on action (by action and for action) and define this as a collective transformation in which individual conscience is not enough (Figueredo, 2010, p. 88). The idea of the collective as added value is assumed, importance is given to people's experiences so that they are later enriched with science and that all learning is practical and leads to action; These are premises that enrich and distinguish the EPA.

It is agreed with Figueredo (2010) who states that Popular Environmental Education as an environmental pedagogical approach conceives learning in such a way that educator and student construct their own discourse and their possible contextualized actions and raises an educational

process that involves transforming ourselves and promoting transformation, cognitive and behavioral level. It must mobilize individuals to improve their realities and promote the articulation of reasons, meanings, work objectives, decision making and proposed solutions to socio-natural problems. It should be noted that a comprehensive, flexible and aware process is generated for students.

The educational process must be designed and implemented in such a way that power circulates; that we are able to share our knowledge with other knowledge; that we know how not only to hear but to listen, to the extent that we accept those who are different; that we accept questioning, problematization, doubt, question and error. It is not about rejecting power but about assuming another conception of it, one that brings us closer to our condition as human beings (Figueredo, 2010, p. 89).

Pérez (2021) determines driving principles that constitute guidelines for action, those that can contribute to this research are mentioned below:

- Principle of transformation: promotes the change of dominant and reproductive paradigms in human action towards emancipatory paradigms, criticism of anthropocentric positions, developmental and economic models that exacerbate predation and extractivism.
- Principle of innovation and contextualization: assumes the ability to innovate and carry out the teaching-learning process in the dimensions: developmental, educational and instructive.
- Principle of coherence and philosophy of life: defends the conception of the EPA, more than as a methodology, as a philosophy of life and includes an ethical aspect that rescues the necessary coherence between discourse and practice.
- Principle of interdisciplinarity: builds ecological knowledge from an integrative perspective.

- Principle of methodological flexibility: guarantees taking into account the particularities of the group; roles are shared in design and coordination.
- Principle of dialogue of knowledge and collective construction of knowledge: group work ensures the promotion of collaborative, meaningful and dialogic learning, which builds knowledge and knowledge collectively.
- Principle of integration and systemic conception: forms systemic thinking, skills of critical understanding and projective construction of the world and a system of socio-natural relationships based on equity and respect.
- Principle of critical and self-developing participation: forms and promotes conscious participation of subjects in environmental problems.

## **1.2 Analysis of the study plan of the Sociocultural Management for Development career**

### **1.2.1. The Sociocultural Management career for development in Cuba**

Cultural and sociocultural management appears as a result of a demand from UNESCO international events in 1966 and 1990, where reference is made to the need to train professionals in the cultural field. The greatest references, studies and results are found in Europe, Argentina, Chile and Mexico, where work was carried out that denotes years of dedication and experience to show its essence and its value for society in general. Cultural management has advanced the most in Europe; In Mexico, Argentina and Cuba, sociocultural management is more used. However, in each of these countries it acquires its own uses and nuances with its particularities and should not be used as equivalents, since they are different processes, it is about establishing the vision with which each of the terms is assumed and used (Borges, 2018).

Sociocultural management has its antecedents in social studies, especially as a consequence of the evolution and deepening of anthropological studies (philosophical, physical, biological or medical anthropology and the anthropology that studies man as a social being); anthropological reflections on culture; Social or sociocultural Education and psychological theories such as the sociocultural approach of Lev Semionovich Vygotsky (Martínez, 2015).

The sociocultural cannot be understood as the sum of the social and the cultural (Martínez, 2015). The current discourse on the cultural dimension of development forces us to rethink the sociocultural as a transdisciplinary category, with various theoretical sources: philosophical, psychological, ecological, system approach, among others. It composes it, then, the economic, political, cultural, scientific, technological, educational and environmental spheres. Hence, it aims to synthesize the complexity of interrelationships that make up society (Martínez, 2019).

The Cuban social project proposes to distinguish in sociocultural management an interdisciplinary training, capable of promoting social development through diverse sociocultural action in the institutions and communities, within the framework of which it carries out its management, promoting the necessary growing protagonism of the masses in the cultural development of society in interaction, and even with the frequent absence of other social science professionals in the fulfillment of these objectives of sociocultural development (Martínez, 2015).

The Bachelor's Degree in Sociocultural Management for Development in Cuba is the result of the improvement of the Sociocultural Studies degree, begun in 1999 on an experimental basis at the "Carlos Rafael Rodríguez" University of Cienfuegos and the "Nico López" National School of the PCC. Starting in the 2000-2001 academic year, it was adopted by different universities in the country, both in

the face-to-face and blended modes in the C study plan.

Its conception occurs as the challenge of conceiving a new university career with the capacity to train professionals in the social and humanistic sciences with diverse skills that respond to the sociocultural needs of the various territories. In 2010, curriculum D was implemented. Later, based on a series of evaluations, it became necessary to subject the study plan in question to a rigorous evaluation that would allow the improvement of the career, its objectives and professional scope, also adapting them to the social and economic changes that are continuously taking place in the country (Martínez, 2015). In 2016, the degree changes to the E study plan, more in tune with the international context and the needs of the country. The degree also changes its name to Sociocultural Management for Development.

### 1.2.2. Curriculum Analysis

To carry out the analysis of the study plan of the Sociocultural Management for Development career, we must highlight that it will be carried out in two senses: first, the three study plans through which it has gone will be compared (study plan C, D and E), with the intention of highlighting the evolution of the treatment of environmental problems in them; and second, an analysis will be carried out based on the educational content (knowledge, skills, procedures, values and methods), to point out the relationship and the strengths and weaknesses that it presents for the implementation of Political Ecology in the degree.

The purpose of the career has changed over the years. The E study plan allows for a more complete and holistic training, compared to previous plans (see table 1). It involves diagnosing, investigating, implementing, evaluating and systematizing. Sociocultural management has different forms such as: environmental, cultural management, promotion, animation, recreation,



accompaniment, advice, mediation, among others. It does not focus only on cultural processes, but also on sociocultural ones, this being a broader vision that also integrates the environmental from the multidisciplinary construction of the sociocultural. It does not only specify the community, but leaves open any scenario where individual and collective human development is managed. It contemplates the need for development, as stated by Ramírez *et al.* (2022), as part of their professional role, making the topic of development one of the most debated in science in recent years and which is the central axis for environmental problems. Although it is an anthropocentric vision to limit only the development of man.

**Table 1-** Object of work of the Sociocultural Management for Development degree in study plans C, D and E

Plan	Work Object	Mode of Action
<b>Plan C</b>	Community sociocultural work. Its mode of action is carrying out specialized work of detection, research and sociocultural intervention; Therefore, the object of the profession is precisely community social intervention that involves work with ethnic groups, gender, territories, generations, urban and rural, tourism.	It prepares professionals capable of carrying out community social work, consultancy, social research, promotion, animation and cultural and tourism management and even teaching training and extension work in the social, cultural, political-ideological and tourism spheres.
<b>Plan D</b>	The cultural processes that occur in different social contexts, especially those that affect the increase in the quality of collective life, spiritual enrichment, the strengthening of cultural identity and the population's capacity for	They imply a special sensitivity to culture and are characterized by the development of an activity, supported by consistent scientific-research work and an attitude of commitment to social development, management, promotion and sociocultural transformation, facilitating active

	participation in those processes.	participation and protagonism of society in the spiritual and cultural enrichment that it needs, in correspondence with the current social project.
<b>Plan E</b>	The sociocultural management processes aimed at enhancing individual and collective human development in the context of various strategies, projects and actions of a social nature, influencing the strengthening of cultural identity and the sense of belonging, to raise the quality of life and participation in social development.	Advise, accompany and facilitate at a basic level for the recent graduate, the processes of understanding, appropriation and consequent dynamization by those involved, of culture and sociocultural praxis as a resource for mediation and indispensable social change, in correspondence with the Cuban social project within the framework of the territory or the instance in which it corresponds to act.

Source: Study plans for the Sociocultural Management for Development degree

It can be seen that in the E study plan (see table 1) modes of action from previous study plans are recognized and described and new modes of action are proposed such as: mediation, facilitation, accompaniment and advice, which make the role of the professional in this career is richer and allows him to approach environmental problems from different angles, tools and scenarios. Transformation could be included as part of the modes of action, since all the actions proposed must lead to transformation, and this is one of the principles proposed by Pérez (2022).

The fields of action of the degree have evolved from cultural, artistic, social, political-ideological and tourism, to sociocultural management and promotion, social theory and methodology, history and cultural thought and Cuban culture, to sociocultural management, social theory and methodology, social history and cultural thought, understanding of social development and social

and public policies and sociocultural training. The fields of action of the career have advanced and increased. Sociocultural promotion has been replaced by sociocultural management, which includes promotion, animation, recreation, health prevention, gender issues, equity and environmental management as forms of action. Development and public and social policies have been included, within which the environmental dimension of the processes is debated. The principle of transformation and interdisciplinarity, proposed by Pérez (2022), can be included to integrate emancipatory paradigms, criticism of anthropocentric positions, developmental and economic models that exacerbate predation and extractivism, and build ecological knowledge from an integrative perspective.

Regarding the spheres of action, those that have to do with sociocultural development, accompaniment, consultancy, research, promotion, animation and sociocultural management, teacher training and training have been maintained throughout the history of the degree. In the E study plan, local, social and community development, the implementation and evaluation of social and public policies, and the consultation and mediation of conflicts appear as new. The sociocultural manager moves in scenarios where he can make use of this training to address dissimilar problems in society; accompaniment, advice, consultation and mediation of conflicts are some of the proposals made to solve environmental problems. Pérez (2022) highlights accompaniment as part of the EPA.

The objectives of the degree have had to do with demonstrating knowledge and appropriation of scientific-methodological tools, developing permanently and effectively processes of professional self-improvement, applying modes of action and using communication and information in a pertinent and appropriate manner. Regarding the self-management of knowledge, it is one of the demands of Political Ecology, according to Santos (2020).

In plan E, as objective number 7, the need to integrate the environmental dimension for adaptation to climate change into local and community strategies, projects and programs in their professional performance appears for the first time explicitly. Although adaptation to climate change is a priority today, this objective could be enriched and provide a more holistic vision of environmental problems, based on the analysis of power relations studied by Political Ecology and analyzing nature as a subject of law, according to Alimonda (2017). Likewise, it is worth highlighting that this is the first time that it includes the environmental dimension as a specific objective.

The graduate must be able to master basic professional skills such as managing sociocultural processes with a local and community nature, advising social actors, training in sociocultural management, researching with an interdisciplinary nature, self-managing their learning, using communicative resources in a relevant and appropriate manner, and carry out actions to defend the country, its culture and national identity. It should be noted that Political Ecology is also an inter- and multidisciplinary process, according to authors such as De la Cuadra and Elizalde (2019).

The fundamental values proposed by Plan E are: patriotism, political-ideological commitment, national and local identity, dignity, solidarity and cooperation, humanism, collectivism, responsibility, honesty and civility. It should be noted that the values are expressed in a general sense in all study plans. These are related to the research interests, but we could also add environmental awareness, responsible consumption, environmental justice, equity, emancipation, reciprocity, sisterhood, sensitivity, co-responsibility, critical, self-critical and political subject, according to García (2020) and Pérez *et al.* (2022).

The work placement of graduates in sociocultural management for development coincides with previous study plans in: cultural, educational, tourism, armed and civil defense institutions,

bodies of Popular Power, bodies of the Central State Administration, social organizations, political and mass, documentation and training centers. The inclusion of institutions linked to social prevention, Public Health and the health prevention system is novel. It should be highlighted, for the interests of this study, the novelty of including institutions related to CITMA, protected areas and linked to environmental management, which implies the recognition of the role that graduates have played in recent years in this area of the knowledge.

Curriculum E has 10 disciplines (see table 2); within them the integrative discipline Sociocultural Management, the common core disciplines and the general ones. The previous study plans differ from the current one in the division of some disciplines, as novelties of the previous plans, by assuming sociocultural management as a mode of action, since the integrative discipline takes that name. The Research Methodology subjects are separated and form a discipline and English leaves the curriculum (table 2).

**Table 2-** Disciplines and hours of plan E of the Sociocultural Management for development career

No.	Discipline	Number of hours		
		Total	Class	Labor Practice
<b>Core curriculum</b>				
1	Sociocultural management	1056	486	570
2	Development and policies social	546	546	--
3	Social methodology	192	192	--
4	Cultural history and social thought	350	350	--
5	Marxism-Leninism	150	150	--
6	History of Cuba	fifty	fifty	--
7	computing	48	48	--
8	Spanish language studies	64	64	--
9	Defense preparation	68	68	--
10	Education Physical	112	112	--

<b>Total hours of the base curriculum by organizational form</b>	2636	2066	570
<b>Curriculum own + optional / elective</b>			
<b>Total hours of own curriculum and optional/ elective curriculum by organizational form</b>	648	648	--
<b>Total hours</b>			
<b>Total hours of the curriculum by organizational form</b>	3284	2714	570

Source: Study plan E of the Sociocultural Management for Development degree

With respect to the subjects, it should be noted that, by tradition, the degree has had a subject that works on environmental issues, which has been modified in terms of its name and content according to advances in science. In the current study plan it is named Development and Environment. Subjects such as Sociocultural Management III and Development Theory also contribute to training in this area of knowledge, others such as Philosophy, Sociocultural Anthropology, Sociology of Culture, Sociocultural Research Methodology I, II and III, can provide knowledge and skills for this training.

Curriculum E had the characteristic of considering a series of content so that the CES could organize and name the subjects according to their experiences. In the case of Development and Environment, elements of the knowledge system that are considered mandatory are considered, which has to do with: nature as a condition and reference of society; the nature-society interaction; contemporary significance of environmental problems and the sociocultural perspectives of their understanding and treatment in conceptions and actions linked to social development.

Curriculum E allows: the addition of content to the subject and the perspective of analysis from Political Ecology and Popular Environmental Education; see this nature-society relationship from power relations (Villar 2017); analyze

nature as a subject of law, according to Alimonda (2017); the causes and consequences of environmental problems as part of the development of current economic and market relations (Leff, 2017); inclusion as a way to solve environmental problems, of popular environmental education as a pedagogy of Political Ecology, according to Toro (2017) and García (2020). Environmental policy can also be included with Cuban regulations.

Curriculum E has 3,284 hours, of which 2,714 are class hours and a total of 570 hours of work practice. Its form of completion of studies is Diploma Work or State Examination, which is made up of a report card and a research report. It is valid to highlight that, by tradition, environmental research is carried out in the degree program in Pinar del Río, in both forms of completion of studies. Work practice contributes to learning through Political Ecology and Popular Environmental Education, according to Torres (2018) and García (2020).

The E study plan aims to train an innovative and creative professional, possessor of a scientific culture, with a high social commitment. Therefore, students must be protagonists of their learning, who make of self-management of knowledge and self-preparation a permanent process.

Plan E proposes methods that are used in the delivery of content, which must enhance cognitive independence, the student's search for knowledge and its realization in practice. They must promote the leading role of students in their own learning and use participatory methods that encourage demonstration, debate, the search for solutions, and the adoption of decisions that take into account scientific, economic, legal, environmental, and equality criteria, gender, physical and mental health, among others. In this sense, Political Ecology proposes the use of methods such as dialectics, PAR, participatory techniques; It has premises such as collective construction, learning by doing, dialogue, starting from what is popular, problematization, theorization and abstraction

and proposes starting from transformative practice-theory-practice, according to Torres (2018) and García (2020).

The organizational forms have to do with the class, study practice, work practice, students' research work, their self-preparation, consultation, tutoring and advice. The evaluation privileges integrative exams and, especially, coursework. In this regard, Political Ecology proposes inter and multidisciplinary analyzes (Pérez, 2020), so integrative examinations, work practice and investigative work are related. That allows performing field studies in which students can experience the problems, which contributes to learning by doing (Torres, 2018) and (García, 2020). Although it should be noted that it does not give rise to including other forms such as workshops, which can be very useful and are widely used in the practice of Political Ecology and Popular Environmental Education.

Finally, it should be noted that for the first time, curriculum E proposes a special methodological indication on the training of students on environmental sustainability and harmonious interaction with the environment as a significant element of sociocultural management for development, for which it states that the groups of the disciplines will assume this issue as a prioritized reference, as appropriate. The provisions that CITMA has in this regard as the central governing body of this activity are taken as a reference and the spaces and possibilities of linking with the science and technology poles must be taken advantage of, as well as the establishment of the necessary link with other organizations involved in each territory with this problem.

Political Ecology has been established over time as a field of study and action, in close relationship with various academic and scientific disciplines, thoughts, ethics, behaviors and social movements (Leff, 2017). This has turned it into an interdisciplinary science (Alimonda, 2017). It has the challenge of deconstructing, rethinking and reorganizing the conceptions of economy, development and culture, which are

the result of the accumulated historical-cultural heritage, to form a political subject (Santos, 2020), which must be critical, reflective, respectful and capable of transforming their reality (Leff, 2017).

Political Ecology, through its pedagogical and educational practice of Popular Environmental Education, uses methods such as PAR (García, 2020), dialectic (Torres, 2018), abstraction and participatory techniques (Pérez, 2021). It promotes a horizontal educational process, where powers circulate, debate, dialogue, problematize, contextualize, build collectively (Santos, 2020), from inter- and transdisciplinarity and wield popular wisdom in addition to science; proposes a process of formation of a political, participatory and transformative subject.

The analysis from Political Ecology and popular education sees this nature-society relationship from power relations (Villar, 2017), analyzing nature as a subject of law, according to Alimonda (2017); the causes and consequences of environmental problems as part of the development of current economic and market relations (Leff, 2017); inclusion as a way to solve environmental problems, of popular environmental education as a pedagogy of Political Ecology, according to Toro (2017) and García (2020).

From the comparison of study plans C, D and E of the Sociocultural Management for Development career, in terms of environmental training, it should be noted that it has evolved over time. Plan E allows for a more complete and holistic training, which allows approaching environmental problems from different angles, tools and scenarios, and the degree is a natural environment that has a close relationship with the conceptions of Political Ecology. This curriculum presents strengths and weaknesses for environmental training and the use of Political Ecology and the EPA.

## Strengths

- It advances to sociocultural management, development studies, the implementation and evaluation of social and public policies, and the coordination and mediation of conflicts appear as a novelty, which includes the environmental dimension of the processes.
- The inclusion of institutions related to CITMA, protected areas and linked to environmental management is novel, which implies recognition of the role played in this area of knowledge.
- There is a subject that works on environmental issues, according to advances in science and others that allow us to approach these debates.
- It allows the addition of content to the subject Development and Environment, related to Political Ecology.
- Curriculum E allows flexibility in the use of methods and techniques, since it guides methods related to Political Ecology and allows the addition of others.
- For the first time, the E curriculum proposes a special methodological indication on the training of students on environmental sustainability and harmonious interaction with the environment.

## Weaknesses

- It contemplates the need for development, although from an anthropocentric vision.
- The forms of teaching are varied, but do not allow for the inclusion of other forms, such as workshops, which can be very useful and are widely used in the practice of Political Ecology and Popular Environmental Education.
- Curriculum E has a high number of class hours and, in comparison, few hours of work practice.

## CONCLUSIONS

Political Ecology in its educational approach has the challenge of deconstructing, rethinking and reorganizing the conceptions of economy, development and culture, which are the result of the accumulated historical-cultural heritage, to form a political, critical, oppositional, reflective, respectful subject, responsible and capable of transforming their reality through collective action.

Political Ecology contributes to the educational process problematization, the principle of inter and transdisciplinarity, a system of skills, knowledge and transversal values, the methods and techniques of popular environmental education and the principles of learning by doing, self-management, accompaniment and attention from the cognitive to the behavioral.

The comparison of the different study plans showed that the E study plan is the result of evolution over time and today allows a more complete and holistic training, which includes the environmental dimension of the processes as a fundamental novelty and allows us to get closer to environmental problems from different angles, tools and scenarios. It is characterized by flexibility and for being a natural setting that is closely related to the conceptions of Political Ecology. But it still maintains an anthropocentric vision that the study of Political Ecology can contribute to rethinking.

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The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

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The authors participated in the design and writing of the article, in the search and analysis of the information contained in the consulted bibliography.

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