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Dossier: Expanding the frontiers of research on climate policies in Latin America

The Napoleonic footprint: how administrative tradition influenced collaborative climate adaptation in Cartagena, Colombia

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Abstract

This article helps illustrate three of the six themes addressed in the introduction to this special issue: the specificities of the Latin American context, the role of national historical-institutional trajectories in shaping climate institutionality and policy, and the challenges of building capacities -in this case, collaborative capacities- for climate action. The study of a plan for climate adaptation in Cartagena, Colombia, sheds light on the influence of administrative traditions upon collaborative governance and its evolution throughout different stages of the policy process. The results expand on previous research about the flexibility of administrative traditions, suggesting that traditions -in this case, the Latin American variant of the Napoleonic tradition- allow for the introduction and success of practices alien to them under conditions of high perceived interdependence. Maintaining the

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new, non-traditional approach, however, may depend on results reinforcing behavioral change -in this case, collaboration. A return to the default behavior under the administrative tradition can take place very quickly. Effective collaborative governance for local climate adaptation benefits from collaboration designs promoting positive intermediate outcomes (small wins) early in the collaborative process and civil society relentlessly reinforcing perceived interdependence in State actors.

Keywords: administrative traditions, collaborative governance, Colombia, metagovernance, climate change.

A pegada napoleônica: como a tradição administrativa influenciou a adaptação colaborativa às mudanças climáticas em Cartagena, Colômbia

Resumo

Este artigo ajuda a ilustrar três dos seis temas abordados na introdução desta edição especial: as especificidades do contexto latino-americano, o papel das trajetórias histórico-institucionais nacionais na formação da institucionalidade e das políticas climáticas e os desafios da capacitação – neste caso, capacitação colaborativa – para a ação climática. O estudo de um plano de adaptação climática em Cartagena, Colômbia, esclarece a influência das tradições administrativas sobre a governança colaborativa e sua evolução ao longo das diferentes etapas do processo político. Os resultados ampliam pesquisas anteriores sobre a flexibilidade das tradições administrativas, sugerindo que as tradições – neste caso, a variante latino-americana da tradição napoleônica – permitem a introdução e o sucesso de práticas estranhas a elas em condições de alta interdependência percebida. Manter a nova abordagem não tradicional, no entanto, pode depender de resultados que reforcem a mudança de comportamento – neste caso, a colaboração. Um retorno ao comportamento padrão sob a tradição administrativa pode ocorrer muito rapidamente. A governança colaborativa eficaz para a adaptação climática local se beneficia de projetos de colaboração que promovem resultados intermediários positivos (pequenas vitórias) no início do processo colaborativo e da sociedade civil reforçando incansavelmente a interdependência percebida nos atores estatais.

Palavras-chave: tradições administrativas, governança colaborativa, Colômbia, metagovernança, mudanças climáticas.

La huella napoleónica: cómo la tradición administrativa influyó en la adaptación colaborativa al clima en Cartagena, Colombia

Resumen

Este artículo ayuda a ilustrar tres de los seis temas abordados en la introducción de este número especial: las particularidades del contexto latinoamericano, el papel de las trayectorias históricas e institucionales nacionales en la configuración de la institucionalidad y las políticas climáticas, y los retos que plantea el desarrollo de capacidades – en este caso, capacidades de colaboración – para la acción climática. El estudio de un plan de adaptación climática en Cartagena, Colombia, arroja luz sobre la influencia de las tradiciones administrativas en la gobernanza colaborativa y su evolución a lo largo de las diferentes etapas del proceso político. Los resultados amplían las investigaciones anteriores sobre la flexibilidad de las tradiciones administrativas, sugiriendo que las tradiciones – en este caso, la variante latinoamericana de la tradición napoleónica – permiten la introducción y el éxito de prácticas ajenas a ellas en condiciones de alta interdependencia percibida. Sin embargo, el mantenimiento del nuevo enfoque no tradicional puede depender de que los resultados refuercen el cambio de comportamiento, en este caso, la colaboración. El retorno al comportamiento predeterminado en el marco de la tradición administrativa puede producirse muy rápidamente. La gobernanza colaborativa eficaz para la adaptación climática local se beneficia de diseños de colaboración que promueven resultados intermedios positivos (pequeñas victorias) en las primeras etapas del proceso colaborativo y de una sociedad civil que refuerza sin descanso la interdependencia percibida en los actores estatales.

Palabras clave: tradiciones administrativas, gobernanza colaborativa, Colombia, metagobernanza, cambio climático.

1. INTRODUCTION

Devastating floods in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and then in Valencia, Spain. Droughts in significant areas of the Amazon leading to electric power rationing in Ecuador and water rationing in Colombia's capital. Giant fires in Portugal and California. Heat waves in Asia, the Mediterranean and Mexico. All in the span of a few months.

As the effects of climate change become more evident, efforts to not just reduce its speed and scope, but also to adapt to its consequences become more urgent. Climate adaptation, defined as "the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects to moderate harm or take advantage of beneficial opportunities" (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2022, p. 7), addresses specific risks – to land and coastal systems, urban and infrastructure systems, energy systems, cross-sectoral systems – with specific measures aimed at making human activities still viable in the new contexts.

Those risks became "clear and present" for many coastal cities in the world since the 2000s, and have kept increasing (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2023). Cities from New York to Jakarta, and from Rotterdam to Santos, have been forced to start adaptation arrangements due to sea level rise (Lewis, 2023; Prefeitura de Santos, 2022; Wright, 2019; Zuza, 2023). This article studies the case of Cartagena, Colombia's main port, key industrial hub, and traditional touristic city, which started to prepare in 2009 to address risks of a 60-centimeter surge in sea levels, 4 degrees heating, and floods reaching many areas of the city, with particularly harsh effects on those communities with the lesser resources to withstand the shock.

Attention to local adaptation is in line with the significant scholarly interest in cities' role in climate change (IPCC, 2024; United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2024). While there is no optimal level of policy interventions to address climate change, given the ample scope of its concurring implications (Gupta, 2007) cities are often highlighted as key venues for climate adaptation for a variety of reasons, including their share in the World's population, the proximity of local governments to citizens and their needs (Cid & Lerner, 2023) and their capacities to translate top-down risk information into more appealing frames like peace or economic development (Cid & Lerner, 2023; Milhorance et

al., 2022). However, results of local climate adaptation are mixed as it confronts multiple challenges including, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) conflicts with the priorities of local elected representatives (Barnett et al., 2015; Barton, 2013); a dichotomy between short-term electoral terms and long-term outcomes of adaptation efforts (Averchenkova et al., 2022) scarce resources compared to the scale of the investments needed, even in high-income countries (Aguiar et al., 2018; Boda & Jerneck, 2019) and an over-reliance on national government's capacities for disaster recovery that could be interpreted to compensate for the scarce capacities to prevent those disasters.

Responses to those limitations of local governments include strategies of polycentric governance (Ostrom et al., 1961) and collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012; Huxham & Vangen, 2000). This article focuses on the latter.

Collaborative approaches to climate adaptation are frequent, given the multiplicity of climate change's impacts upon society that make it a complex, often dubbed "wicked" (Abreu & Andrade, 2019; Head, 2014; Xiang, 2013), or even "super wicked" problem (Lazarus, 2008). But collaboration, too, faces challenges including the risk of collaborative inertia where collaborations are created yet progress is not made (Vangen & Huxham, 2010), and its results depend on a series of conditions that are differently present in different contexts (Douglas et al., 2020; Valdivieso-Cervera, 2023). A part of those contexts whose specific significance is being researched is administrative traditions (Peters, 2008; Van der Wal et al., 2021b).

This article addresses two research questions through the study of a plan for climate adaptation in Cartagena (Colombia): First, how key conditions in collaborative governance models – perceived interdependence and facilitative leadership – influence the outcomes of collaborative plans for local climate adaptation. Second, how these two conditions are influenced by administrative traditions.

After this introduction, section 2 addresses the theoretical framework used in the article to explore the intersections between administrative traditions and collaborative governance, followed by section 3 on methods. Then, section 4 takes on the analysis of the evolution of collaborative governance for Cartagena's Plan 4C for climate adaptation with a

focus on its formulation and implementation and only brief references to the agenda-building and decision phases. Finally, the discussion addresses the responses given to the two research questions in section 5. Section 6 (conclusions) highlights the main contributions to the scholarly literature, specially to the themes addressed in this special issue, and some takeaways for policymakers and civil society.

2. COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE, ADMINISTRATIVE TRADITIONS, AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Collaborative governance is the dominant approach in our time to deal with climate, biodiversity, and sustainability problems, giving its advantages over hierarchies and markets in dealing with complexity (Hartley et al., 2013; Hjern, 1992), as well as the possibilities of the 'collaborative advantage' (Huxham, 1993; Vangen & Huxham, 2010) i.e., the positive effects of synergy between different actors in their joint outcomes, going beyond the simple coordination between them (Cleveland, 1972).

Among different approaches to collaborative governance (Bryson et al., 2020; Emerson et al., 2012) Ansell and Gash's model (2008) stands out for the description of a process.

They define collaborative governance as:

> A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets (Ansell & Gash, 2008, p. 544).

In Ansell and Gash's model of a collaborative process, some conditions make the framework for the process's success: first, as a starting condition, the perception of interdependence between actors with different resources and asymmetries of power; second, facilitative leadership in which leaders help "others to make things happen" (Ansell & Gash, 2012, p. 20) and third, an institutional design with rules that support transparency, trust and

the perception of interdependence. Subsequent research, however, found that collaboration can thrive in the absence of a specific institutional design (Torfing et al., 2020). After the beginning, the process is reinforced by the emergence of trust, shared understanding, and small wins. This research pays particular attention to perceived interdependence and facilitative leadership for reasons explained in the following paragraphs.

Perceived interdependence is the glue keeping partners in the collaboration together (see for example Hendriks, 2002; Liu, 2021). The perception of interdependence can be reinforced during the collaborative process (Ansell & Gash, 2008) or perhaps not be reinforced, leading to the collaboration's decline, as analyses of the Collaborative Governance Case Database in three continents suggest (Ulibarri et al., 2020; Valdivieso-Cervera, 2023). Now, what reduces, or augments, perceived interdependence? Ansell and Gash (2008) point to the contributions of small wins (Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Warner, 2006), ownership of the process, and a sense of integrity in the collaboration as drivers of mutual recognition of interdependence (Saarikoski, 2000). Small wins are the type of positive intermediate outcomes that can reinforce the perception among partners that they can achieve their individual goals via collaboration. Their absence also helps us understand why some collaboratives start to show a decline in perceived interdependence after some time.

Facilitative leadership influences the progress of the collaborative process. Three functions need to be fulfilled in it (Ansell & Gash, 2012): initiating and maintaining the process by protecting its integrity – the role of steward –, building up ownership of the process by the different parties, intervening to manage disputes – the role of the mediator – and "identifying value-creating opportunities and mobilizing stakeholders to pursue them" (Ansell & Gash, 2012, p. 8), the role of the catalyzer. The function of the catalyst may be even more critical than the others since it influences the levels of perceived interdependence.

The catalyst is not only tasked with finding opportunities but also with proposing a vision of how to take advantage of them. As Morse (2010, p. 243) put it, "For integration […] to even be possible, someone has to imagine the process of coming together to create something new". The literature offers examples of the positive influence of the catalyst (Agbodzakey, 2021) and effects of its absence (Rubin, 2019).

Administrative traditions, on the other hand, are "historically shaped cultures, values and practices" (Van der Wal et al., 2021b, p. 297) that are path-dependent and help explain regional and sub-regional differences in the use of administrative practices. They imply, for the States "values, structures, and relationships with other institutions" (Peters, 2008, p. 118). Administrative traditions are expected to create contexts more appropriate for certain types of decision-making than others, including collaborative governance. For example, the Scandinavian tradition should favor collaborative decision-making (Christensen et al., 2016) while the Napoleonic tradition from Southern Europe puts the State on a higher ground than civil society.

Among nine "families" of administrative traditions identified by Painter and Peters (2010) the Latin American one is considered a variant of the Napoleonic one. Civil society has low autonomy in this tradition, like in the Napoleonic one, where the State must defend it because the State is "the incarnation of general interest" (Chevallier, 1996, p. 67). In this tradition, the law is a tool of the State, not a goal for it, and the quest for predictability and uniformity is ubiquitous but superficial. Pecaut and González (1997) observe that, while few countries cultivate the law as much as Colombia, its application is plagued with exceptions.

The Napoleonic footprint in Latin America's administrative traditions, with its legacy of low autonomy for civil society and a higher status for the Sate, could be expected to reduce the possibilities for collaborative climate adaptation through low perceived interdependence by State actors, be they national or local. We could also expect low levels of facilitative leadership by these governments in climate adaptation endeavors, for the same reasons (Douglas et al., 2020; Valdivieso-Cervera, 2023).

Still, the influence of policy diffusion and international cooperation in the region makes it very likely that collaborative adaptation processes will start, championed by those international organizations. The "blueprinting tradition" phenomenon present in international cooperation, where donors support initiatives designed in ways that echo their own administrative traditions (Vink & Schouten, 2018) is likely to be present. Poor alignment of the resulting interventions with existing institutions and (local) administrative traditions could also lead to high degrees of resistance to change in existing practices.

Among the scant previous research on the subject at subnational levels, some cases investigating the initial stages of collaboration suggest that successful collaborative governance is possible in Latin American contexts, despite the adverse administrative traditions and the possibilities that they would collide with "blueprint traditions" for international cooperation (Checco & Caldas, 2019; Curan, 2022; Frey & Calderón-Ramírez, 2019). Other research has shown that administrative traditions do not fully determine all the governance practices within them (Jugl, 2023; Van der Wal et al., 2021a). By studying the relationship between administrative traditions and conditions enabling collaborative governance, this research should help us understand how.

3. METHODS

A single, holistic case study (Yin, 2009), Plan 4C in the city of Cartagena, is used to analyze the presence of two conditions of successful collaborative governance (perceived interdependence and facilitative leadership) in a climate adaptation effort, as well as the influence that Colombia's administrative tradition might have had upon the presence of those conditions.

The Cartagena case was selected for being the first large-scale adaptation effort in a Colombian city. Almost all city initiatives in the period when it was approved and started implementation were oriented toward mitigation – for example, green transportation. There were also reasons for convenience sampling (Miles et al., 2013) like access to sources and documents in a rather large city within the country.

Data was collected from three different sources: interviews with key informants directly involved in the adaptation effort, a questionnaire submitted to them, and the revision of documents including Plan 4C's document (2014), its predecessor, *Guidelines for climate change adaptation for Cartagena de Indias* (2012), the Plan's medium-term evaluation (2019), many specific project reports, presentations, and one of the meeting minutes of the city's climate change adaptation commission. Six undergraduate research assistants and one graduate research assistant helped gather these documents and carry out some of the

interviews, as well as implement the questionnaire, over the 2020-2022 period (See the list of interviews in Table 1 at the end of this section).

Data processing included interview transcriptions, also aided by research assistants and the operationalization of the conditions leading to a codebook employed by the main researcher and research assistants to code the data -assistants' coding was discussed with the main researcher. The presence of conditions was dichotomized in high/low levels, giving the difficulties of affirming that conditions of this type can be completely absent or fully present.

Data analysis occurred in two steps: First, the analysis of the conditions of perceived interdependence and facilitative leadership for each phase of the collaborative process using deductive, descriptive coding (Miles et al., 2013) and following a codebook with specifications for the observation of high or low levels of perceived interdependence and facilitative leadership both in interviews and documents. Other conditions were coded but not analyzed for this specific project. Second, the analysis of the influence of Colombia's administrative tradition by observing the coherence between actions reflected in the coded manifestations of facilitative leadership and perceived interdependences and the those expected from actors within the Latin American variant of the Napoleonic tradition, as it was described in the previous, theoretical section.

Table 1

List of interviews

Subcase	Organization	Role in Plan 4C	Interview Code
City-wide effort	INVEMAR	Head of Global Change and Marine Policy	General1, 09/03/2020
City-wide effort	WWF	Climate Change Coordinator/Urban Policy Coordinator	General2, 09/03/2020
City-wide effort	GIZ	Advisor/Capacity Building	General3, 09/21/2020
City-wide effort	WWF	Conservation and Governance Specialist	General4, 10/06/2020
City-wide effort	DNP	National Adaptation Program Coordinator	General5, 10/14/2020
City-wide effort	Cartagena District	Former Secretary of Planning1	General6, 10/15/2020
City-wide effort	Cartagena District	Former Secretary of Planning1	General6, 12/16/2020
City-wide effort	BDS	Manager	General7, 01/07/2021

City-wide effort	CDKN	Ex-country Manager	General8, 01/08/2021
City-wide effort	Cartagena District	Former Plan 4C Coordinator1	General9, 01/09/2021
City-wide effort	Cartagena District	Former Plan 4C Coordinator2	General10, 01/21/2021
City-wide effort	Universidad Tecnológica de Bolívar	Dean	General11, 01/29/2021
City-wide effort	Bolivar's Center for Thought	Former Director	General12, 02/03/2021
City-wide effort	Cartagena Port Society	Environmental Management Chief	General13, 02/04/2021
City-wide effort	Cartagena District	Former Plan 4C Coordinator3	General14, 08/03/2021
City-wide effort	Chamber of Commerce	Former Director	General15, 02/25/2021
City-wide effort	Community Board Cienaga de la Virgen zone	President	General16, 16/03/2021
City-wide effort	Canal del Dique Foundation	Representative	General17, 05/25/2022
City-wide effort	Cartagena District	Former Secretary of Planning2	General18, 03/12/2024
City-wide effort	Universidad de Cartagena	Teacher/researcher	General19, 10/05/2020
City-wide effort	Planeta Azul Foundation	Director general	General20, 10/14/2020
City-wide effort	INVEMAR	Head of Global Change and Marine Policy	General21, 10/31/2023

Source: Author's interview files.

4. THE EVOLUTION OF COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE IN CARTAGENA'S PLAN 4C

Cartagena's response to climate risks, Plan 4C for its Spanish acronym, was a proposal for a Cartagena "Competitive and Compatible with Climate" – thus the 4 Cs – that would address the specific challenges posed by climate change to the city's ports, industry, tourism, but also to its poorest communities. Several systems of concern regarding adaptation – coastal systems, critical infrastructure, human health and livelihoods (IPCC, 2022) were at risk.

The collaborative nature of decision-making in the plan was illustrated first by the group of organizations that jointly presented it – the city government, the national Ministry of the Environment, the national government's marine and coastal research institute, an international NGO, and the city's Chamber of Commerce – and after that by the operation of

the Interinstitutional Commission on Climate Change with representatives from the city government, businesses, and civil society.

The agenda-building for Plan 4C was initiated at the request of civil society and with a strong coordination between the national government and city authorities, both events rather unusual in Colombia's administrative tradition. Civil society was concerned about the potential impacts of climate change upon the city's port activity – due to sea level rise – and its tourism – due also to sea level rise, but also flooding linked to extreme weather events. Plan 4C was the first of its kind in the country, before a national policy on adaptation was adopted, a situation similar to that of Sao Paulo in Brazil (Checco & Caldas, 2019).

In December 2008, the director of the city's main newspaper, *El Universal*, and the team of the city's mayor, Judith Pinedo, started contacts leading to a large meeting with several actors from the city's civil society where a series of key risks were considered, and some possible strategies to confront them were discussed (General18,03/12/2024).

After that meeting on the newspaper's premises, several of the participating actors started to deliberate on how to address climate challenges. A focusing event (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993) however, accelerated collaboration between three of them: the District, the national government's INVEMAR, and the British NGO, Climate & Development Knowledge Network (CDKN). The focusing event was the extreme rains affecting Colombia between December 2010 and January 2011, which caused floods affecting over 2 million people (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe [CEPAL], 2013). When visiting Cartagena after the floods, President Juan Manuel Santos committed the full cooperation of the national government to help Cartagena avoid similar events in the future. The first direct contributions to that end would come from the country's Marine and Coastal Research Institute (INVEMAR, for its Spanish acronym). Just like in the cases of Recife and Sao Paulo in Brazil (Checco & Caldas, 2019; Curan, 2022) international cooperation, represented in this case by the British CDKN, was important from the beginning.

After this period of preparations, the Plan's formulation formally began in 2012, with high participation from a variety of State actors, and it was adopted two years later with great celebration. Its progress started to stagnate quickly, however, within a process of three phases.

4.1 Formulation (2012-2014)

Jones (1984, p. 77) defines policy formulation as "simply that means are proposed to resolver somebody's perception of the needs that exist in society". Howlett (2010) warns of the likelihood of this being a contentious process, with several actors pressing to prioritize their own priorities and proposals.

Besides being highly participative, the formulation of Plan 4C was uncontroversial. The first document produced in the route to the plan was the *Guidelines on Climate Change Adaptation for Cartagena de Indias*, where the main author was the National Institute for Maritime Research, INVEMAR, but the roles of the Ministry of the Environment, to whom INVEMAR reports, the city's Secretary of Planning, and CDKN were also salient. It was INVEMAR's director, however, who signed the presentation of the guidelines.

The guidelines were the result of workshops, interviews, focus groups, and other activities involving 63 organizations, mainly from the Government and, among them, mostly from the city and regional level, but also from civil society, business, and academia. Only 3 of those organizations represented communities, however. The document identified risks – mainly for tourism, ports, and commerce, the city's oil refinery, and, yes, the city's population – including higher temperatures and higher sea levels but also 10 times more frequent extreme rain periods that would have an impact on health besides damaging infrastructure. The most affected, the guidelines warned, would be low-income neighborhoods around *Cienaga de la Virgen*. Key actions identified were the inclusion of adaptation priorities in the city's planning instruments, the protection of beaches, changes in building/housing expansion, the creation of green "buffer" zones to adapt to floods, and the creation of new, adapted neighborhoods (Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras [INVEMAR] et al., 2013).

However, the publication of the guidelines only launched the work on the plan, which continued for two years, until July 2014. The presentation of the plan was signed by the city mayor, and all the main institutional actors (CDKN, INVEMAR, the Ministry) were also present, yet the salience of the city's Chamber of Commerce was greater. Since early 2013, the participation of other partners became more formal and regular with the creation of the

city's Interinstitutional Commission on Climate Change, but their diversity diminished. The commission had 24 members, only one of them representing communities: the community boards' federation of the city. The city's Society of Engineers and Architects was also part of the commission, together with representatives from the ports, the city council, environmental agencies, foundations, academia, and three representatives of the tourism sector.

The plan was organized around five strategies: climate-compatible ports and industry (including coastal protection and mangrove protection managed by industries), climate-committed tourism (including studies for coastal protection in touristic zones managed by the city), protected historic heritage (including flood-prevention works and old building maintenance paid by the city), adapted neighborhoods (one adapted neighborhood in the urban area, one in the rural area, both managed by the city) and ecosystem-based adaptation (including beach recovery, delimitation of *Cienaga de la Virgen* and mangrove plantation led by the city, INVEMAR, and other national government's organizations). The expectation was that most of the resources would come from non-local actors: Of an estimated cost of some USD 78 million in July 2014, it was expected that the city would only have to contribute 20 percent, the regional government 3 percent, and the local private sector 10 percent. Most of the resources would come from the national government -34%, loans 16 percent and international cooperation 7.8 percent (Alcaldía Mayor de Cartagena de Indias et al., 2014).

The outcomes of the *formulation* stage were satisfactory: a full text of Plan 4C, including a list of strategies and project profiles, was completed without any reports of opposition by key actors. Progress to the decision – the adoption in July 2014 – was seamless.

In this stage, collaborative governance occurred mainly between four main partners: The Cartagena District's Secretary of Planning, the British NGO CDKN, the national government's INVEMAR, and, after the Guidelines were approved, the city's Chamber of Commerce. They received inputs from the other 60 organizations consulted for the Guidelines and the 20 other members of the city's *Interinstitutional Commission on Climate Change* but were the only ones deciding together which risks to highlight, which strategies to prioritize, and which projects to present first.

Perceived interdependence was high both from State and non-state actors toward the others in this phase. In his presentation of the guidelines, the director general of the national-

level INVEMAR emphasized the "collective work of local institutions, together with the private sector and civil society" (INVEMAR et al., 2013, p. 23). Interviews and other documents point in the same direction (General 15,02/25/2021).

"Of the cities in the Coast, it was Cartagena who did its homework. What was our strategy as a team? Always work very inclusively with the community and the private sector. They are very important" (General14, 08/03/2021).

Facilitative leadership was also high, as the very high number of workshops, interviews, and other activities conducted to gather inputs from different social actors recalled at the beginning of this section attests. The city government, through its secretary of planning, joined forces with the Chamber of Commerce and CDKN to convoke business sectors and civil society. The director of INVEMAR, again, highlighted the protagonism of the city government and the Chamber of Commerce in the Guidelines, while the mayor of Cartagena acknowledged the contributions of the Ministry of the Environment, INVEMAR, the Chamber of Commerce, and CDKN in his foreword to the plan (Alcaldía Mayor de Cartagena de Indias et al., 2014). The function of catalyzing was in the hands of the four, not just one of them (General6,10/15/2020, General21, 10/31/2023).

4.2 Early implementation (2014-2016)

Lester and Goggin (1998) define policy implementation as the timely and satisfactory execution of tasks related to the purpose of the law – or the policy decision. After the decision on Plan 4C was adopted and publicized with its presentation in July 2014, what remained was "putting the decision into practice" (Howlett, 2010, p. 185).

It was in the second stage, *early implementation,* that progress started to slow down in Plan 4C. A few of the several specific projects that should have started did start, among them mangrove plantation in some areas around wetlands led by the German cooperation agency GIZ and *Fundacion Grupo Social* and some strengthening of adaptation capacities in communities and industries, always at a small scale. More initiatives, like the delimitation of wetlands, coastal protection for the industrial zone, and maintenance of historic buildings at risk due to climate change, did not start or started at a very slow pace. "When I returned to

Cartagena the process was like […] people talked about Plan 4C, a lot of pageantry, but the feeling that nothing had been done" (General 15,02/25/2021). Resources expected from the national government and international cooperation were not secured at the pace expected.

In this stage, the main partners were the District's Secretary of Planning, CDKN, and the city's public-private partnership *Invest in Cartagena,* the latter mostly by hosting a Plan coordinator paid by CDKN. Involvement by the country's Ministry of the Environment through INVEMAR receded. However, other organizations interacting with them from industry, communities, and the Chamber of Commerce itself, were relevant participants.

Accounts of high perceived interdependence prevail for this phase, but see some decline compared to the previous period. The reduced participation from the ministry and INVEMAR was noticed by other partners. As the representative from CDKN put it, "The metric for the national Government seems to be only to have the plans adopted. Once they are adopted, they (the Ministry) lose interest" (General8, 01/08/2021).

Facilitative leadership also changed, with the function now mainly in the hands of *Invest in Cartagena*, that was expected to facilitate larger participation by businesses in the implementation of the plan. Actual outcomes were not the intended ones, though: Involvement by *Invest in Cartagena* was largely limited to the Plan's coordinator paid really by CDKN, and the expected investments by the private sector didn't occur. Also, despite the involvement of *Invest in Cartagena* being largely the initiative of the Secretary of Planning, there are reports of "jealousy" by the District both toward the organization and toward an academic committee created by a group of scholars to create awareness on the risks of climate change and the importance of the plan. "*They acted with suspicion, but we were only complementing their efforts*" (General6,10/15/2020).

4.3 Late implementation (2017-2020)

In the last stage – late implementation, between 2017 and 2020 – lack of progress in some key areas became more evident. The list of initiatives that did not start of did it very slowly in the previous phase expanded, now including projects for beach regeneration, arborization, and the development of a decision-making tool for resilient tourism.

The pilot project for neighborhood adaptation remained almost completely abandoned. The Plan's evaluation carried out in 2019 showed no progress in its tasks (Sostenible, 2019), and despite efforts to present it again for national funding in 2018, it was not included within the District's priorities when a new administration relaunched adaptation efforts in 2020. That situation had not changed by the end of 2024.

Plan 4C remained largely inactive long after our period of analysis concluded, at the end of 2024, although it has continued to be included in the city's local development plans that guide each mayor's administration. In August 2024, a new District administration called upon representatives from civil society to discuss reactivating the Interinstitutional Commission for Climate Change. This time, instead of discussing the adaptation of large business sectors or neighborhoods, the areas discussed included environmental education, citizen sensitization, and the effects of climate on health, perhaps suggesting a more modest effort (Alcaldía Mayor de Cartagena de Indias, 2024).

Perceived interdependence is reported as high from Non-State actors in the 2017-2020 period, but low from the District toward them, perhaps as a result of a period of political turmoil that saw different, short-lived, administrations in charge of the city in periods of just a few months. Scarce perceived interdependence by the city is very bad news in Cartagena, a city where, according to an academic interviewee, *"the articulating axis of the city is the District's administration*" (General11,01/29/2021). It is clear for key actors that, at least for some at the city government, the expectation of resources from the national government or international cooperation was a key driver of their perceived interdependence, and the strength of that driver receded after 2016. "*Plan 4C was moving until 2015-2016, then we stopped being invited* […] *what happened?* […] *Budget was not assigned to it, so the plan stagnated*" (General 21, 10/31/2023).

Facilitative leadership was almost non-existent in the 2017-2020 period, since neither the District, engulfed in an institutional crisis, nor the national government or the Chamber of Commerce took the roles of convoking and catalyzing that are critical for collaborative governance to exist. "*The Commission has not met much during the last administrations. To be honest, I think only once in this administration*", shared one of the inspirators of the body (General6, 12/16/2020).

In 2019, at the request of the District, CDKN financed a progress report of the plan (Sostenible, 2019) showing how little progress had been achieved.

4.4 The influence of administrative tradition in each phase of the collaborative process

Actions by the national government and the District of Cartagena were more in line with the Latin American variant of the Napoleonic tradition during the implementation of Plan 4C than during its formulation. While formulation saw intense participation by the national and local governments, the implementation phase saw a retreat, particularly in late implementation as described in the previous section. If formulation witnessed both the local and the national government convoking other actors, implementation saw them retreating. This coincides with observations of less perceived interdependence and less facilitative leadership.

Arguments presented in the previous section about a preoccupation of national authorities with just the adoption of plans, rather than their implementation, gain relevance in this context. The State at the national level went from being one of the main leaders of Plan 4C formulation to mostly an observer during its implementation. Infrastructure projects for neighborhood adaptation, for instance, had to compete for national funds with many other priorities (General10,01/21/2021; General18, 03/12/2024). This is consistent with the traditional role of "arbiters" and rule-makers of national governments in the Napoleonic-Latin American tradition.

Being a long-term phenomenon, the Latin American variant of the Napoleonic administrative tradition was present both during formulation and implementation, and it did not impede collaborative governance in the former (see also Checco & Caldas, 2019). The fact that they allow for both the present and absence of collaborative governance suggests that administrative traditions are flexible framework rather than straitjackets (in line with Van der Wal et al., 2021a).

Studying the initial COVID response, Jugl (2023), found that State-centric public administrations can act swiftly if they find urgency. This urgency can be found in the concern about the risks for Cartagena identified by INVEMAR – a national government institute – in

the late 2000s, as well as in the national government's reaction to the "Ola Invernal" of 2010-2011, which included the creation of a national fund for climate adaptation. At the local level, this sense of urgency was even higher, as the description of the plan's origins shows. Initial perceptions of perceived interdependence leading to high levels of facilitative leadership are consistent with this state of urgency, as well as with the expectations of funds coming from both the national government and international cooperation.

At the local level, Colombia's administrative tradition helps us understand why not only there was a reduction in the District's proactive action but also reports of "jealousy" from the District toward other actors promoting the implementation of the plan that we reported above.

A useful concept to understand how State leaders relate to collaborative governance is that of Metagovernance (Sørensen, 2006; for examples of its use in Latin America see Martin, 2022). Blackman et al. (2012) state that, to succeed, collaborations require meta-leaders contributing vision, connectivity and stewardship, attributes very similar to those of facilitative leaders according to Ansell and Gash (2012).

Building upon Jessop's definition of metagovernance as "[…] the organization of self-organization" (Sørensen, 2006, p. 101), Eva Sorensen identifies four possible types of metagovernance: hands-off framing of self-governance; hands-off storytelling; hands-on support and facilitation and hands-on participation.

The roles of both the national government and the District government in Plan 4C formulation easily fit in Sorensen's typology as hands-on participation for the District, effectively leading the collaboration, and a mix of support and participation by different organizations in the national government. In the implementation phase, however, while the District continued to participate, it relinquished its leadership, especially in the late phase of implementation after 2016. The national government turned to a more "framing" mode in the typology, as shown in its determination to make Plan 4C compete for funds.

Sorensen herself shows both how modes of metagoverning can change – in her example about public sector reform in Denmark- and how some of them are more amenable to certain administrative traditions than others – by highlighting that market-oriented reforms were "[…] fused with a specific Danish participatory tradition that underlies the necessity of

involving civil society actors" (Sørensen, 2006, p. 106). The Danish case shows that the same administrative tradition can accommodate different ways of metagoverning, but also that some of those ways are more natural to it. The same seems to be the true for the Plan 4C case: collaborative governance – or the metagoverning way of hands-on participation by State actors, was possible within the country's variant of the Napoleonic tradition during formulation, but a combination of achieved goals in terms of planning and unrealized expectations, especially of fresh resources and "small wins" (Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Vangen & Huxham, 2003), helps understand why, after formulation, the administrative tradition of rule-setting or hands-off framing, rather than support or participation, regained importance and interest in collaborating declined from both the national and the local government, leading to the abandonment of their meta-leadership.

5. DISCUSSION

The article looks for answers to two research questions: one on how conditions in collaborative governance models – perceived interdependence and facilitative leadership – influence the outcomes of collaborative plans for climate adaptation at the local level. The second is on how these two conditions are influenced by administrative traditions.

For the first research question, our findings suggest influences from levels of perceived interdependence and facilitative leadership upon the intensity of collaborative work and the progress achieved in different phases of Plan 4C, leading in one moment of the process – formulation – to high intensity of the collaborative work and significant progress, and later, during implementation, to scarce activity and stagnation. These findings are in line with literature on lifecycles of collaborative governance. State actors at both the national and the local level can be expected to be active in convening others for inclusive decision-making as long as their perceived interdependence is high, and those levels of perceived interdependence are likely to vary during different phases of the collaborative process (Imperial et al., 2016; Ulibarri et al., 2020).

For the second research question, our findings suggest that Colombia's non-collaborative administrative tradition could accommodate high levels of collaborative

governance – the hands-on participation mode of metagovernance by State actors – during the initial phases of Plan 4C when perceived interdependence was high by State actors thanks to high urgency and the expectation of resources. It receded to its default mode of hands-off framing and, at best, support at the local level (Sørensen, 2006) progressively during early and late implementation when urgency diminished and small wins did not materialize. In other words, Colombia's well-known legalistic, centralistic tradition was no impediment for collaborative governance during the formulation phase of Plan 4C, and collaboration was never openly opposed by State actors. Collaborative governance was simply not enforced during implementation, when the urgency of action seemed to recede for the national government after the document was complete and the resources that the city government expected for its adaptation took their time to arrive. When those incentives were missing, the return to traditional, non-collaborative, public administration and approaches to public problem-solving was swift.

These findings are in line with Jugl's (2023) and Van der Wal et al. (2021a) observations about the flexibility of administrative traditions, but also expand them. They suggest an influence of administrative traditions upon climate adaptation that is strong, yet flexible. Acting as a flexible framework, administrative traditions can accommodate actors' behavior more familiar to other traditions – in our case, collaborative governance – when incentives are high enough, facilitating policies like collaborative climate adaptation as it happened in the first phase of Plan 4C. Sustaining this path over time, however, requires maintaining high levels of perceived interdependence – especially through positive intermediate outcomes/small wins – among State actors, both local and national, that could then display facilitative leadership. If that is not the case, State actors will behave again in the logic of their administrative tradition – for Latin America, a logic of State distance, rule generation, and a low emphasis on policy implementation. In the case of Plan 4C, the shift was notorious barely a year after the Plan's approval.

6. CONCLUSION

This research contributes to the literature on administrative traditions by expanding on previous findings by Jugl (2023) and Van der Wal et al. (2021a) and suggesting that, besides administrative traditions not being deterministic and being able to accommodate unfamiliar practices, tradition-backed behavior can return swiftly when incentives reinforcing the new approaches are absent.

Our findings also contribute to the literature on collaborative climate adaptation by confirming the crucial role of facilitative leadership by State actors (Ansell & Gash, 2012; 't Hart, 2014; Torfing et al., 2020). Even in administrative traditions prone to collaboration, non-state actors expect the State to be in the driving seat (Mees, 2017). In Colombia, within the Latin-American variant of the Napoleonic tradition, international cooperation can foster the collaborative process (Curan, 2022; Solorio, 2024), but cannot make it advance by itself. Hands-on metagovernance by capable metaleaders could be a solution, yet it is a strategy on the hands of the same State actors that, in a Napoleonic context, have the hands-off mode of framing and regulating as their default approach to problems.

Takeaways for local policymakers working on climate action in Latin America (see also the contributions by Solorio, 2024 and Figueira et al., 2026, in this dossier) include awareness of the influence of administrative traditions and a suggestion to design local climate adaptation plans, usually aimed at decades-long transformations, through shorter phases where intermediate outcomes are observable. Ideally, at least some goals should be achievable with local resources, as this would likely reinforce the collaborative adaptation process. Also, to take into account that, for the promise of collaboration to transform into reality and increase climate action capabilities, facilitative leadership of those collaborations by the State might be necessary, and pressure from civil society helps achieve such leadership.

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Gustavo Enrique Valdivieso-Cervera: Conceptualization (Lead); Data curation (Lead); Analysis (Lead); Investigation (Lead); Interviews (Lead); Methodology (Lead); Project administration (Lead); Validation (Lead); Writing original draft (Lead); Writing - review & editing (Lead).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

RESEARCH DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The entire dataset supporting the results of this study is available upon request to the corresponding author.

AI USAGE STATEMENT

The AI-supported translation tool DeepL was used for the initial translation of the manuscript into Portuguese. That version was followed by a human professional style correction.

NOTE

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