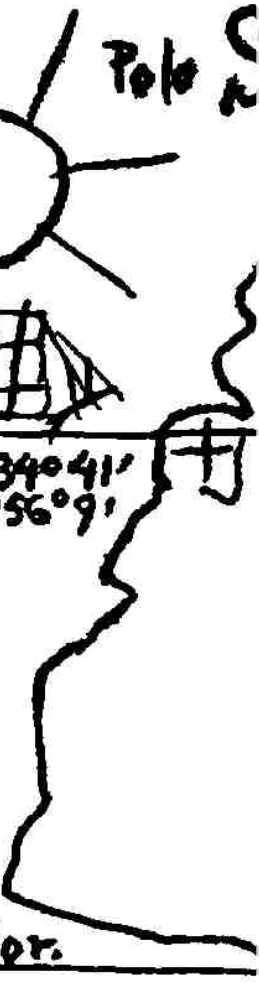
Alternautas

(Re)Searching Development: The Abya Yala Chapter



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Alternautas is a peer reviewed academic blog that publishes content related to Latin American Critical Development thinking.

It intends to serve as a platform for testing, circulating, and debating new ideas and reflections on these topics, expanding beyond the geographical, cultural and linguistic boundaries of Latin America - Abya Yala. We hope to contribute to connecting ideas, and to provide a space for intellectual exchange and discussion for a nascent community of scholars, devoted to counterbalancing mainstream understandings of development.

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Preface

Welcome to the second Journal Issue of Alternautas!

Alternautas is an academic blog animated by a group of young scholars dedicated to critically discussing development from a Latin American perspective. Since we started this project in 2013, our goal has been to generate discussion and challenge assumptions drawing upon the vast and valuable body of thinking emerging from the development debate in Latin America, or Abya Yala.

In early 2015, the Alternautas family grew bigger. In order to make the most of the steady flow of contributions received—as well as to strengthen our capacity to develop improvements, new projects, and collaborations—we opened a call for editors to invite fellow young scholars to join us. Our team is now formed by an eight-member Editorial Board and thirteen Commissioning Editors. This has strengthened our community, allowing Alternautas to organise several panels at international conferences, along with maintaining our vibrant online community. An example of this is the recent panel on Rethinking Development from a Latin American Perspective held at LASA 2015 in Puerto Rico. We have continued to expand the numbers of our subscribers and followers in social networks, becoming a growing platform to share news and announcements of academic and cultural events. We also plan to collaborate on projects with other development-related institutions.

We believe that much still remains to be shared and debated in the timely and original body of thinking arising from the South. That is why we launched the Alternautas journal, to give our blog activity a further boost. Unlike a traditional journal, Alternautas favors short articles, also welcoming research-in-progress and essayistic, experimental writing, while maintaining high standards of academic rigor and the peer-review process of traditional journals. These innovative characteristics are meant to enhance dialogue, exchange and dissemination of ideas among researchers (also early-stage), public scholars, and reflexive practitioners. This new

edited collection aims at further disseminating the short academic writings published as posts on our blog during the first half of 2015. The compilation invites our readers to reflect on development from a range of academic landscapes. The eight contributions presented in this issue deal with a wide array of themes. Some of them continue the debate on topics explored in the first issue of Alternautas, such as the dissonances between the traditional development approach and Buen Vivir in the context of resource management in Bolivia. Others present new topics to our readership such as the concern with academic dependency in the production of scientific knowledge and the possibility of sociology in the peripheries. Although all contributions engage with contemporary debates seeking alternatives to mainstream development approaches, their focuses are wide-ranging. They include the mutually enriching contributions of feminism for post-growth perspectives and vice-versa; the role of grass-root expert knowledge in water and forest management; the social, economic, environmental and political tensions created by commodities-oriented development; the multiple spillover effects and further repercussions of extractivism in the Ecuadorian Íntag; and the discussion on whether INGOs in Haiti can be considered as agents for alternative development approaches.

An asset of this issue of Alternautas is the array of geographic locations explored. Although some posts are theoretical reflections and others focus on Latin America as a region, some examine concrete cases in countries including Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Haiti. This geographic and thematic breadth encourages us to continue seeking and proposing new horizons of debate around development issues in Latin America.

Sue Iamamoto's piece discusses the tensions that have arisen in Bolivia in determining whether Buen Vivir is a new development paradigm or yet another traditional development approach. In order to illustrate these tensions, she presents empirical accounts from actors mobilised in 2003 during the 'Gas wars'. By focusing on people's perceptions in the context of the mobilisations, Iamamoto presents narratives of the actors in urban and rural settings with the purpose of exploring how they express different perspectives on development. She reflects on the normative dimensions of how a Buen Vivir discourse positions itself as a paradigm building on balance and fairness and, in a way, situated in opposition to the idea of living better, which relies on a conception of development based on consumption and economic growth. The text concludes that, despite these issues

not being treated with the seriousness they deserve by state authorities in Bolivia, Buen Vivir has the potential to contribute significantly to debates related to environmental problems and indigenous rights in Bolivia and might be used as a tool by the diverse groups struggling on this front.

Johannes Waldmüller's contribution focuses on the spillover effects of extractive industries on multiple spheres of society such as the environment, territory, rights, justice, democracy and people's resistance in Latin America. He reports and comments on a presentation offered by Eduardo Gudynas at FLACSO Ecuador on 3 March 2015 and focuses on the social effects of extractivism and the global resource dependency being promoted in Latin America. The text elaborates on the combination of effects that led to the implicit or explicit use of violence; para-legal forms of governance to legitimise imposed extractive projects; and an idea of national development based on 'modernization' which serves as the ideological basis and justification for extractivism. Waldmüller uses these reflections to analyse an Ecuadorian mining project in the Íntag region between Quito and the Colombian border. The Íntag case exposes how local communities are caught between promoting a large-scale mining project and endorsing local community projects that promote a different model of development, based on agriculture, eco-tourism and eco-coffee plantations. Waldmüller's text echoes Iamamoto's in contributing to development thinking contrasts with the mainstream development narratives' justification of extractivism.

Furthering the critical literature on extractivism, Maristella Svampa's article presents Latin America as having joined a "Commodities Consensus" in which the ideological differences between governments are left aside in following the irresistible character of the extractivist approach. Latin America plays its part in maintaining the current world economic and political-ideological order by deepening its historical position as a provider of raw materials. Svampa stresses that despite its attempt to become the only game in town the Commodities Consensus is at the core of the numerous conflicts over environmental and land management that the region has witnessed in recent years. Underpinning such conflicts is the questioning of extractivist development models. Svampa's contribution shows that proposals labelled as "leftist" appear insufficient to counter extractivism because their focus on production blinds them to the key issues raised by the "eco-territorial turn". The battle is instead being fought by those that share a common language—one that builds on a "communitarian-indigenous matrix" and puts forward

discourses on the defence of the territory and environmentalism. These frameworks not only allow organizing for collective action, but also lead to producing a collective subjectivity. Yet, as Svampa reminds us, these coalitions face numerous challenges, such as the disconnection between rural areas and urban workers' unions, which typically defend developmentalist paradigms. In that light, the most important task of these coalitions is to consolidate their ability to build an alternative horizon of desirability.

It is also an interest in new horizons of desirability that drives Silvia Vega Ugalde's post (translated from an original chapter in the book Post-Crecimiento y Buen Vivir: Propuestas globales para la construcción de sociedades equitativas y sustentables, edited by Gustavo Endara). This post engages with the concept of sumak kawsay from a feminist perspective, showing how different readings of the concept of "gender" correspond to different understandings of "sumak kawsay". From Vega Ugalde's exploration emerges a mutually enriching dialogue for feminist and post-growth perspectives proposing the construction of new development utopias, understood as guiding stars that set the target for a society that would overcome patriarchy as an intrinsic part of capitalist oppression. Indeed, both concepts find common ground in changing relations of production and domination to put the sustainability of life at the centre. This article is especially interesting at a time when the Latin American governments that put forward alternatives to the development paradigm are stuck in reformist agendas that struggle to achieve the promised transformations.

In her contribution, Maria Eugenia Giraudo provides us with a concrete example of the commodities consensus that Svampa describes. She explores the case of the complex of Gran Rosario, an agro-industrial cluster in Argentina that has become one of the largest and most efficient hubs for commodity transport in the world, especially for transporting soybean. The piece argues that commodity hubs are part of corridors designed to reach global markets and flourish by the process of concentration of capital and production of space, ultimately creating new geographies of capital. The case of Gran Rosario is analyzed as an example of how the dynamics of capital require a certain spatial fixity in order to guarantee the maximisation of profits. This paper also connects to Waldmüller's contribution in making the case that large-scale infrastructures act as enforcers of the economic, social and environmental transformations that an extractivist frenzy is imposing throughout Latin America.

Julia Schöneberg's contribution, "INGOs in Haiti: Development Actors as Agents for Alternatives to Development?", asks whether the third sector in Haiti could be a space to put forward concrete and constructive alternatives to mainstream development. Based on the key role that International Non-Governmental Organizations have in service delivery and post-disaster relief in Haiti, the paper engages with the post-development critique of mainstream development models. Skeptical of the transformative potential of NGOs in local contexts, Schöneberg concludes that although INGOs may offer some spaces to engage with alternatives to mainstream development, these remain restricted to a dominant managerial framework that focuses on project logic, efficiency and quick and measurable results.

Emilie Dupuits also focuses on the third sector and opens up the discussion on an important topic in development studies with a post on grass-root expertise. She focuses on the appearance of transnational networks bringing together community-based organizations opposing the increasing globalization and commodification of common-pool resources. Dupuits focuses on water and forests, two resources traditionally managed at local or national levels. Although there are now numerous efforts to set global management schemes for both forests and governance, these are areas where governance is highly fragmented. Dupuits presents us with the fascinating cases of CLOCSAS and AMPB, their differences and the challenges they face. CLOCSAS frames water as a global common and a universal human right and bets strongly on associativity between different local organizations. AMPB, by contrast, frames forests as embedded in local territorial rights. While CLOCSAS aims at constituting a professionalized network, AMPB fights for the recognition of local organizations from a perspective of self-determination and demanding respect for ancestral territoriality. Notwithstanding these differences, both networks aim at gaining “direct representation in global governance arenas and to transform languages of expertise around governance norms and the scales on which they operate”. Transforming the language of expertise entails redefining actors’ understandings and perceptions of natural resources.

Finally, we would like to draw attention to Fernanda Beigel’s post, where she reflects on power imbalances in academia, a fundamental topic for our blog. This post addresses some of the shortcomings of Piotr Sztompka’s view of sociology as the discovery of supposedly universal laws of humanity and his criticism of alternative sociologies as a field of inquiry. Beigel focuses on academic dependency,

which she defines as "encompassing the unequal structure of production and circulation of knowledge that has emerged historically along with the international scientific system". To illustrate her point, she highlights some of the numerous structures—such as publishing models—that perpetuate academic dependency. Beigel situates alternative sociologies within the long and fruitful history of critical studies, thus countering Sztompka's argument that the denunciation of academic dependency is nothing but an ideological exercise. Indeed, she explains that intellectual dependence, Eurocentrism and colonialism in the field of knowledge production have been scrutinized since the 1970s and have served to nourish the pluralism that exists in sociology, "in the West as much as in the Rest".

We would like to encourage readers of this collection to further engage with Alternautas by commenting and sharing. As always, we welcome new contributions that critically engage with development thinking from Latin America.

These should critically reflect on the boundaries of mainstream development and/or discuss alternative paradigms. Empirical enquiries and theoretical explorations are equally welcome. Our platform aims at providing a space wherein authors can share and test new and provocative ideas that might later be published in more traditional academic media. We are particularly interested in discussions that bring together the social, political and ecological dimensions of development, embedded in Latin American thought. We are fully aware that much of the intellectual production from Latin America in Spanish or Portuguese is hindered by a language barrier from entering into dialogue with the rest of the world, and we are committed to making such work available in English so that the field is levelled for an engagement in the wider academic conversation on development. For the future, we intend to further enrich the dialogue on our blog by encouraging comments and discussions on the published posts. Additionally, we hope to launch a new section that will offer book reviews. Stay tuned for news on these and other developments, and help us spread the word that Latin America has its own voice, and one that needs to be heard.

The Alternautas Editorial Board,

Adrian E. Beling, Ana Estefanía Carballo, Anne Freeland, María Eugenia Giraudo, Juan Loera González, María Mancilla García, Julien Vanhulst, and Johannes M. Waldmüller

From a virtual Abya Yala, July 2015.-

JULIA SCHÖNEBERG*

INGOs in Haiti: Development Actors as Agents for Alternatives to Development?[1]

Haiti. The "Pearl of the Caribbean", the proud country with the only successful slave revolution in history, the first independent black republic. Usually these are not the attributes that immediately come to mind when thinking about Haiti. Quite in contrast, Haiti is known as the "Republic of NGOs", the country with the second highest number of foreign NGOs in the world.[2] Even before the disastrous earthquake in January 2010 Haiti was already known as the poorest country of the Western hemisphere despite -or as some argue, due to- decades of international intervention and development efforts. Continued international support for past dictatorships has led to famines, human rights violations and kleptocracy. Haiti is generally considered a failed state, with weak governmental structures, little state accountability and high vulnerability to environmental catastrophes.

NGOs, once hailed as magic bullets to solve political, social and economic problems, have been criticized from many different perspectives, but nevertheless continue to be important actors in the development landscape of Haiti. However, five years after the disaster, the situation in Haiti has not essentially changed. At the same time, in general, the apparent failure of development approaches has also generally resulted in a fundamental critique of mainstream development, as proposed by Post-Development theory. Post-Development demands the

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[1] Article originally published in http://www.alternautas.net/blog/2015/3/4/ingos-in-haiti-development-actors-as-agents-for-alternatives-to-development on March 4th, 2015.

[2] Mark Schuller: Invasion or Infusion?

questioning of the dominant discourses, representations and the power/knowledge nexus and argues that this can only be achieved by local, i.e. Southern, movements and organizations themselves. In this regard, strategies of Alternative Development and their participatory approaches are contrasted with the call for radical Alternatives to Development and the complete rejection of international development cooperation as such. Some theorists nevertheless contend that the cooperation of local and international organizations within the demands of Post-Development is possible. They argue that "the postdevelopment agenda is not […] anti-development. The challenge of postdevelopment is not to give up on development, nor to see all development practice – past, present and future […] as failed. The challenge is to imagine and practice development differently."[3]

NGOs, particularly those seeking to imagine and practice alternatives, are confronted with the pitfalls of this aspiration and the reality of being a part of the structured mainstream development apparatus. Very little practical research has been conducted so far, both about the consequences for their work, as well as conflicts within Post-Development theory itself. Indeed, although Post-Development has been discussed extensively on a theoretical level and been criticized for lacking propositions of concrete and constructive alternatives, spaces for a practical Post-Development implementation have yet to be explored. In this discussion, I thus aim to investigate what practical contribution Post-Development has to offer for progressive development work. For this reason, the focus is laid on partnerships and cooperation between Haitian and international NGOs. Field research was carried out in the Haitian capital and in four departments between 2012 and 2014. Data was collected through participant observation, narrative interviews and group discussions with International (INGO) and Haitian NGOs (HNGO) staff, activists, community leaders and grassroots groups.

The Post-Development critique

Different development and poststructuralist critiques in the 1980s and 1990s, according to which power, ideology and representation are the root causes of apparent problems rather than economic nor methodological topics, eventually led to the deconstruction of the development paradigm and the emergence of Post-Development theory. Post-Development argues that (classical or mainstream)

[3] Gibson-Graham: Surplus Possibilities, p. 6.

development has failed and needs to be dismissed. From this point of view, approaches of Alternative Development should not be pursued any longer, but rather Alternatives to Development be sought. Post-Development differentiates itself particularly from Alternative Development in that "inequalities are perceived through political rather than technical lenses."[4] Roughly, Post-Development theory can be divided into two waves. Radical authors of the first wave [such as Escobar (1985, 1992), Esteva (1997) Esteva and Prakash (1998) Ferguson (1997), Kothari (1997), Latouche (1993), Rahnema (1997), Rist (1997) and Sachs (1992)] reject international development cooperation altogether. However, they have also been criticized for romanticizing poverty and homogenizing the subaltern. More skeptical second wave theorists, such as Ahorro (2008), Matthews (2004, 2007), McGregor (2009), Nustad (2001, 2007) and Ziai (2004, 2007), have been less exclusive in their arguments. They hold external actors' involvement in development cooperation acceptable under certain conditions.

I base my discussion on two skeptical Post-Developmental arguments in particular. First, in the "development-as-politics" approach, McKinnon envisages selective interactions and political confrontations of local actors with NGOs.[5] The need for this politicization has also been identified by Ferguson. He contends that in neither guise "does the "development" industry allow its role to be formulated as a political one."[6] The technical framing de-politicizes the problem of poverty and inequalities and frames it in a managerial and technical way. According to McKinnon, it is not necessary to question the involvement of external actors wholly, but much more important to make clear "who should be inviting whom to participate"[7] in development processes. A similar proposition has been formulated by Matthews. She asks what (meaningful) contribution the "privileged" can make.[8] Like McKinnon she does not rule out a role for Northern (international) actors within the realms of Post-Development. Nevertheless, the question remains whether such a role according to the demands and premises of Post-Development is viable at all, and what a practical realization would look like that does not

[4] Andrew McGregor: New Possibilities?, p. 1696.

[5] Katherine McKinnon: Postdevelopment, Professionalism, and the Politics of Participation, p. 779.

[6] James Ferguson: The anti-politics machine, p. 256.

[7] McGregor, Ibid., p. 1697

[8] Sally Matthews: The Role of the Privileged in Responding to Poverty: perspectives emerging from the post-development debate.

perpetuate aspects of the formulated critique with regard to paternalism and cooptation.

However, before this exploration commences a word on the use of binaries is necessary. Employing binary terms while attempting to criticize the dichotomous description of different parts of the world is problematic. It can only serve as generalization, yet it may prove to be helpful in confining external and internal roles to those of alleged experts versus beneficiaries. Agreeing with Matthews, the poor or oppressed will be defined as those "who struggle to meet their everyday material needs" and are faced with "exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence."[9] This means that the privileged are not necessary those located in the global North, but those that have unrestricted access to a variety of material and non-material resources. For the sake of this analysis INGOs are framed as such.

"We also understand your idea, but we can't….." ideal constructions of partnership and cooperation and their clashes with realities

The concept of partnership is the dominating theme in how INGOs formulate their vision and approach. They consciously "no longer seek to impose their vision of development […] but instead wish to be partners in strategies determined and owned by recipients themselves."[10] They formulate a clear ideal type of partnership. However, interviews and observations with INGO respondents carried out on my fieldwork pointed to vast clashes of reality and construction. On the one hand, respondents show reflexivity, on the other they are eager to find justifications for why they cannot abide by the self-proclaimed principles. Largely there seems to be a high awareness about the short-comings of the own work; however, these are legitimized with outward and situational requirements and pressures. The sources of problems are located in the set-up of the development apparatus, its rules and restrictions, and the actors that consciously or unconsciously work to perpetuate this structure rather than reforming it. INGO actors feel they do not have any choice other than to abide by the rules and assume the role of intermediaries. They are torn between their ideal vision of work and the requirements they feel exposed to. Central to this trickle-down intermediarism is the quote: "We understand your

[9] Ibid., p. 132.

[10] Abrahamsen: The power of partnership, p. 1453.

idea, but we can't…"[11], pointing not only to the restrictions of the dispositif but also to the upward accountability structure and the inevitable interconnection of time, money and efficiency. Essentially, the idea of change, framed within categories of activism or protest, is contradictory to the existing bureaucratic structure with its focus on time, efficiency and the documentation of results. The dominant conduct of development interaction does not allow for this idea, even though that may be the official discourse and aim.

Repoliticizing development

The analysis of interactions within the realm of project work shows that (power) imbalances within the relationships persist and cannot, despite awareness of their existence, be overcome. In exploring possible alternative roles for the so-called privileged (i.e. INGOs) it can be asked whether engagement in project work, due to its inherent faults, is valid at all or should be replaced by a different mode of engagement. One possible solution is the involvement in a more profound way by means of funding social change. Research has found that Haiti does not only have a history of community-based grassroots organisations and cooperative forms of work and mobilization, this culture can also still be found at present. To further explore a possible role of the privileged the hypothesis is posed that if people have rights, i.e. they can be citizens, they are able to assume a much more powerful position in order to prompt processes of change. To frame this hypothesis I make the following assumption: In order for development (interaction) to be meaningful and for it to produce long-lasting change it inevitably has to be political. The analysis of interaction within the realm of project work has demonstrated that a lack of further reaching social, political and economic demands leads to the implementation of the status quo. In this context, local organisations work to maintain this status, despite their initial progressive potential and the reliance on self-help and solidarity. The "Republic of NGOs" and its structures, rules and restrictions has been "diverting people's attention away from engagement with the government. […] They feel like that is a losing game and so they would rather lobby an NGO [and] […] settle for […] these little handouts because it seems more tangible versus the bigger picture change."[12] It could be argued that the inherent pitfall in current interactions is the emphasis on projects rather than movements. In thinking about a theory of

[11] INGO respondent 2012.

[12] INGO respondent 2014.

development-as-politics the need for a repoliticization of development is assumed. This thought assumes that the current framing of development depoliticizes the problem of poverty and frames it in a managerial and technical way.[13]

"What can YOU do to help us that the state listens to us?"

Haitians interviewed have demanded the state to take more responsibility. They claim that the state needs to listen and act. A participant of the kombit, a community work event based on self-help and solidarity structures, in the community of Fage explained the precariousness of the community's living conditions and the feeling of being neglected and left behind by the state. He posed the question: "What can you do to help us so that the state listens to us?" This leads to the concept of citizenship and structures of civil society. Starting from a Gramscian understanding, civil society constitutes an "arena in which hegemonic ideas concerning the organisation of economic and social life are both established and contested."[14] Indeed, this sheds light on the demands raised by Haitians for support to make the state listen. INGO support of civil society while neglecting the capacities of the state can cause an aggravation of problems, as the state remains weak.[15] This produces a continued dependence on external intervention. Indeed, local groups do not struggle to build parallel structures to the state, they seek to engage with it and hold it accountable. In this regard, the state cannot be neglected. The support of protest and resistance needs to find a form "which avoids either by-passing civil society or undermining the state."[16] Engaging social movement theory with notions of citizenship points towards an understanding of "mobilising citizens as knowledgeable actors engaged in a dynamic, networked politics across local and global sites."[17] Following this line of argument, a starting point for a role of the privileged within a practical form of Post-Development is the support of political resistance movements and social justice advocacy. This approach differs from models of Alternative Development as it tackles sources of poverty, inequality and injustice rather than merely dealing with symptoms.

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[13] Edward Royce: Poverty and Power, pp. 288-289.

[14] Bebbington et al.: Can NGOs make?, p.7.

[15] Alan Whaites: Let's get civil society straight, pp. 131-134.

[16] Ibid., p. 135.

[17] Leach and Scoones: Mobilizing Citizens, p. 3.

Haiti has been dubbed the "Republic of NGOs" for decades, not only since the earthquake in 2010. In 2002, the overall government budget of Haiti was roughly equivalent to that of the town of Cambridge, Massachusetts: a population of 10 million compared to 100,000.[18] Yet, the catastrophe has made the disastrous impact of this structure even more blatant. Of the almost US$ 6 million of official aid disbursed to Haiti an estimated 90 percent bypassed the state and public agencies and was channelled via (international) NGOs.[19] It is no surprise that as a result public services remain chronically weak or worse, nonexistent, and that the thousands of (I)NGOs who are filling this gap reproduce an infrastructure with limited accountability and sustainability. However, one of Haiti's greatest strengths are the many ways in which ordinary people organise to support one another in cooperatives and solidarity structures such as gwoupman or the kombit.[20] This wealth of social capital, oftentimes neglected by external actors, can serve to provide the much needed basis for building a responsive Haitian state that listens and reacts to the demands of its citizens. A shift from private (i.e. INGOs or corporations) to public ownership of services, rights and accountabilities is very much needed. Although the social and political landscape is certainly challenging, there are openings where social movement actors are engaging with state institutions and prompting change processes. Successful examples include DINEPA, the National Water and Sanitation Directorate, and its collaboration with local community groups in improving infrastructure and the Ministry of Women's affairs, which in collaboration with the network of women's organisations is leading the drafting of a much needed law against violence against women. To support these efforts the privileged can support the capacity of social movements to "build constituency, engage public decision makers and hold [...] [them] accountable."[21] Project logic is not appropriate in this context. Rather, INGOs need to be flexible. They can support the communication costs of movement or network members and enable new channels such as the internet or social media. Other possibilities are the funding of legal advice and training, media training or advice on internal organisation. Most importantly, they can provide access to small sums of money for

[18] Paul Farmer: Haiti after the Earthquake, p. 135.

[19] Daniel Moss: Building back Haitian Government Responsiveness, p. 4. ; Vijaya Ramachandran et al.: Haiti: Where has all the money gone?, p.1. For a detailed overview of foreign assistance to Haiti, funding channels, recipients and private contractors see Rachmandran/Waltz (2012) and http://www.lessonsfromhaiti.org/lessons-from-haiti/international-assistance/.

[20] Daniel Moss:. p. 2.

[21] Ibid.

"funding impromptu protests and emergency meetings"[22] in situations where the movement needs to react quickly.

However, there are limitations to be considered. Social movements distinguish themselves from INGOs in three aspects in particular: the degree of professionalization, the degree of politicisation and the fabric of their membership. NGOs are much more statist and immobile in their engagement, strategy and structure while movements are fluid. Interactions will inevitably clash at the point where the demand for the formulation of measurable indicators collides with the need for spontaneous and flexible reaction to newly arisen situations and events. Additional pitfalls arise regarding power imbalances and the risk of cooptation from the constellation of global NGOs interacting with local movements. There is the danger that interactions remain focused on the provision of financial funds and are determined by inherently paternalistic positions of speaking and listening and structures of representation. Nevertheless, funding social change and engaging in social advocacy seems to offer more spaces for contributing meaningfully than within established structures of projects.

Building from these findings, seeking global solidarity is a further viable entry point for a form of development-as-politics. This approach incorporates three main elements. First, the most important precondition for sustainable change is the dissolution of binaries. The employment of a global, political lens does not mean sacrificing the local for the sake of the global, but rather the dissolution of framing poverty and inequality as matters located in certain parts of the world and realising its factuality as a global problem. Second, transnational networks may be able to challenge structures that produce and maintain these inequalities. Networks that rely on the mutual exchange of knowledge and experience rather than the injection of expert knowledge usher in agency and open spaces of speaking and listening rather than of cooptation and representation. Third, one of the most restricting factors in attempting to achieve meaningful development was the imbalance in relationships resulting from the unequal distribution of resources and financial means. A shared management of available funds rather than the disbursement from one party to another can provide a solution for this shortfall. A possible solution is a global fund that is administrated by transnational networks.

[22] http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3198

In conclusion, one can say that although INGOs may have some spaces to engage in Alternatives to Development, these spaces remain restricted. To open these, it is inevitable that project logic, with its focus on efficiency and quick and measurable (quantitative) results, is abandoned in favour of more flexible and progressive ways of engagement. To counter the mainstream managerial frame, thinking within terms of global solidarity as a means of development-as-politics could provide the necessary tool for unravelling the "complex relationship between [...] egalitarian justification and [...] hierarchical structure, between the discourse of partnership and bottom up, and the reality of donor power and a global hegemonic discourse on development."[23]

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[23] Terje Tvedt: Development NGOs, p. 136.

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JOHANNES M. WALDMÜLLER*

Analyzing the Spillover Matrix of Extractivism: From Para-legality, Separation and Violence to Integral Health in the Ecuadorian Íntag[1]

On 3rd March 2015, Eduardo Gudynas held a talk at FLACSO, Ecuador, titled "Los efectos derrame de los extractivismos: energía, consumo, territorio y resistencias" ("Spillover effects of extractivisms: energy, consumption, territory and resistances") at a one-day conference on energy matrices in Latin America and possible shifts. In his presentation, which I was kindly granted access to report and comment on, he deduced in detail the effects on several sectors of societies of persistent, and partly reinforced, heavy dependence on natural resources, as in countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia, Mexico and, of course, Venezuela (whose oil exports account for 96% of its export earnings, thus virtually exporting nothing else). It should be stressed that these mechanisms reside not only in the foundations of climate change, but also inherently in global capitalism and warfare – altering them would be equal to improving the current state of the planet.

In this sense, it is crucial to acknowledge that the extraction of so-called 'natural resources' is necessarily and unavoidably violent – violent against nature, law, societies, indigenous peoples, democracy, ideas of justice, etc. - and that this violence penetrates further into our current global economic and political system.

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[1] Article originally published in http://www.alternautas.net/blog/2015/3/20/analyzing-the-spill-over-matrix-of-extractivism-from-para-legality-separation-and-violence-to-integral-health-in-the-ecuadorian-ntag on March 22nd, 2015.

In this contribution, I will first summarize the destructive dynamics and effects that the Uruguayan social-ecologist Gudynas so meticulously studied and laid out, in the order he presented them, that is, sector by sector. In a second step, I will take up three powerful key concepts for these effects, as he has described them, i.e. "*alegalidad*", separation and "techno-developmental optimism", in order to continue these reflections toward another socio-environmental conflict case of current importance – around the mining project in the Ecuadorian Íntag. My aim is twofold: to demonstrate the cultural and values-related effects and causes of extractivism ('*extractivismo*', widely used in Spanish literature, but strangely enough never broadly incorporated into any other Western language) in Latin America. In addition, to advance a different sort of thinking that counters the main narrative for justifying extractivism.

The so-called "spillover effects" can be identified, according to Gudynas, with having a clear impact on the following relations, which are all the more interrelated:

- environmental/nature,
- territorial,
- cultural,
- rights-related,
- economical,
- justice-related,
- on the State,
- globalization-related,
- and on democracy per se;

Environment and nature

Let's start with the first one: extraction of natural resources (crude oil, gas and various precious metals in the case of mining), however 'clean' it might be promised to be, leads unavoidably to the contamination of water, of agricultures, eventually large territories become uninhabited (migration to cities) and thus contributes to a loss of biodiversity (Bebbington 2012). Maintaining biodiversity is not only the key to food security and sovereignty, but also to combat the effects of global climate change. Such effects are widely known. However, given the global hike in commodity prices during the past 10 years or so, several Latin American governments opted for even more 'flexibility', that is, creating regulatory measures

for facilitating extracting activities and investment: this can occur for example through newly established national companies, such as ENAMI in Ecuador, or transnational partnerships, as in the case of "Gran Nacionales" between Venezuela and Ecuador, or foreign investment, either from regional powers – Chile's CODELCO, for example – or Canadian or Chinese companies (see also Moore and Velasquez 2012).

Such flexibilization programs are based on a predominant understanding of nature as being somehow separated and subjected to the Anthropocene, that is, human society, problems, aspirations and lives. In order to realize more extracting activities, other existent conceptions of human and nature, for example, as being inextricably one (biocentrism, animism, spiritual worldviews, etc.), needs to be eliminated, or at least, continuously suppressed. Here, we encounter the first form of what could be called 'constructed separation', an effort to separate and remove humans from their environment, for example through 'education', ideology, indoctrination, or simply nationwide celebrations of successful oil drills.

One basic, but important, argument in favor of extraction is that better administration, improved technology and scientific progress will lead to less contamination, pollution and 'clean resources'. It manifests a techno-modernizing optimism that, however, does not concur with human health and poverty statistics in affected areas, and neither with the existent loss of biodiversity.

Territory and culture

Second, in order to sell new concessions, state territories become fragmented and parceled. This involves natural reserves, indigenous lands (granted by post-colonial states). The picture on the entry page of this contribution presents a contemporary map of the Andean region (showing Gudynas in front), parceled and clustered into extraction pools.

Third, such fragmentation is in fact frequently illegal, may be even against constitutions in force, but justified by arguing that in order to maintain or achieve development, such activities are required in the name of some sort of 'national interest'. What we encounter is that through formal legal procedures, illegal – or at least unjust, i.e. running against the spirit of legal norms – activities become legalized: Gudynas calls this *'alegalidad'* or, in English, para-legality. In numerous cases, this involves on the ground factual violence against the rights of persons and

of nature. On an administrative level, it leads to a constant redefinition of rights – and runs against any intent to build up reliable, stable and trustworthy democratic institutions.

Economization of rights and justice

Fourth, given their importance at national scales, such activities inform cultural settings in at least two crucial ways: maneuvers of *'alegalidad'* contribute to a general culture of permanent exception, i.e. it leads to the evasion of legal norms, yet regarded as acceptable. In another sense, they lead to a culture of compensation (also based on broadly bypassing): inhabitants of destroyed areas of extraction should be compensated after having been devastated. I would add that compensation cultures go hand in hand with rentier economies and clientelist networks, which even occur at a national scale (Ecuador, Venezuela).

Fifth, the dependency on continued destruction and exports of crude commodities is based on precisely the ongoing need to pay compensations and to jolly clientelist networks along – mostly through imports of goods beyond and within the standard basket of commodities. In the case of Ecuador, 70 percent of the import-based consumption of the recently established middle class are directly related to vital standard commodities in the past 7 years (Dávalos 2014, 128). In terms of mind-sets, the effect is an economization of social relations, expressed in quantitative factors. It's at the basis of social separation, after the rift in human-nature relationship through other means. Other forms of valuing human relations or the relationship with nature become suppressed, because they are regarded as deviating from the mainstream view that upholds economical systems.

Sixth, and importantly, this leads to an equalization of social justice with economic justice. While being frequently celebrated as 'rationalized' or 'modern', this means a crucial narrowing-down of other dimensions of justice, such as recognition, redistribution or participation of plurality. Justice, in this equalizing sense, focuses basically on facilitating compensations and satisfying clients. In a perverted turn, it becomes a motor of exclusion – hence again, violence.

Social effects of global resource-dependence

Seventh, societies become polarized, but not necessarily demarcated by favoring or rejecting such forms of economic and political systems. Rather, various

groups and sectors start simply fighting for the surplus generated by extractivism, export and import of goods.

Eighth, while States become regarded from within as basically access and compensatory mechanisms for own profit, governments from the Right and Left maintain supposedly 'progressive' positions to demonstrate 'good governance', relevant for direct foreign investment. However, such 'progressiveness' is in fact based on evermore-increased extractivism, or in other words – quoting Gudynas – "what is shared by all actors is the subordination of justice, rights and lands to the idea of development".

Ninth and tenth, the idea of development – of material prosperity, accumulation, unlimited use of nature resources, etc. – is still promoted at a global level, including recently emerging actors, such as China, Africa, Iran, etc. Moreover, the use of fossil resources is still largely subsidized by, at least, almost all OECD countries (see e.g. OECD 2012). But subordinating justice, rights and lands to such ideals means to contribute to an unequal world-system; it maintains an all-too-powerful Global North, profiting from the same capitalist system. One cannot be, at the same time, progressive and counter-imperialist, while extracting 'natural resources'. In consequence, this also means a turn away from regional solutions, for example, strengthening pan-Latin American cooperation. Eventually, it contributes to secretiveness at the level of governments, impedes alliance-making and, once more, separates one from another. Finally, the natural government model for such form of paralegal economies is a highly delegating form of 'hyper-presidentialism', caudillismo (in Latin America) or 'market-conform democracy' (in Germany), which seeks to constantly undermine forms of grassroots decision-making in order to maintain control.

The case of the Ecuadorian Íntag: extraction for accumulation versus community health

At this point, I would like to reflect on three essential elements of Gudynas' illuminating analysis: constant separation at various levels, including the implicit or explicit use of violence; creating para-legal forms of governance to legitimate such acts of separation through formally legal mechanisms; and, paramount to this, an idea of national development based on 'modernization' which serves as the ideological basis and justification for such separating activities.

In my understanding, primordial violence reverberates into the world economy by being causally based on violent impositions through mechanisms of control – the global problem of mass surveillance manifests an identical need of constant control at a much larger, and at the same time very individual, level. In order to elucidate my point, it is necessary to study the mechanisms of control at work, almost in a Foucauldian sense, in areas of planned extraction. The Ecuadorian case of a region between Quito and the Colombian frontier, the Íntag, provides helpful details.

This region, including smaller towns and hamlets such as Apuela, Junín, Garcia Moreno, etc. is situated about four hours north of Quito. It has been the focus of mining companies and governments of Ecuador since the mid-1990s, when Japanese's Bishimetals (belonging to Mitsubishi) started exploration activities in the region and delivered first prospect expectations, which serve as estimations even till today. However, Íntag is a hyper-biodiverse region, as DECOIN, the environmentalist and rights-concerned NGO from the region, states on its encompassing website (www.decoin.org):[2] "the area is part of two of the world's most important biotic regions, the Tropical Andes, and the Chocó-Darien Western-Ecuadorian Biological Hotspots. Many threatened species roam this area, from Jaguars and Spectacled Bears, to Mountain Tapirs, Mantled Howler Monkey, the critically endangered Brown-headed Spider Monkey, Pacaranas, and the spectacular Plate-billed Mountain Toucan; to mention just a few of the approximately 28 species of mammals and birds facing extinction."

This is not the place to recount the particular history of possible mining and community resistance in the Íntag of the past 25 years; but in any case it is long and notable and has been on the radar of international support networks, academics, etc. However, since 2013, the recently established Ecuadorian mining company ENAMI managed to obtain concessions for prospecting work within the next 6-8 years. In 2014, a local farmer from Junín, a community and, supposedly, rebellion leader, Javier Ramírez, was arrested and kept in investigative custody for 10 months. He was eventually sentenced to 10 months in prison and thus released in early 2015. This case has turned national and international attention to the Íntag – which emerged as a showcase for the current Ecuadorian government to demonstrate its abilities, that is, to finally conduct large-scale mining in the

[2] This website also provides a complete overview of the history of mining and resistance in the region. DECOIN is run by people living there. [Last retrieve: 12.03.2015].

country, versus local community projects that promote a different model of development, based on agriculture, eco-tourism, eco-coffee plantations, etc. Possible scenarios for decision-making have been well studied and showed clear results: the latter should be favored (see Latorre, Walter, and Larrea 2015).

My analysis of this case is based on data obtained from an ongoing ethnographic research project; it is as such preliminary.[3] However, it aptly elucidates the points Gudynas presented. According to various interlocutors, including ENAMI staff (who are nowadays pervading hamlets like Junín), the case is settled: since Ecuador has never had any large-scale mining project actually reach active extraction, the government wants, at any cost, to demonstrate its abilities and is convinced that the copper mines in the Íntag should be mined out by ENAMI and the Chilean CODELCO. Consequently, as of early 2015, a majority of Íntag's directly affected inhabitants have changed their minds and are now in favor of the project. How did ENAMI (and the government) achieve this change after 25 years of resistance?

First, the government proceeded to create legal status for the concessions through modes of *'alegalidad'*: Íntag is a protected area, which should be free from any extractivist activities, for which it enjoys special protection from the Ecuadorian constitution of 2008 (Asamblea Constituyente 2008). Articles 395 and 397 clearly stipulate that in case of doubt, rights of nature should be treated prior, and that the burden of proof lies with the responsible actors (Gudynas 2009, 90–91). Since much privately owned land in the mining area is principally based on customary law, proper land titles are frequently still missing.[4] However, they are missing because a particular state strategy during the past few years seems to have been to negate the granting of new land titles to people in resistance (upon formal solicitation), while granting them to supporters of the project. This way, not only did it become possible to obtain the land necessary for renewing and creating roads to the prospect area (several road works are currently underway), but also to separate communities geographically from within. These roads, which in general are

[3] This analysis is based on local observations and several interviews in the region, including farmers, community project leaders, ENAMI staff, legal experts, etc. Given the increased sensitivity of the topic (e.g. several of our interlocutors are still under legal prosecution), concrete names or references are not disclosed here. Our research will continue throughout 2015.

[4] The currently controversially discussed new 'ley de tierras' (land law) in Ecuador would eventually integrate the legal possibility of land titles also for women, something still absent bearing several severe consequences until now.

unpaved in the region, lead precisely to the mines – but do not much connect communities, which again reveals a politics of topographical separation led by the state. Indeed, ENAMI employees stated that parts of the project involve roads to be renewed including connections between communities, but this is likely to occur only later, since it would involve other ministries (beyond the also recently created national mining ministry).

Yet on the contrary, there is strong social connection between ENAMI employees and locals, because since the beginning they have been housed at homes of privates, including rotation of stays: such deals provide quick income for local families by ENAMI staff paying for bed and food. In addition, it involves a cunning strategy of infiltration – ENAMI employees state themselves, they live with local families, eat with them, chat with them and explain their mining project privately. If resistance prevails, euphemistically called 'socialization' events take place, where ENAMI engineers, together with police, enter private houses (another act of *alegalidad*, involving non-physical violence through intimidation) in order to 'enlighten' the locals about the mining project and possible benefits. By doing so, engineers and other representatives are keen to avoid any forecasts regarding the nature-related spillover effects and impacts of their activities, for example, on local rivers, land, food crops, etc. When asked about their hesitation, the answer would typically be: "Since we are in the phase of prospecting, not knowing possible results yet, for technical reasons we cannot convey any message about future impacts." In these cases, technicality helps neatly to cover otherwise clear, clean and modernization-embracing conduct.

As a matter of course, this alarms local farmers. However, many of them have already been separated enough from their traditional forms of life to accept – while acknowledging the possible negative impacts for their region – the promises of ENAMI: 1) jobs, directly created by ENAMI or services linked to the mining activities, 2) changing lifestyles from semi-subsistence farming to running shops, restaurants or other services for ENAMI staff, 3) the establishment of schools, a hospital and a permanent police unit (conveniently located close to the mines). As a result, this package creates, first of all, dependence from the state; and as such dependence on the material success of exporting extractivist products on the global market. An entire logical chain of involvement and indirect complicity takes off.

In short, a large process of legal, topographical, social and ecological transformation is currently ongoing in Íntag. Locals are pushed out of their

traditional, community based lifeforms, sometimes voluntarily, sometimes by force; the first instance of separation. Junín's community forest, bought as a communal project to promote domestic and international eco-tourism, potentially bears large quantities of copper as well as silver and gold; it's already on the ENAMI radar. The promise of development as a sovereign nation, accompanied by a constant belief in technical progress – manifested as 'modern and clean extraction methods', the 'modern life-to-come' with schools, services, jobs, safety and health provision and eventually the progress of the state, as such, through successful mining and export – is also a very powerful and tempting narrative in the Íntag itself. Whomever deviates from such a view must be suppressed, including through violent and paralegal means, if necessary: the second instance of separation. Already earlier, environmentally and human rights-concerned NGOs, for which the case of Íntag has always been a beacon of resistance, had become under constant suspicion in the country. A dubious combination of public power in synergy with public enterprises, together with the promise of quick and easy money, appears legally almost unbeatable. In effect, short-term, profit-oriented thinking prevails over long-term, ecologically-concerned thinking in every instance; a third instance of separation, in this case the separation from values concerned with intergenerational and collective well-being. This is all the more tragic since the rare forecasts of the mines project some 300.000 tons of terrain to be shifted, while only bearing some 0.7% per ton of interesting metals. It is indicative what Dávalos writes about mining and its connection to the global market: "In mining, what matters is not so much the minerals themselves, but the possibility of linking them to the issuing of complex financial products, especially regarding the futures market. Never mind whether minerals have actually been extracted or not, but that they can contribute to the global speculative game. What matters is the mining concession and the right of property on that mining concession area. [...] The issue of financial derivatives on resource commodities for June 2013 amounted to 2.7 trillion USD. Financial derivatives of such commodities do not necessarily imply their actual extraction, or physical movement, but the revaluation of market expectations and their role as collateral effect for other speculative investments." (Dávalos 2014, 175; my translation). Eventually, however, the state as a direct and dependence-creating actor enters the field and it will remain there in a transformed society, shifted from local actors to clients, even if in six years prospecting will not lead to any fully-functioning mining activity. This way the 'terrain' is 'prepared' that one day mining

will be possible in Íntag. It leaves locals with struggles for either direct compensation or clientelist funds.

Countering the promises of extractivism through 'integral health'?

Yet, there is another perspective that can also be encountered in the region. At this point, it remains unclear whether the following is an 'autochthonous' vision of the locals, or has emerged due to the vast national (including indigenous) and international networks of the local resistance. I would argue that this question is eventually of minor importance, as it can be encountered frequently elsewhere as well. As already mentioned, local farmers would express their perspective in terms of collective, community-centered and intergenerational well-being in the long run.[5] As such, the perspective of 'integral health' is crucial: local farming, partly based on agro-ecological techniques, and local consumption, but in any case by protecting biodiversity, would lead to such an understanding of 'health'. In this sense, before the start of the mining project, as they express it, "nobody used be poor in the Íntag" – because everyone being healthy and free from sickness. Mining would bring sickness through contamination, degrading of water, crops, food and eventually producing 'social sickness' through two interlinked forms of separation (from lands, between family members, communities in favor/contra mining, etc.) and created dependence. Seen this way, as several interlocutors resisting the mining project argue, extractivism might indeed bring material wealth, improvement of certain conditions and certainly modernization. But eventually, it would lead to impoverishment in a crucially more encompassing sense. This is why strategies of interconnected, holistic abundance (socially, ecologically, agriculturally, etc.) run counter to the technical discourses of development and modernization, based on para-legality, separation and, preeminently, violence as the means to achieve such streamlining. Finally, it seems that the perspective of 'integral health' bears a powerful potential to be deployed as an other-value against the capitalist dream of constant material accumulation and consumption, accomplished by technical efficiency.

[5] My aim here is not to depict an all-too-simple view of 'white' local farmers versus 'black' mining agents. Neither am I arguing from an overly naïve perspective of human-nature paradises – Rousseau's dream – in the Íntag. As this research indicates, local farmers resisting mining seem to receive support from various international NGOs, others have been living from partly illegal logging and have led untreated sewage into local rivers. However, it should be stressed that precisely such points are also strategically employed by ENAMI representatives in order to argue for mining and modernization activities.

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SUE IAMAMOTO*

Traditional Development or Vivir Bien? An Analysis of the Bolivian 'Gas War' in 2003[1]

Since Evo Morales' arrival to the Palacio Quemado and the nomination of David Choquehuanca as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bolivian international policy has been marked by a rhetoric of environmentalism, defence of indigenous rights and cosmovisions, and the promotion of *vivir bien* (good living) as a new paradigm of development.[2]

During the last nine years, however, many internal policies of the government were harshly criticised precisely for their lack of commitment to this 'new paradigm'. The dispute over the construction of a highway in the Isiboro Sécure Indigenous Territory and National Park (TIPNIS), in which the government insisted on carrying out the project despite local indigenous resistance, was illustrative of the Morales leanings towards a more traditional sort of development. "There is no government in dispute between developmentalism and 'vivir bien', but an administration that has already defined its path: state capitalism, even though it keeps the eco-indigenist discourse – with some strength in the foreign affairs – as coverage and source of legitimacy and construction of the anti-capitalist mystique", claims Pablo Stefanoni (2010, p. 171).

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[1] Article originally published in http://www.alternautas.net/blog/2014/10/13/human-rights-indicators-as-development-20, on April 05, 2015.

[2] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs edited an illustrative volume on the many documents and official speeches of Morales or Choquehuanca related to *vivir bien* (See Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2010). On the concept of *vivir bien*, see this blog's last contributions from Johannes M. Waldmüller (2014), Adrien E. Beling and Julien Vanhulst (2014), and the volume edited by Ivonne Farah H. and Luciano Vasapollo (2011).

Nevertheless, to say that the government does not comply with its own agenda of *vivir bien* does not mean necessarily that the concept is only an intellectualism, devoid of empirical relation to Bolivian society. In fact, scholars have highlighted the importance of the intense periods of mobilisations against neoliberalism that have shaken Bolivia from 2000 on and created the conditions for Morales to win the presidential elections in 2005. According to them, the main actors of this process were indigenous movements and their core dissatisfaction was against Bolivian "internal colonialism", a long-standing feature of the local society translated into neoliberalism in the recent period.[3] Consequently, the new paradigms that follow a decolonising agenda, such as plurinationality[4] and *vivir bien*, would be originally found in the actions of the social movements of this period.

Álvaro García Linera states that the popular struggle against the privatisation of water in Cochabamba in 2000 (the "Water War") and the intense mobilisation for the nationalisation of natural gas in the department of La Paz in 2003 (the "Gas War") demonstrated a defence of natural resources typical of indigenous and communitarian perceptions of life. The natural resources were seen as vital for the reproduction of the community and the official neoliberal policies were threatening an "agreed and negotiated relationship between the community and the forces of nature" (García Linera, 2004, p. 49).

This piece investigates the narratives that the actors of the mobilisations in 2003 — both in the urban context, in the city of El Alto, and in the countryside, in the province of Omasuyos — have enacted to explain their struggle. What sort of perspective(s) on development do they express in their accounts? How much of them can actually be related to a *vivir bien* formulation, which emphasises the importance of living in harmony with nature and with the community? By investigating these issues in people's actual perception of their struggle, this piece attempts to cast light on processes that mediate between the empirical and the normative dimensions of development.

[3] See Rafael Puente (2011), Pablo Mamani Ramírez (2004) and Álvaro García Linera (2004).

[4] In a previous work, I have discussed at length the different concepts surrounding plurinationality in the context of the Constituent Assembly in Bolivia (Iamamoto, 2013).

The 'Gas War' in 2003

The mobilisation started in September 2003, when Aymara peasant sectors of the highlands of the department of La Paz promoted two marches towards the seat of the government to demand the government's compliance with a an agreement of more than 70 topics negotiated a couple of years before, but mostly ignored by the government. The peasants organised blockades in the main roads that connected La Paz to the rest of the country and, in an attempt to clear one of them, the army killed five people, including an eight-year-old girl, in Warisata on September 20.

Parallel to the peasant petition, many sectors of Bolivian society were already organising against a government's plan to sell natural gas to the United States through a Chilean port. They denounced the low prices that the international consortium would pay for the gas, and the fact that Bolivia would not benefit from the business, since the processing plants were going to be installed in Chile.[5] Besides, Chile is considered an enemy nation because Bolivia lost its seacoast from it in the War of the Pacific, in 1879.

When the Warisata events happened, many were already mobilising on a national scale to stop this business and to demand the nationalisation of the gas industry.[6] With migrants from the highland countryside, *alteños* (inhabitants of El Alto) reacted forcefully against the killings and announced an open-ended and mobilised (with street blockades) civil strike for October 8, supporting the peasants, demanding the nationalisation of gas and the resignation of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. El Alto is part of the metropolitan area of La Paz and very soon its civil strike started to affect the seat of government's provision of food and fuel. The government again reacted violently against the blockades. By 17 October 2003, when Sánchez de Lozada finally resigned, almost 60 people had been killed by the army.

[5] See Mirko Orgáz García (2002).

[6] On 19 September 2003, a national day of protest in defence of natural gas was called by Bolivia's main social organisations (workers and peasants' organisations at national levels, coca growers' federations, sectors related to the struggle for water in Cochabamba), with demonstrations occurring in La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, Sucre and Potosí. The majority of the protesters were concentrated in La Paz and Cochabamba, where more than 50 and 20 thousand people gathered respectively (Webber, 2011, p. 207).

Industrialisation and progress

Even though the demands and reasons for the mobilisation varied considerably according to the actors involved, it is reasonable to identify the nationalisation and the industrialisation of the gas as the main demands held by the mobilised population in El Alto. "The October agenda is not written, it's present in people's memory of the struggle. In this moment, there was no sense of 'we're fighting for that'. There was a clamour saying the gas is not going through Chile nor Peru: gas for Bolivians first. Nationalisation, industrialisation", remembers Carlos Rojas, an activist who participated in the protests.[7]

The testimonies of the leadership of the Federation of Neighbourhood Councils (Fejuve) stress the lack of industrialisation and the exportation of products without added value as the main problems of Bolivia. Vicente Fernández, who was part of the executive committee of Fejuve during 2003, considers gas a key resource to revert this situation:

> We were analysing [those issues] in the political commission [of Fejuve], and we believed that gas could generate big transformations in the country, it could create a lot of jobs, it could contribute to the gross domestic product. It could generate a series of added values, if it were industrialised in the country, if it were not only sold as raw material. So, we had this analysis that this was a strategic product in Bolivia, and, therefore, the struggle was concentrated around the hydrocarbons.[8]

These expectations are projected over Bolivia as whole, which could be a "developed" and "rich" country if the state acted in favour of the people, using the resources coming from gas: "We had a seminar with gas experts, and there they told us that many materials could be extracted from natural gas and oil, and that could make us rich in Bolivia (…). So, it's very unfair that we Bolivians have all the resources (…), and our rulers are selling it all", states Luis Flores, also a former member of Fejuve's executive committee.[9] Along with the expectations of development comes also the comparison with other countries, particularly Bolivia's neighbours. Felipa Catacora, a vice-president of Fejuve in 2013, remembers the motivations of the struggle in 2003 in these terms:

[7] Interview on 13 June 2013.

[8] Interview on 23 May 2013.

[9] Luis Flores, interview on 24 May 2013.

> [We wanted] the state to apply some policies that would help the population to move forward, as they do in the neighbouring countries, such as Peru, Chile, Brazil. Our compatriots go to these countries to work, there are better living conditions. Here, they don't offer you anything. We had all the resources, we had analysed (…), but there was no capacity to properly manage the state. (…) We asked the government to establish industries in Bolivia, to improve living conditions, that there be more professionals, and that they have work in their own country, that they would not need to migrate from country to country.[10]

These testimonies indicate an idea of development which is very close to dependency theory: industrialisation, the idea of "catching-up" with more developed countries, and the state as a main actor to promote these tasks.[11] They are evidence of a deeply rooted left-wing and anti-imperialist tradition of thought, which have been promoted among *alteños* not only by intellectuals who were conducting workshops and seminars, but also by many of the local leaders, who were themselves affiliated with left-wing organisations.

Basic human needs

On the other hand, the activists were able to translate the possible impact of industrialisation on their daily lives. According to their perspective, the industrialisation of natural resources would provide the state with enough capital to promote basic policies of welfare, translated into the idea of "needs" (*necesidades*). Vicente Fernández sees these needs as the main motivation for *alteños* to participate in the struggle in 2003:

> This was because of need. (…) Need of better living conditions, need of decent employment, need of a better future for your sons, need of so many basic issues. There were areas where there was no water, no energy, we used oil lamps, some streets were impassable. It was a difficult situation and people were in great need. So I think that this had motivated people to go out to the streets.[12]

Through such a lens, gas also symbolises a sort of development related to domestic facilities, since many households did not have access to it in 2003, and, when they did, they used bottled gas. "We had no piped gas. We had to queue [to buy it] (…). But there was [enough gas] to give to another country. This was a

[10] Felipa Catacora, interview on 25 March 2013.

[11] See Ana E. Carballo's article (2014) in this blog.

[12] Interview on 23 May 2013.

bigger problem than just giving our resources, because we did not have it ourselves", explains Cipriana Apaza Mamani, who was also part of the Fejuve in 2003.[13]

The perception of these basic needs is related to the experience of the neighbourhood organisations, the *juntas vecinales*. When moving to a new area, the *vecinos* (neighbours) had to take the initiative to obtain funding and to contribute with their own work in order to have their basic needs covered, as Luis Flores recalls:

> When I was 27 years old I was a neighbourhood leader, when I bought a piece of land with my family here in Río Seco, District 4. We built our house to live, there was no light, no water, no basic services. (…) So, because I was in the *junta* I had to go and look for services, funding. We founded a school, because we needed one for the children to study. We started to apply for energy first, then drinking water in public taps at every corner. So, these were our first basic services to live as human beings.[14]

This experience of self-construction (*auto-construcción*) helped to give *alteños* a different perception of citizenship and the way they perceive their rights regarding the state (Lazar, 2008, p. 70). Even though they believe the state is responsible for offering these services, they have an active stance in guaranteeing them through the neighbourhood organisation. Therefore, they are – and feel like – agents of the improvement of their lives.

This perception of development, related to the satisfaction of basic needs and the 'empowerment' of local organisations to carry out tasks that would otherwise be carried out by the state, is rooted in the recent history of El Alto and its development as a big city during neoliberal administrations. According to Sian Lazar, this reflects a "current development orthodoxy, neoliberal in focus, which seeks to minimize the state as far as possible, privatizing public service functions so that they are taken over by NGOs". However, she emphasises, instead of promoting "individual citizens responsible for their own welfare", the application of this policy in El Alto actually resulted in promoting an active citizenship based on collective groupings (Lazar, 2008, p. 70). The rhetoric of basic human needs can also be

[13] Interview on 23 November 2012.

[14] Interview on 24 May 2013.

traced to a trend in development thinking from the 1970s on that would "expand the focus on economic growth with more social considerations" (Carballo, 2014).

Rural development and dignity

Alteños, however, were not the only actors in the mobilisation in October, as seen earlier. Their peasant "brothers" were essential to ignite the "Gas War" and now we turn to their specific perspectives on development. As mentioned before, the Aymara peasant sector demanded the compliance by the government of an agreement of 70 topics, signed two years before, in August 2001. The agreement contained a strong element of local development, welfare and agrarian reform: donation of a thousand tractors; rural credit for small producers; a programme of rural development that would fund irrigation, road construction and technical support; social security policies to indigenous and peasant populations; new health centres; the expansion of the electricity and telecommunication networks in rural areas; and the donation of 3.8 million of hectares of fiscal lands to peasant and indigenous communities.[15] Felipe Quispe, the head of the national peasant confederation which was promoting the mobilisation, stated in his diary that the peasants and indigenous people were only asking for a "life of dignity":

> Our struggle is in order to have a life of dignity [*vida digna*] in our communities. In our homes, we do not have electricity, internet, telephone, health centres or hospitals; we keep healing ourselves with natural herbs and human urine. There are no roads and, because of that, we cannot take the agricultural products to the big cities. We do not have drinking water; we keep drinking it from the rivers, which are the same or even worse than the dirty waters from Rio Abajo, in Murillo province. We do not have irrigation in the communities; the people who live from the cultivation of the land have to look to the sky, day and night, waiting for the rain to come and freshen the *pachamama* (or the crops). People do not know the mechanization of the agriculture; we want agricultural machines in the *ayllus* and communities. (…) Some people even use human traction for ploughing, they do not even have animals, which were lost because of the difficult and miserable circumstances we are living. Our way of life in the countryside is sad. (Quispe Huanca, 2013, pp. 39–40)

[15] Quispe includes the agreement as an annex in his diary (2013).

Many peasant leaders would relate their difficult lives to the inequality between the city and the countryside, particularly regarding the prices of peasant products during the last period of neoliberal administration. Felipa Huanca, the head of the La Paz departmental federation of peasant women in 2013, who was already an important leader from Omasuyos during 2003, describes this tension:

What did the neoliberal governments do? They separated the countryside from the city. The city had more opportunities, better universities, private schools where people could study. In the countryside, [we had] nothing. As if we were not able to think, to do anything, this is how they wanted us to be. And this is why the struggle was so strong in 2003, 2004. In 2005, we had elections, we elected an indigenous president. At this stage, the Aymara, Quechua and Guarani peoples were already a majority, they could govern, we could govern ourselves. Because then we had two Bolivias, one Bolivia with good life conditions, with electricity, water, education, universities, everything, paved roads up to the doorstep. But the other was abandoned, it had no roads, its products were not valued. When they were deputies, when they were presidents, in one month they earned twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, eighty thousand. In one month. But what we produced in the countryside, an animal we raised in five, six years, how much would we sell it for? 300, 500 bolivianos. Now we sell it for five, six thousand. Before we sold it like that. A sheep, we have to raise it for three years, we would sell it for fifty bolivianos. Do you see the difference? Do you think it's easy to produce, to be in the countryside? It isn't. It's cold, it rains, it's windy. You have to bear everything. But if people don't value your work, where do we stand?[16]

Huanca accuses neoliberal governments of undermining the peasant population by allowing a devaluation of their production, a claim upheld by some studies. According to Mamerto Pérez, in 1998, the gross value of highland peasant production was cut by almost half compared to 1985, when neoliberal policies started to be applied (Pérez Luna 2003: 59, 2005: 73). It is possible to identify in Omasuyos the same trends seen in El Alto: a more traditional development perspective, centred on modernisation and industrialisation (construction of roads, mechanisation of agriculture), and another centred the coverage of basic needs, such as health, education and public services. They also expressed their frustration over

[16] Interview on 17 July 2013.

an economic order that systematically undermined their work and central contribution to Bolivian society.

Living well or living better?

From these accounts, one could easily conclude that the idea of *vivir bien* was perhaps a more recent creation of Bolivian politics or that, even though it might be rooted in Bolivian social movements and indigenous groups, the ones that acted during October 2003 were not among them.[17] It is hard to identify an environment agenda in this mobilisation: there was no discussion on the impact of gas on global warming, indigenous movements were not complaining about the impact of deforestation, agrotoxins or genetically-modified organisms. Compared to the activists' version of their struggle, García Linera's characterisation of the "Gas War" as an event marked by resistance against a neoliberal attack on a "negotiated relationship between the community and the forces of nature" seems rather misplaced. The activists presented their petition based on current and traditional views of development and human needs.

There is, however, one issue that is part of the elements of the concept of *vivir bien* that was clearly present for the actors of October 2003: the idea that they were being exploited, that someone was stealing their resources to live a better life and was condemning them to misery. This imbalance is not deemed to be natural or characteristic of human socialisation in Andean cultures. Xavier Albó, explaining the meaning of *suma qamaña*, the equivalent of *vivir bien* in Aymara, clarifies that *suma* already includes in itself the "greatest possible degree". The Aymaras are "resistant to say 'better'", he explains, "because it is often understood as a group or individual that lives and is better the others, at their expense" (Albó, 2011, p. 135).

Both *alteños* and Aymara peasants from Omasuyos organised their struggles around the image of some other collectivity that was taking advantage of them. In the case of the *alteños*, the image of the Chileans played a very important role:

[17] There were a couple of movements before the election of Evo Morales that emphasised the need of a re-foundation of the country based on indigenous values, which would be closer to the *vivir bien* paradigm, particularly the march for the constitutional assembly in 2002, promoted by indigenous organisations from the lowlands (CIDOB) and from the highlands (CONAMAQ). Besides the constitutional assembly, one of the main demands of this march was the regulation of the right of prior consultation defined in the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 169 (Iamamoto, 2013, p. 97). The right of prior consultation was one of the key elements of conflict in the TIPNIS dispute, from 2010 on.

They said they wanted to sell the gas to another country, to Chile. But we didn't want that, because the Chileans have taken the sea, Antofagasta, from us with a war. Now we have a problem with the waters of River Silala, because the Chilean has free access to this water [*gratis está viviendo con esta agua*], uses it for irrigation, produces apples, grapes, kiwi, all these things. Because of that we started to struggle. How is it possible that Goni [Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada] wants to sell something that is ours to the Chileans? This is how it started. Otherwise, there would be no Gas War.[18]

The testimony above, from Isabel Álvarez, an activist who participated in the mobilisations of October, depicts this popular idea that the Chileans are constantly taking advantage of the Bolivians. Moreover, Chile's development is seen as something that was actually stolen from Bolivia, since the rich copper mines that were key to the country's development during the whole twentieth century were in former Bolivian territory.[19]

Aymara peasants from Omasuyos identify a different collectivity that relates to this "taking advantage characteristic": the *q'ara* people. *Q'ara* means naked, but is commonly used to depict white and *mestizo* people in the cities. Albó defines it as "equivalent to 'uncivilised', for not following the fundamental rule and objective of living together", and this rule of socialisation is related to the idea of production, since the *q'ara* is seen as someone that "has nothing that is the fruit of her or his labour" (Albó, 2011, p. 136). When talking about the discrimination suffered while going to the sell her products in the city, Zenobia Chura clearly depicts this image of the *q'ara*:

> People did not respect us, the indigenous people, in the city. "Oh, this indian, this dirty woman", they cleaned themselves when they approached us. This was how things were in the city. (…) They showed disgust when they were close to us, it was always very extreme. (…) And I perceived it quite well, because I take the best sheep meat to sell [in the cities], to make money out of it. Potatoes, the best ones are for selling. I eat only the meat I cannot sell. Then I do it and they despise me, they discriminate against me. This is not right, you see? (…) It's because the city people

[18] Isabel Álvarez, interview on 6 December 2012. Silala River is a source of dispute between Chile and Bolivia, since canalisations were built to carry water from its headwater to Chilean territory. In 2009, the Chilean government agreed to pay Bolivia for 50% of the waters.

[19] Consider Walter Montenegro's statement in 1987: "Until now, Chile has exported more than 20 million tons of copper (...). With much justification, Salvador Allende qualified Chuquicamata as the 'salary of Chile'. A salary that Bolivia has been paying for a century with the resources provided by mines situated in the territory that was once hers" (Montenegro in Presidency of the Republic Bolivia, 2004).

> are like this, discriminatory. We didn't like this. I take [my products] to the city to them, they don't work, I take only the best things to sell. And they don't respect me (…). There must be respect, I'll respect him, he must respect me. I'm also a worker, I don't depend on them. They don't feed me. (…) We always had to greet them taking off our hats (…). I don't know exactly why, but it left my heart in anger.[20]

Her testimony depicts a deep feeling of injustice, that it is not fair that peasant and indigenous people are treated with prejudice when they are the ones that guarantee that food is provided to the urban population. Even though there are many differences between this position and the anti-Chilean sentiment presented by some of the *alteño* activists, both of them depict this idea of having some type of resource being unfairly seized, and an expectation that a certain balance between the parts should be restored in order to obtain justice. The demands raised during October appeal to balance: that peasant production should be more valued, that the gas reserves should benefit Bolivian society instead of only benefiting other countries or transnational companies. A main idea that structures the concept of *vivir bien*, a socialising principle based on the harmony of the parts, was also structuring the struggles in October.

This understanding of *vivir bien*, as an idea of balance opposed to the idea of *vivir mejor* (living better), is probably the way in which popular sectors in Bolivia make sense of the new development paradigm. As we have seen, these sectors have a comprehension of development that reflects many of the traditional and Eurocentric views of it, which also means that they have an understanding of their problems – "poverty", "inequality between countries", "lack of basic public services in rural and poor urban areas" – that also reflects the traditional problems that "development" would deal with. These understandings are rooted among social movements and it is unlikely that they would abandon them in the short or medium term. However, and this is the point to be emphasised in this conclusion, there is room for a popularisation of the concept of *vivir bien* precisely because of this normativity of fairness and balance also rooted and present amongst both urban and rural populations. Thus, we can and do expect that the new *vivir bien* normativity contributes significantly to the debates related to environmental problems and indigenous rights in Bolivia and might be used as a tool by the groups that are struggling on this front. This is particularly important if we consider that, despite all the official *vivir bien* rhetoric, these issues are not being treated with

[20] Zenobia Chura, interview on 15 July 2013.

the seriousness they deserve both by state authorities and social sectors in Bolivia today.

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Maristella Svampa*

The 'Commodities Consensus' and Valuation Languages in Latin America[1]

The 'commodities consensus' underscores the incorporation of Latin America into a new economic and political-ideological global order, sustained by the international boom in prices of raw materials and the continually increasing demand for consumer goods in both central and emerging economies. This order is consolidating a neo-extractivist development style that generates new comparative advantages — visible in economic growth — at the same time that it produces new asymmetries and social, economic, environmental and politico-cultural conflicts. These tensions signal the opening of a new cycle of struggles, centred on the defense of the territory and the environment, as well as on the discussion of development models and the boundaries of democracy itself.

Introduction

Over the last decade Latin America has shifted from the Washington Consensus, with its focus on finance, to the commodities consensus, based on the large-scale export of primary products. In this article, we will use the term 'commodities' in a broad sense, as 'undifferentiated products whose prices are fixed internationally'[2] or as 'products of global production, availability and demand that have an international price range and do not require advanced technology for their

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[2] Andrés Wainer: «Inserción argentina en el comercio mundial: de la restricción externa al desarrollo económico» in *Realidad Económica* No 264, 11-12/2011, p. 77, available at <www.iade.org.ar/uploads/c87bbfe5-d90c-6211.pdf>.

production and processing'.[3] Both definitions range from raw materials to semi-processed or industrial products. In the case of Latin America, the demand for *commodities* is concentrated in food products such as corn, soybeans and wheat, as well as fossil fuels (oil and gas) and minerals and metals (copper, gold, silver, tin, bauxite and zinc, among others).[4]

While it is true, then, that the exploitation and export of raw materials are not new activities in Latin America, it is evident that in the last years of the twentieth century — and in a context of a changing accumulation model — the expansion of mega-projects aiming at the control, extraction and export of raw materials without major value added has been notably intensified. Thus, what we generally term here as the 'commodities consensus' underscores the incorporation of Latin America in a new economic and political-ideological global order, sustained by the international boom in prices of raw materials and the continually increasing demand for consumer goods in both central and emerging economies. This generates indisputable comparative advantages for economic growth and the increase of monetary reserves, at the same time that it produces new asymmetries and profound inequalities in Latin American societies.

In terms of its consequences, the commodities consensus is a complex and rapid process that must be analysed from multiple perspectives at once: economic and social, political and ideological, and cultural and environmental. For this reason, to illustrate this problem we offer here a presentation in three parts. In the first place, we advance a conceptualisation of what we understand by 'commodities consensus' and the different styles of neo-extractivist development. Secondly, we propose a quick tour of what we have called 'the eco-territorial turn' as an expression of the new *valuation languages* that permeate the socio-environmental struggles in the region. We conclude with a discussion of the challenges that the majority of the critical Latin American social movements and organizations face.

Towards a conceptualization of this new phase

[3] «Los commodities» en Mundo Finanzas, 12/6/2012, <www.mundofinanzas.es/finanzas/los-commo dities/>.

[4] It is interesting to see how, on a global scale, 'the geography of extraction is very different than the geography of consumption'. For example, Latin America produces 26.2% of the world's bauxite, but consumes only 2.9%; as for copper, it produces 45.1% and consumes 6.1%; and it produces 15.2% of gold and consumes 3%. Quote and data from Horacio Machado Aráoz: *Naturaleza mineral. Una ecología política del colonialismo moderno*, PhD Thesis, Facultad de Humanidades, Universidad Nacional de Catamarca, Catamarca, 2012.

In the first place, from an economic and social point of view, the demand for commodities has originated an important process of 're-primarization' of Latin American economies, accentuating their orientation towards primary extractive activities or *maquiladoras* with little value added.[5] This regressive dynamic is aggravated by the new involvement of emerging powers such as China, which is quickly becoming an unequal partner in the trade exchanges with the region.[6] At the same time, this process of 're-primarization' is accompanied by a tendency toward the loss of food sovereignty, linked to the large-scale export of food products for animal consumption, or, increasingly, for biofuels production, which includes soybeans, palm oils and fertilizers.

Secondly, if we analyse it from the point of view of the logic of accumulation, the new commodities consensus entails a deepening of the dynamic of dispossession of land, [7] resources and territory while producing new and dangerous forms of dependency and domination. Amongst the most common elements of this dynamic we can highlight the large scale of the projects undertaken, the tendency to mono-cultivation and scarce economic diversification, which demonstrate a clearly destructive logic of territorial occupancy. In fact, following an efficiency and productivity seeking notion of development, other logics of territorial valuation are discouraged, and these territories are considered as socially expendable or simply as 'sacrificial areas', in pro of selective progress.

It is not insignificant that an important part of the Latin American critical literature considers the result of these processes to be the consolidation of an accumulation pattern based on the over-exploitation of natural resources[8]— in large

[5] As Ariel Slipak points out, the concept of 're-primarization' refers to a complex process. 'There seems to be a consensus on the idea that *re-primarization* means the reorientation of the resources of an economy, or of its productive matrix, towards activities with reduced value added, primarily the primary-extractive ones, although we can also include here assembly processes and others with scarce knowledge use.' A. Slipak: «De qué hablamos cuando hablamos de reprimarización», 2012, mimeo.

[6] Nowadays Latin American exports to China are concentrated mostly around agriculture and mineral products. "In this way, for the year 2009 the exports of copper, iron and soybeans represented 55.7% of the total exports of the region to China. At the same time, the products that China brings to the Latin American markets are mainly manufactured products with an increasingly higher technological content." A. Slipak: «Las relaciones entre China y América Latina en la discusión sobre el modelo de desarrollo de la región. Hacia economías reprimarizadas» in *Iberoamérica Global* vol. 5 No 1, in press.

[7] David Harvey: «El 'nuevo imperialismo': acumulación por desposesión» in *Socialist Register*, 2004, available in <bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/ar/libros/social/harvey.pdf>.

[8] Eduardo Gudynas: «Diez tesis urgentes sobre el nuevo extractivismo» and Jürgen Schuldt and Alberto Acosta: «Petróleo, rentismo y subdesarrollo. ¿Una maldición sin solución?» in aavv: *Extractivismo, política y sociedad*, caap/claes, Quito, 2009. Maristella Svampa: «Néo-'développementisme' extractiviste,

part non-renewable ones — and at the same time on the expansion of the frontiers towards territories formerly considered 'unproductive'. Neoextractivism establishes a vertical dynamic that invades the territories and de-structures regional economies, destroys biodiversity, deepens the process of land concentration evicting or displacing rural, indigenous or peasant communities, and violates processes of citizen decision-making.

With these characteristics, we can consider as developmentalist neoextractivism activities traditionally associated with it (like mining and oil) as well as the ones linked to the new agriculture and food system, such as agribusiness and biofuel production.[9] It also includes the infrastructure projects proposed by the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA), a program initiated by several governments in Latin America in 2000 that includes projects related to transportation (waterways, ports, bi-oceanic corridors, among others); energy (large hydroelectric dams) and communications. Its main strategic objective is to facilitate the extraction and export of raw materials to their destination ports.

The scale of these initiatives warns us of the large magnitude of the investments (they are capital-intensive activities rather than labour-intensive ones) as well as the type of actors involved and their economic concentration (large multinational corporations).[10] For these reasons and in a way similar to the past, these initiatives tend to consolidate exporting enclaves associated with a neo-colonial logic with little or no connection to local production chains. These operate under a strong social and regional fragmentation and configure socio-productive spaces that are dependent on the international market. In this way, the open-pit mega mine projects, the expansion of the energy and oil frontier (including shale gas exploitation and the controversial method of fracking), the construction of large hydro-electrical dams, the expansion of forestry and fishing frontiers and the

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gouvernements et mouvements sociaux en Amérique latine» in *Problèmes d'Amérique Latine* No 81, verano de 2011, pp. 103-127; Raúl Zibechi: «Tensiones entre extractivismo y redistribución en los procesos de cambio» in *Aldeah*, < www.aldeah.org/es/raul-zibechitensiones- entre-extractivismo-y-redistribucion-en-los-procesos-de-cambio-de-america-lat>,20/1/2011; G. Massuh: *Renunciar al bien común. Extractivismo y (pos) desarrollo en América Latina*, Mardulce, Buenos Aires, 2012.

[9] E. Gudynas: op. cit.

[10] Colectivo Voces de Alerta: *15 mitos y realidades sobre la minería transnacional en Argentina,* El Colectivo / Herramienta, Buenos Aires, 2011.

generalization of the agribusiness model (soybeans and biofuels), are the most emblematic features of developmentalist neoextractivism.

Further, the expression 'commodities consensus' has not only an economic but also a political-ideological connotation. It alludes to the idea that there is an agreement — tacit, although with the passing of the years ever more explicit — on the irrevocable or irresistible nature of the contemporary extractivist dynamic. This is particularly so considering the concurrence of the increasing global demand for primary goods and the current wealth levels, amplified by the *'eldoradista'* vision of Latin America as a place with abundant natural resources *par excellence*. This concurrence, which in economics falls under the traditional notion of 'comparative advantages'[11], has laid the foundations of a developmentalist illusion that can be traced, despite nuanced differences, throughout all the countries in Latin America.

We are therefore interested in highlighting that, despite the differences in the political regimes existing today, the 'consensus' on the irresistible character of the extractivist approach ends up working as a historical horizon or threshold annulling the possibility of a debate on alternatives. The acceptance — tacit or explicit — of such a 'consensus' contributes to consolidating a new ideology of scepticism or resignation that strengthens, on its limits, the 'sensibility and rationality' of a progressive capitalism, imposing the idea that there are no alternatives to the current style of extractivist development. Consequently, every critical discourse or radical opposition is ultimately perceived as anti-modern, a negation of progress or simply in irrationality and ecological fundamentalism.

Nonetheless, this period can be read both in terms of its continuities as well as its ruptures with the previous period of the Washington Consensus. In terms of rupture, there are important elements that allow us to distinguish it from the 90s. If we recall, the Washington Consensus focused on recovering the financial agenda, promoting austerity and privatization policies that redefined the state as a meta-regulatory agent. At the same time, it operated under a sort of political

[11] We should remember that currently, there are many who defend the extractivist model that avoid the traditional critique by the ECLAC of the declining terms of international trade as the end of the economic cycle (Cepal, v. Raúl Prebisch: *Capitalismo periférico. Crisis y transformación*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, DF, 1981). This critique is rejected as no longer valid in light of the increasing demand for raw materials and the rising prices of commodities, as well as the consolidation of a determined energy and civilizational matrix built upon the consumption of fossil fuel. Others argue that the export of primary products is what generates the foreign currency necessary for income redistribution and promotes growth based on an internal-market focused strategy, or re-orients the activities towards those with a greater value added.

homogeneisation of the region, marked by its identification with neoliberal recipes. In contrast, the current 'commodities consensus' concentrates its agenda around the mass implementation of extractive projects destined to increase exports, opening a more flexible space in which the state defines its role. This allows for the coexistence of progressive governments that question the orthodox version of the neoliberal consensus with those that continue deepening a neoliberal conservative political matrix.

However, continuities can be found in different areas where connecting trends between the 90s and today can be traced. On the one hand, the maintenance of the normative and legal framework that allowed for the expansion of the current extractivist model that guarantees legal security to financial capital and high profit margins for businesses. At the same time, even in cases where the state has recovered an active role (particularly in the expropriation of companies), during the 'commodities consensus', the new regulations tend to confirm the association with transnational capital.

In general, the confirmation of Latin America as an 'adaptive economy' in relation to the different accumulation cycles, and thus the acceptance of the place of the region in the world's division of labour, is located at the core of both the Washington Consensus and the commodities consensus. This remains the case regardless of the industrializing and emancipatory rhetoric of progressive governments in the region asserting the economic autonomy and national sovereignty or the construction of a political Latin American space. In the name of 'comparative advantages' or the pure subordination to the global geopolitical order, depending on the case, progressive and conservative governments alike tend to accept the 'destiny' of the 'commodities consensus'. This has historically relegated Latin America to the role of nature-exporter, turning a blind eye to the enormous environmental and socio-economic consequences (the new dependency frameworks and the consolidation of the export enclaves) and their political implications (disciplining and coercion of the population).

Finally, and despite its attempts to become a *'Pensée unique'* the *commodities consensus* appears fraught with ambivalence, contradictions and paradoxes. These are linked to the enormous and growing socio-environmental conflicts that the extractivist dynamic generates, as well as to the multiple tensions and disputes between neoliberal dynamics, the notion of development, the Left and progressive populism. In fact, traditionally in Latin America, a large part of the Left and

progressive populism sustains a vision of development focused on production, offering a reading that privileges the conflict between labour and capital and tends to neglect the new social struggle around the defence of the territory and the commons. In this political and ideological framework, blinded by its focus on production and staunchly opposed to the principles of the environmental paradigm, the current dispossession dynamic becomes a blind spot, impossible to conceptualise. As a consequence, socio-environmental conflicts are considered a secondary problem or one that could simply be sacrificed, in light of the grave problems of poverty and exclusion in Latin American societies.

In the progressive vision the 'commodities consensus' appears associated with the action of the state as a producer and regulator and with a number of social policies directed towards the most vulnerable sectors, based precisely in the extractivist profits (oil, gas and mining). Certainly, the recovery of certain tools and institutional capacities from the state, which has again become a relevant economic actor and in certain cases a redistributive agent, should not be disregarded. Nonetheless, framed in the global governance theories that seek to consolidate a new institutionalisation from supra-national or meta-regulatory frameworks, the tendency is not for the nation state to become a mega-actor or for its intervention to guarantee profound changes. On the contrary, the maximum goal points towards the return of a moderately regulatory state. Here, it is expected that the state will be able to work in a changing space within a multi-stakeholder scheme (of an increasingly complex civil society, with the emergence of new social movements, NGOs and other stakeholders) but in close association with private multinational capital whose effect in national economies is ever increasing. This creates clear boundaries to the actions of national governments and a threshold to the democratising demands for collective decisions that the communities and peoples affected by large extractive projects voice.

We should also not forget that the return of the state to its redistributive functions is built upon a very vulnerable social fabric — a vulnerability that was accentuated by the social transformations during the neoliberal years — and that the current social policies are often an overt or veiled continuation of the compensatory policies of the 90s that followed the recipes of the World Bank (WB). In this context, progressive neo-developmentalism shares with liberal neo-developmentalism common features and frameworks even if it seeks to establish marked differences in terms of democratization.

The most paradoxical contexts of the 'commodities consensus' are those of Bolivia and Ecuador. This is not a minor topic, given the fact that these are the countries where — amidst strong participatory processes — new 'horizon-concepts, such as decolonisation, plurinational state, autonomies, 'buen vivir' and nature rights have emerged. Nonetheless, and despite the praise of Indigenous peoples' vision in their relation to nature ('buen vivir') written into the constitution, in the new century and with the consolidation of these governments, other aspects related to extractivist neo-developmentalism became more central. Framed in the crude language of dispossession (liberal neo-developmentalism) or in the one that points towards the state's control of surplus value (progressive neo-developmentalism) the current development style rests upon an extractivist paradigm. This paradigm emerges from the idea of 'economic opportunities' or 'comparative advantages' put forward by the commodities consensus and opens up a social imaginary (particularly around nature and development) that transcends the political and ideological boundaries of the 90s. In this manner, beyond the differences that we can find in political and ideological terms, these positions reflect the consolidation of a model based on the appropriation and exploitation of the commons. This model proceeds in a top-down approach, putting the advances of the participatory democracy in a quagmire and inaugurating a new cycle of criminalisation and violation of human rights.

In sum, outside of any linearity, from this multiple perspective, the commodities consensus is configuring a space of variable geometry in which a dialectical movement synthetizing the continuities and ruptures of this new context operates embedded in what can be legitimately called a pos-neoliberal context without, however, implying the eclipse of neoliberalism.[12]

Territory and valuation languages[13]

One of the consequences of the contemporary extractivist turn is the explosion of socio-environmental conflicts where indigenous and peasant organisations are actively involved. These are accompanied by new forms of mobilisation and citizen

[12] Some speak of a 'neo-developmentalist post-neoliberalism'. M. Féliz: «Neoliberalismos, neodesarrollismo y proyectos contrahegemónicos en Suramérica» en *Astrolabio* No 7, 2011.

[13] We recover here the notion coined by Joan Martínez-Alier: *El ecologismo de los pobres. Conflictos ambientales y lenguajes de valoración*, Icaria Antrazo, Barcelona, 2004.

participation, centred on the defence of natural goods, biodiversity and the environment.

We understand by socio-environmental conflicts those that are linked to the access and control of natural goods and territory which presuppose diverging values and interests, in a context of power asymmetry. These conflicts bring to the forefront different conceptualisations of territory, nature and the environment and at the same time foster disputes about the understanding of development and, at a more general level, of democracy. Certainly, to the extent that multiple mega-projects tend to reconfigure the territory in a global manner, they not only jeopardise the existing economic and social dynamics, but the breadth of democracy itself. These projects are imposed without the consensus of the local populations, generating strong divisions in societies and a spiral of repression and criminalisation of resistance struggles.

In this context, the explosion of socio-environmental conflicts has corresponded to what Enrique Leff named "The environmentalisation of the indigenous and peasant struggles and the emergence of a Latin American environmental thought".[14] Within this social grid we can also find new environmental social movements, rural and urban (in small and medium-sized localities), which have a multi-class composition and are characterised by assembly-like types of governance and an increasing demand for autonomy. At the same time, some environmentalist NGOs — particularly small organizations that combine lobbying activities with a social movement logic, and cultural collectives, including those of intellectuals and experts, women and young people — play a significant role and accompany the actions of organisations and social movements. These actors should not be considered as 'external allies' but as stakeholders within this organizational and social grid.

In this context, what is particularly novel is the articulation amongst the different stakeholders (indigenous-peasant movements, socio-environmental movements, environmental NGOs, intellectual and expert networks, cultural collectives) which translates into a dialogue of knowledge and disciplines. This fosters the emergence of an expert-knowledge independent from mainstream,

[14] E. Leff: «La ecología política en América Latina. Un campo en construcción» en Héctor Alimonda: *Los tormentos de la materia. Aportes para una ecología política latinoamericana*, Clacso, Buenos Aires, 2006.

dominant discourses and the valuation of local knowledge, many of which have peasant-indigenous roots.

These *valuation languages* of territoriality have promoted the approval of laws, even of legal frameworks, oriented toward the construction of *new environmental institutional frameworks* opposing the current extractivist public policies.

In general terms, and beyond specific differences (depending largely on the local and national contexts), the dynamics of socio-environmental struggles in Latin America have taken what we have called an 'eco-territorial turn'. This entails a common language that illustrates the cross-over between the communitarian-indigenous matrix, defence of territory and environmentalist discourse: the commons, food sovereignty, environmental justice and *buen vivir* are some of the terms that express this productive engagement. In this sense, it is possible to speak of the construction of common frameworks for collective action that not only work as alternative interpretive frameworks but as producers of a collective subjectivity.

Thus, against the grain of the dominant vision, natural goods are not understood as commodities (as in language of the commodities consensus) but also not exclusively as strategic natural resources, as progressive neo-developmentalism sees them. Despite their differences, both languages impose a utilitarian perspective that implies a lack of awareness of other attributes and values that cannot be represented through a market price — even if some of them have one. Against this perspective, the notion of "the commons" refers to the need to keep outside the market those goods that — given their cultural, social or natural value — belong to the community and possess a value that exceeds any price.[15]

It would be impossible to make a list of the self-organised networks, national and regional, that deal with environmental issues in Latin America. To mention only a few examples: the National Confederation of Communities Affected by Mining (Concacami) founded in 1999 in Peru; the Union of Citizen Assemblies (UAC) that emerged in Argentina in 2006 bringing together grassroots organisations opposed to mega-mining projects, agribusiness and fracking; and the National Assembly of Environmentally Affected People (ANAA) from Mexico created in 2008 against mega-mining projects, hydroelectrical dams, savage

[15] Plataforma 2012: «Por una verdadera estatización de los recursos energéticos: La crisis de ypf o el fracaso de una política energética» in *Plataforma 2012*, ‹http://plataforma2012.org/2012/05/15/ por-una-verdadera-estatizacion-de-los-recursos-energeticos/›, 15/5/2012.

urbanisation and industrial farming. Amongst the transnational networks is the Andean Coordination of Indigenous Organizations (CAOI) that links organisations from Peru, Bolivia, Colombia and Chile since 2006 and advocates for the creation of an Environmental Criminal Court. Finally, there are several observatories dedicated to these issues. Amongst them we can find the Latin American Observatory of Environmental Conflicts (OLCA) founded in 1991 and located in Chile, and the Latin American Observatory of Mining Conflicts (OCMAL) founded in 1997, linking more than 40 organizations including Ecologic Action from Ecuador.

Amongst all the extractive activities, the most controversial today in Latin America is large-scale metal mining. Indeed, there is no country in Latin America with large-scale mining projects that does not have social conflicts — that bring communities into conflict with both mining companies, on one side, and governments, on the other — associated with them: Mexico, several Central American countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama), Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina and Chile.[16] According to OCMAL[17], there are currently 184 active conflicts, five of them cross-border, involving 253 affected communities across the region. This context of social unrest contributes directly or indirectly to the judicialization of social-environmental struggles and to the violation of human rights that in several cases, including Peru, Panama and Mexico, have ended in the murder of activists.[18]

In sum, what we are calling an eco-territorial turn refers to the expansion rights as well as a societal dispute as to what could or should be understood as 'true development' or 'alternative development', 'weak or strong sustainability'. At the same time, it puts concepts such as sovereignty, democracy and human rights at the centre of the debate: in effect, be it in a language of the defence of the territory and the commons, of human rights, of the collective rights of indigenous peoples, of the rights of nature or '*buen vivir',* the demand of the communities is inscribed in the horizon of a radical democracy. This includes the democratization of collective decision-making and, indeed, the rights of peoples to say 'no' to projects that

[16] Colectivo Voces de Alerta: ob. cit.

[17] V. «Sistema de información para la gestión comunitaria de conflictos socio-ambientales mineros en Latinoamérica», <http://basedatos.conflictosmineros.net/ocmal_db/>.

[18] Ocmal: *Cuando tiemblan los derechos. Extractivismo y criminalización en América Latina*, Ocmal / Acción Ecológica, Quito, 2011.

strongly affect the quality of life of the most vulnerable sectors of the population and compromise the livelihood of future generations.

Challenges for organizations and critical thinking

The current process of construction of territoriality takes place in a complex space in which different logics of action and rationalities with different valuations intertwine. In a schematic manner, we can affirm the existence of different territorial logics, dependent on whether we primarily refer to large economic stakeholders (corporations, economic elites), to the state (at its different levels) or to the different social actors organized or intervening in the conflict. The territorial logic of corporations and economic elites is framed in an economistic paradigm of commodity production that highlights the importance of transforming the spaces in which the natural goods are found into efficient and productive territories. The state logic, at its different levels, is normally framed within a space of variable geometry that attempts to articulate the vision of natural goods as commodities, and, at the same time, as strategic natural resources (a vision linked to the state control of extractivist profit). This avoids any consideration that includes — as social movements, indigenous organizations and critical intellectuals propose — a perspective that understands them in terms of the commons.

Having said this, it is necessary to recognise the existence of different obstacles, linked to the difficulties associated with movements and spaces of resistance, sometimes fraught with competing demands, and to the persistence of certain social imaginaries in relation to development. One of the difficulties is associated with the persistence of an '*eldoradista*' view of natural goods, extending even into indigenous communities and some social organizations.[19]

Another challenge is the disconnect between networks and organizations that confront extractivism — more linked to rural areas and small communities — and

[19] We take this expression from Bolivian sociologist René Zavaleta, who stated that the *myth of the surplus* 'is one of the most fundamental and primary in Latin America'. Here Zavaleta, is referring to the *'eldoradista'* myth that 'every Latin American hopes in his soul' for the sudden material discovery (of resources or natural wealth) that would generate surplus like 'magic', 'that in the majority of the cases, has not been used in a balanced way'. While Zavaleta's worries had little to do with environmental sustainability, we believe it is legitimate to recover this thought to reflect on the contemporary return of this foundational and persistent myth of the abundance of natural resources and their advantages, within the framework of a new cycle of accumulation. Therefore, we understand this *'eldoradista'* vision of natural goods as an expression that captures the contemporary developmentalist illusion. See: R. Zavaleta Mercado: *Lo nacional-popular en Bolivia* [1986], Plural, La Paz, 2009.

the urban trade unions that represent important sectors of society and have a strong social role in several countries (Mexico, Argentina and Brazil, among others). The lack of connecting bridges between these movements is almost total, and this contributes to the strong developmentalist imaginary for the workers in large cities, generally unaware of the environmental problems of medium and small localities. In every case, the distance between the large urban centres has contributed to a deepening of the frontiers between rural areas and cities, between the mountains, the jungle and the coasts in countries such as Peru and Colombia; or between the small towns and the big cities in Argentina where the large projects (mining, agribusiness, dams and fracking, among others) only affect the cities indirectly. This is reinforced by processes of territorial fragmentation produced by the implementation of extractivist projects and the consolidation of export enclaves.

In this context, extractivism advances at a vertiginous pace and in many cases, the struggles become immersed in contradictory tendencies, which illustrate the complementarity between a traditional Left, progressive language and the extractivist model. Despite this, the confrontation between Latin American governments, on the one hand, and environmental movements and networks that reject the extractivist policies, on the other, has intensified. At the same time, the criminalization of these struggles and serious incidents of repression have notoriously increased in the region and include a large number of countries: from Mexico and Central America to Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, Chile y Argentina. In this framework of acute social unrest, the dispute over development models has become the fork in the path of the contemporary epoch.

On the other hand, it is no less true that the commodities consensus has opened a gap, a profound wound in Latin American critical thinking, which presented much more unified characteristics in the 1990s amidst the monopolizing ideological tendencies of neoliberalism. As a result, Latin American today contains diverse political and intellectual tendencies, including those which propose a 'sensible and reasonable' capitalism, capable of coordinating extractivist and progressive politics, and critical tendencies that openly question the hegemonic model of extractivist development.

In a context of the return of the notion of development as a meta-narrative, and in keeping with the challenges raised by indigenous thinking, the field of critical thinking has recovered the notion of 'post-development' (coined by Arturo

Escobar[20]) and elements of a 'strong' notion of sustainability. Along these lines, the perspective of post-development has promoted valuations of nature that emerge from other registers and cosmovisions (Indigenous peoples, environmentalist, eco-communitarian, eco-feminist, decolonial perspectives, and eco-territorial movements among others). In this way, post-developmentalist thinking rests upon three main challenges: the first is to think and establish a transition agenda towards post-extractivism. ,In many countries in Latin America debates on alternatives to extractivism and the need to create transition hypotheses have begun, from a multidimensional matrix of frameworks of intervention.[21] One of the most interesting and exhaustive proposals has been developed by the Latin American Centre of Social Ecology (CLAES), under the direction of Uruguayan thinker Eduardo Gudynas[22], which argues for a set of public policies that would rethink the connection between environmental and social issues.

At the same time, Gudynas argues that a set of 'alternatives' within conventional development would be insufficient against extractivism. Therefore, it is necessary to think and create 'alternatives *to* development'. Finally, Gudynas stresses that it is a discussion that should be undertaken at the regional level, and following what Indigenous peoples call *buen vivir*. In an interesting exercise for the Peruvian case, the economists Pedro Francke and Vicente Sotelo[23] demonstrated the viability of a transition to post-extractivism through two main measures: a tax reform (higher taxes on extractive activities or to mining over-profit) to increase tax revenues and a moratorium on the mining-oil and gas projects that began between 2007 and 2011.

The second challenge refers to the need to look, at local and regional levels, at the successful experiences of alternative development. It is in fact well known that in the fields of social, community and solidarity economics in Latin America there is a range of possibilities and experiences to explore. However, this necessitates a

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[20] Escobar: «El post-desarrollo como concepto y práctica social» en Daniel Mato (coord.): *Políticas de economía, ambiente y sociedad en tiempos de globalización*, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Sociales, Universidad Central de Venezuela, Caracas, 2005, pp. 17-31.

[21] Permanent Working Group on Alternatives to Development, Rosa Luxembourg Foundation: *Más allá del desarrollo*, América Libre, Quito, 2012

[22] E. Gudynas: ob. cit.

[23] P. Francke y V. Sotelo: «¿Es económicamente viable una economía post extractivista en el Perú?» en Alejandra Alayza y E. Gudynas (eds.): *Transiciones. Post extractivismo y alternativas al extractivismo en el Perú*, Cepes, Lima, 2011.

previous valuation of these alternative economies and strategic planning to boost the potential of the local economic alternatives that can be found across the continent (agro-ecology, social economy, amongst others. Finally, it also requires a stronger role for local communities and a stronger intervention by the state (excluding any objective or pretence of political tutelage).

The third challenge is to advance an idea of transformation that creates a 'horizon of desirability', in terms of styles and quality of life. A large part of the appeal of the notion of development is related to the fact that the patterns of consumption associated with the hegemonic model are ingrained within the population. We are referring here to cultural imaginaries that are sustained by both the conventional idea of progress and the idea of 'quality of life'. That is, today the definition of what is a 'better life' has more to do with demands for the 'democratization' of consumption than with the need to undertake a cultural change in consumption patterns and our relation to the environment, based in a different theory of what social needs are.

In sum, post-development thinking today faces many challenges, paradoxes and tensions. These are linked to the process of the 'environmentalization' of social struggles, as well as, to be more precise, the more radical approaches of critical thinking. Nonetheless, the discussion on post-extractivism has been opened and will probably become one of the greatest debates not only in Latin American thought of the twenty-first century, but for the our societies as a whole.

Notes

Author's note: This article builds upon several ideas presented in the book edited by Gabriela Massuh: *Renunciar al bien común. Extractivismo y (pos)desarrollo en América Latina* (Mardulce, Buenos Aires, 2012) and in a text published in the journal of the Social Observatory of Latin America («Consenso de los *Commodities*, giro ecoterritorial y pensamiento crítico latinoamericano» en *osal* No 32, 9/2012). For the expression 'commodities consensus' I have been freely inspired by the title of an editorial of the magazine *Crisis* from July 2011, <www.revistacrisis.com.ar/El-consensode- los-commodities.html>.

FERNANDA BEIGEL*

Academic Dependency[1]

In his attempt to reduce the sociology of sociology to an ideological exercise, Piotr Sztompka builds a cocktail of academic dependency, intellectual imperialism, and colonialism within sociology, which are lumped together, uncritically naturalized and peremptorily discarded by reducing them to 'a reflection of those more fundamental external divisions in our globalized society' (2011: 389). Leaving aside Sztompka's disrespectful language used to describe peripheral scholars and their writings, my first argument is that critical studies of science have a long history, emerging in the North and in the South by the mid-20th century, when science (and especially social sciences) became embroiled in the Cold War. Academic dependency today has different dimensions and is its own paradigm within current sociology –a 'multi-paradigmatic discipline' according to Sztompka (2010: 22) himself.

As a research field, academic dependency is nourished on the social studies of science, critical epistemology and comparative studies of higher education. It encompasses the unequal structure of production and circulation of knowledge that has emerged historically along with the international scientific system. This structure is composed of institutional, material and symbolic processes, mutually related, which have produced different paths of academia-building. In the periphery, these combinations are the historical result of national and regional

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responses to internationalization – particularly given the diverse roles played by the state in scientific development and higher education.

There is no shortage of studies on the relation between scientific research and foreign aid, between publishing and scant material resources, about the uneven distribution of academic prestige among disciplines and institutions, or between dissimilar research capacities and heteronomous academic mobility. Within this research field we find the analysis of intellectual dependence, Euro-centrism and colonialism within knowledge production. These studies critically converge with dependency analysis and Latin American structuralism –two traditions mainly concerned with economics and politics. In the second half of the 1970s, pioneer works by Edward Shils, Joseph Ben David and Philip Altbach attested to specific factors shaping subordination within the academic field. In 1988, Frederick Gareau published an important paper in International Sociology arguing that Western-forged social sciences built their 'truths' with only marginal input from the Third World, a fact that raised serious questions about their objectivity. His analysis of the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences showed that 98.1% of the authors were affiliated to North American or European universities – the latter being mainly in the UK, France and Germany.

Recent studies show that 'universal standards' for sociological research and 'good theory' have been constituted and legitimized by the 'international' publishing system started by Eugene Garfield in the 1950s. For many decades, the Social Science Citation Index's rankings have been dominated by US and European journals. Academic prestige was progressively concentrated and a set of international hierarchies was established – separating research completed in more prestigious academic centers from marginal knowledge produced and published outside these centers. Despite the growth in scientific production in many peripheral countries, Latin America, Asia and Africa currently contribute less than 20% of the articles published in SSCI (Beigel, 2011). As a result, striving for academic autonomy has been a complex and uphill task for peripheral sociologies, while it is simply taken for granted in American or French Sociology.

The World Social Science Report (UNESCO, 2010) showed that unevenness in institutional settings, translation capacities and material resources are powerful determinants in academic life. Collaborative research is still dominated by North-North partnerships, with a minute share of joint South-South articles (2010: 146). Heilbron has shown that symbolic goods produced by central academies – and

written in English – have a dramatically broader international circulation than those produced in dominated languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Arab, Russian). The latter's 'export' rates are very low or even zero, as they have minimum access to the more prestigious journals published by the established research centers. It has also been demonstrated that a peripheral circuit can, eventually, reduce foreign imports and increase endogenous production of concepts or theories, but it is far more difficult to increase their international circulation. Especially in the social sciences, these 'peripheral centers' have reached dominant positions within Southern regions, but remain subordinate within 'Global Sociology' (Beigel, 2010).

There is no consensus on the possibilities and paths to overcome academic dependency. From the standpoint of the individual scholar, career-building through international graduate education and publishing in English undoubtedly have provided successful passages to academic recognition – although it has been most generally effective for natural sciences. However, this individual path of accumulating scientific capital does not necessarily lead to broader scientific development in peripheral societies.

A final word on the opposition between Western sociology and Indigenous sociology – two position-takings that have been reduced by Sztompka to homogeneous stereotypes. Sociology in the peripheries is not a new phenomenon, it has its own history, and its own oppositions – one big debate being precisely around the status of indigenous knowledge. Equally, the dichotomy also fails to recognize critical perspectives that have been circulating within 'Western Sociology' for at least fifty years. In fact, we do have many sociologies in the West and 'in the Rest'.

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EMILIE DUPUITS*

Technical vs. Grassroots Experts in Global Water and Forests Governance[1]

Since the 2000s, facing the increasing globalization and commodification of common-pool resources, community-based organizations managing water and forests at the local level started to create transnational networks. Their main goal is to get direct representation in global governance arenas and to transform languages of expertise around governance norms and the scales at which they operate. The international involvement of grassroots organizations raises several questions: who are grassroots experts and to what extent are they different from technical experts dominating international arenas? At what scale and in what field is grassroots expertise constructed as legitimate? Finally, is transnational grassroots expertise based on a harmonization or a diversification of knowledge and practices?

Grassroots organizations in an era of globalization and commodification of water and forests governance

While, since the 1970s, some environmental issues are inserted into global management arrangements, such as climate change or ozone layer, the global governance of common goods such as water or forests remains more problematic. Indeed, these resources were traditionally managed at the local or national scale and lack a structured international regime to regulate some important transboundary issues, as deforestation or water depletion and pollution (Gupta, Pahl-Wostl, 2013). However, since the 1990s, water and forests are the object of increasing attempts to

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address these issues at the international scale, especially in the context of rising efforts to fight climate change.

First, the multidimensional nature of forests has encouraged its connection to other international regimes, such as biodiversity and climate change, which benefit from more structured regulatory frameworks (Howlett, 2010). For example, in 2008 the UN-REDD Program (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) was launched under the international climate change regime. UN-REDD, as an emerging powerful technical expert, aims to fight deforestation by creating a financial value for the carbon stored in forests through market mechanisms (McDermott et al., 2012). Another example is the international biodiversity regime, in which an economic perspective on forests, based on eco-systemic services and intellectual property rights, enters in tension with the more social and cultural values of traditional knowledge (Nasi, Frost, 2009).

Second, global water governance includes several NGOs and expert networks, such as the World Water Council (WWC) and the Global Water Partnership (GWP), or international organizations, such as UN-Water (Baumgartner, Pahl-Wostl, 2013). UN-Water, as a coordination body providing technical expertise on water issues, still has a weak mandate and doesn't mitigate the very fragmented nature of global water governance, which therefore remains open to diverse and competing normative initiatives trying to define what "good water governance" should be (Conca, 2005). Some examples of these international paradigms are Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), or water as an economic good (International Conference on Water and Environment, Dublin, 1992).

The high fragmentation of forests and water governance represents both an opportunity for grassroots organizations to enter global arenas relatively opened to civil society, and a constraint, as they have to compete with multiple powerful international actors dominating norm-building processes (Andonova, Mitchell, 2010). Disagreements among these actors revolve around what should be the appropriate scale to govern common-pool resources, and diverging representations on the essence of these resources (from public to economic goods, or local to universal rights). Moreover, global norms and paradigms are the object of increasing transnational protests[2], mainly directed against the lack of civil society

[2] Two major examples of these protests are the recent transnational campaign around "Indigenous peoples' rights not REDD", and the "water war" in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in 2001, against water privatization.

organizations' (CSO) inclusion in decision-making processes (Conca, 2005; Agrawal et al., 2010; Cashore et al., 2012). Indeed, CSO are often represented in global arenas through intermediaries such as international NGOs (McMichael, 2004; Vielajus, 2009; Siméant, 2010). The implementation of a "commodity consensus" on natural resources by international technical experts is also a major point of contestation from CSO (Svampa, 2013).

UN-REDD and UN-Water are two examples of technical experts dominating international norm-building arenas. Technical expertise refers to an epistemic community, defined as *"a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area"* (Haas, 1992: 3). The characteristics of technical experts are professionalization and authority in one domain, as well as scientific knowledge and neutrality (Conca, 2005). The technical character of these international experts is increasingly challenged by the emergence of a more social and local expertise of grassroots movements, defined as *"those who are most severely affected in terms of the material condition of their daily lives"* (Batliwala, 2002: 396). Grassroots expertise then refers to *"a wide range of practical skills and accumulated experience, though without any formal qualifications"* (Jenkins, 2009: 880). To compete with or complement international experts, grassroots organizations are more and more inserted into transnational networks. Foyer mentions the capacity of transnational networks to provide a renewed expertise, by crossing both "expert" and "militant" logics (2012: 155). The rising inclusion of CSOs in UN-REDD decision-making processes is an example of this dynamic of cross-expertise (Wallbott, 2014).

Recently, local communities managing common-pool resources followed this tendency by creating transnational grassroots networks in Latin America, to get a direct representation in global arenas and diffuse an alternative framing of water and forests around community-based principles. Community-based governance can be defined as a third model to manage water and forests, between the public – State – and the private – market. Its main principles are self-management and autonomy from governments, reciprocity between users and horizontality in decision-making (Ostrom, 1990). The particularity of transnational grassroots networks is their membership and self-management, as they are only composed of community-based organizations directly concerned by the issue defended (Guarnizo, Smith, 1998).

An example is the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB) which was founded in 2010, following the international climate negotiations. The alliance consists primarily of community forestry organizations, but also includes indigenous and peasant communities. Its main strategy is directed to the consolidation of territorial rights and autonomy from governments and international actors such as UN-REDD. Another example is the Latin-American Confederation of Community Organizations for Water Services and Sanitation (CLOCSAS), created in 2011 during the second Latin-American Conference of Community Water Management in Peru[3]. The network is composed of community water organizations, structured through sub-national and national federations. Its main objectives are the strengthening of local capacities and the inclusion of water community organizations in international arenas, to achieve the challenge of universal access to drinking water and sanitation.

The international involvement of grassroots organizations raises several interrogations: who are the grassroots experts and to what extent are they different from technical experts dominating international arenas? At what scale and in what field is grassroots expertise constructed as legitimate? Finally, is transnational grassroots expertise based on a harmonization or a diversification of knowledge and practices?

The analysis is based on semi-structured interviews conducted between 2013 and 2015 in Latin America, and on direct observations of regional and international events involving the participation of CLOCSAS and AMPB's leaders. The next two parts aim to present the different ways grassroots expertise is claimed by transnational networks. When CLOCSAS is framing water as a global common and a universal human right, in order to become an alternative international expert, AMPB is framing forests as local territorial rights, in order to differentiate from technical international experts.

Claiming grassroots expertise on what?

[3] Agreement made between 35 representatives of community water organizations of the 14 countries represented: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and El Salvador.

To transform languages of expertise, natural resources have to be reframed, as to change the perceptions of targeted actors. Framing is defined as the *"strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action"* (Khagram et al., 2002: 12). Actors can seek to reframe global norms that proved to be inconsistent with local realities. On the contrary, local norms can be reframed as global, for example to build a common identity or gain more influence in higher decision-making arenas. Reframing strategies are particularly important in a context where *"discourses of expertise that are setting the rules for global transactions, even in the progressive parts of the international system, have left ordinary people outside and behind"* (Appadurai, 2000: 2).

To analyze CLOCSAS' strategies to reframe water expertise, it is particularly interesting to focus on the transnational leaders members of the Directive Committee. These leaders are originally members of local water community organizations and therefore possess a direct grassroots experience. They have a decisive influence on water expertise through their circulation in global arenas of discourse production, as the World Water Week or the World Water Forum. The committee is composed of seven community leaders elected in their respective countries and in CLOCSAS' general assembly:

- Network of Social and Community Organizations of Water Management of Ecuador (ROSCGAE); Paraguayan Federation of Sanitation Organizations (FEPAJUS); National Union of Communal Aqueducts (UNAC) in Costa Rica; Association of Community Aqueducts of Colombia (AQUACOL); Misionera Federation of Drinking Water Cooperatives (FEMICAP) in Argentina; National Federation of Rural Drinking Water of Chile (FENAPRU); National Network of Drinking Water and Sanitation Committees (RED CAPS) of Nicaragua.

One of CLOCSAS' main objectives is the regional promotion of "associativity", defined as *"an institutional process of articulation, sharing, communication and coordination between the community organizations (OCSAS) of a locality, region, country or continent, as to learn and strengthen their capacities (management, advocacy on public policies, innovation) on a durable way, and oriented toward the common goal of access to water and sanitation to all Latin-Americans"*.[4] CLOCSAS' leaders and one of its NGO direct partners, Avina

[4] "La Asociatividad Como Estrategia en la Gestión Comunitaria del Agua en Latinoamérica", CLOCSAS, 2012.

Foundation, have formulated this concept deliberatively. CLOCSAS' Secretary explains that behind this concept, there is a will to differentiate the social character of water community organizations from technical experts: *"associativity […] gives the opportunity of a change to escape from international external concepts"*.[5]

We can interpret the associativity framework as a strategy to compensate for the limitations of the global norm of universal access to water. This norm is particularly important in Latin America, as it is officially institutionalized in the Constitution of several countries such as Ecuador or Bolivia. However, it suffers from a lack of concrete implementation in relatively conflictive national contexts in which access to drinking water enters in tension with other "extractivist" water uses (agriculture, hydroelectricity, mining) (De Castro et al., 2015). Therefore, the promotion of associativity by CLOCSAS' leaders appears as a strategy to address the shortcomings of the human right to water, opposing a collective and holistic approach to the individualistic vision of the latter (Bakker, 2007). Three points can be raised to demonstrate this complementary approach.

A first objective of associativity is to frame water community organizations as the best suited actors to reach the challenge of universal access to drinking water and sanitation. During the 6th World Water Week in Stockholm in 2013, CLOCSAS' leaders highlighted the capacity of community organizations to "serve the un-served" through their proximity and knowledge of local needs, especially in rural and peri-urban areas. Moreover, the organization raised awareness on the need to harmonize the large diversity of local legal statuses and forms taken by water community organizations, to improve their visibility and inclusion in national and international decision-making processes. To do so, they have created the unified category of Community Organizations of Water and Sanitation Services (OCSAS).

The construction of associativity aims to produce a convergence of local practices toward the same level of excellence and productive management as private actors (water quality, sanitation services). The discourse of CLOCSAS' Secretary during the V Meeting of Community Water Management in Costa Rica, in 2014, raises this prioritization: *"if we succeed in decreasing costs and making a better use [of water] in every aspect, by some way we are useful to humanity […] Climate change is*

[5] Interview with the Secretary of CLOCSAS, during the World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden, 03/09/13.

affecting us unexpectedly, so we have to adopt a more universal vision of what is happening".[6]

Finally, CLOCSAS is clearly oriented toward a neutral position regarding anti-privatization movements that have emerged in the 1990s against the threat of rising prices and extinction of community organizations (De Gouvello, Fournier, 2002). In fact, anti-privatization movements, often linked to indigenous movements, are perceived as easier to exclude from national decision-making processes because of their radical political character. During CLOCSAS' 5th General Assembly, Executive Committee's members reaffirmed their refusal to inscribe anti-privatization in the network statute, to avoid possible misunderstandings on their position regarding water as a service to be paid and their openness to enter into partnerships with public and even private actors of the water sector.

In conclusion, associativity is framed by CLOCSAS as complementary with the universal human right to water through the harmonization of community water organizations. However, this process can be conflictive, as a manager of the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) mentions it: *"there are a lot of tensions in this associativity: it is not as easy sometimes, as unproblematic as I see it is presented many times by CLOCSAS representatives. In all parts of society, there are political and cultural differences that create barriers and obstruct the very easy collaboration".*[7]

A really distinct process occurs for the AMPB, which is more oriented towards the promotion of territorial and indigenous rights. The claim for cultural diversity has its roots in the network structure, which is composed of a plurality of members with different identities (peasant, forest or indigenous), and power asymmetries. Indeed, AMPB is composed of two categories of actors:

- Community forestry organizations: Association of Forest Communities of Petén (ACOFOP) in Guatemala, National Alliance of Community Forest Organizations of Guatemala (Alianza OFC), Honduran Federation of Agro-forestry Producers (FEPROAH), and Mexican Network of Peasant Forestry Organizations (Red MOCAF);

[6] Idem.

[7] Interview with a staff from the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), 05/09/13, Stockholm, Sweden.

- Indigenous Organizations: Miskitu Asla Takanka (MASTA) in Honduras, Mayangna Nation and YATAMA organization in Nicaragua, Embera-Wounaan Comarca and Guna General Congress in Panama, and Bribri and Cabecar Indigenous Network (RIBCA) in Costa Rica.

The analysis of AMPB's strategies to reframe forests' expertise is based on the discourses of the Executive Commission, composed of one elected leader from each of the ten networks mentioned above. However, some members are more active in the decision-making process, depending on their international recognition or political capacities, such as ACOFOP or the Embera-Wounaan Comarca. As in the case of CLOCSAS, these leaders gained authority from direct experience in forest cooperatives or indigenous communities. Two main divisions exist among AMPB's members regarding the value given to forests and their biodiversity (from cultural to economic values) and UN-REDD programs (from strong opposition to local adaptation). To respect the autonomy and identity of each member, AMPB's leaders have defined two separate agendas, one dealing with territorial rights and the other with forest governance.

At the global scale, AMPB's leaders are more oriented toward the fight for cultural diversity than the recognition of the community-based model of governance, as in the case of CLOCSAS. The acquisition of territorial rights is presented as a prior fundamental step before talking about community forest management models. The prioritization of territorial rights results from the influence of partners who are highly specialized on the strengthening of indigenous rights, such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) or Ford Foundation. It also results from the influence of other transnational indigenous networks, members of a global alliance of forest owners launched during COP20 in Lima in 2014, including the Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin (COICA), the Network of Indigenous and Local Peoples for Forest Ecosystem Management of Central Africa (REPALEAC), and the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) in Indonesia.

AMPB's leaders link the recognition of territorial rights for indigenous and local communities to three major demands posed to international actors: respect and reconstitution of ancestral territoriality; territorial climate funding; auto-determination and free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) linked to the ILO

Convention 169.[8] A national leader of Alianza OFC mentions the opposition between territorial rights and the "carbon-oriented" approach of REDD discussions: *"we have international corporations managed by the World Bank who are pushing for aggressive mechanisms of carbon markets, through a conception that we consider hypocrite, very wrong and very perverse, the one to assign a quantity of prices to natural resources".*[9] AMPB's Secretary mentions the opposition to REDD as a political opportunity: *"What matters about REDD is that REDD allows you to seat at the bargaining table with the government and in the international negotiations to position your issues".*[10]

Finally, AMPB's global strategy is oriented toward political contestation and not neutrality. As an example, the organization's leaders have created an international mobile cinema campaign, called "If not us then who?", aiming to raise global awareness on indigenous rights violations and their vital role in forest conservation worldwide. This campaign shows the reproduction by AMPB's leaders of an international discourse framing indigenous peoples as local "heroes" in the defense of forests (Dumoulin, 2005). Interestingly, the predominance of the "indigenous rights" framework at the global scale is not only a strategy designed by indigenous representatives but also by forestry leaders, who could benefit from the higher visibility of their counterparts in international debates on REDD to redefine the conditions of their property rights with national governments. Therefore, AMPB fights for a better security of collective property rights and autonomy by framing forests as a local common good, by opposition to a public good that would entail the reinforcement of state's power on forest management.

The adoption of a universal human right or territorial right framing leads to very different claims of what should be the legitimate scale to govern water and forests resources. When CLOCSAS aims to become an alternative international expert, AMPB claims a more autonomous and local expertise.

Who are the legitimate grassroots experts?

[8] "Desde los Pueblos-Territorios hacia un Acuerdo Climático Global", COICA, AIDESEP, Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara, REPALEAC, AMPB, 2014.

[9] Interview with the President of Utz' Che' Guatemala, member of Alianza OFC, during COP20, Lima, 05/12/14.

[10] Interview with the AMPB's Secretary, 13/07/14, Mexico.

The concept of scale has been defined in the field of critical geography as an interactional process between actors under power relations (Swyngedouw, 1997; Cash et al., 2006). Actors can either shift decision-making authority from local organizations toward the transnational network, leading to the harmonization of practices and beliefs; or, on the contrary, they can defend local decision-making autonomy, maintaining a flexible transnational structure. Defining certain scales of governance as more appropriate than others depends on the degree of integration or differentiation with existing international experts and paradigms (Dufour, Goyer, 2009).

The framing of water as a universal human right and as a global common facilitates CLOCSAS' claim to be the legitimate representative of Latin-American OCSAS in international arenas. Indeed, CLOCSAS' leaders are seeking to position the network as an alternative international expert on water governance issues. As CLOCSAS' secretary explains it: *"if so many directives impact local policies, supranational organizations are necessary to establish a direct contact with those actors who take the decisions and impose their view of the world politics"*.[11] He also mentions the important value of community-based knowledge in comparison with *"professionals who don't have anything to do with the country. The information that takes the consultant is from the communities which give it to them without getting any profit"*.[12]

Their main objective is to build a social expertise that complements the technical expertise of external partners, mainly international and regional NGOs. As an example, the Director of the Ecuadorian Department of the Inter-American Association of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering (AIDIS), a direct partner of CLOCSAS, mentions that AIDIS *"can provide opportunities for them to participate in technical and scientific events, access to University to learn what they want, raise awareness, learn technical skills on particular and general aspects, and on how to organize the administrative system"*.[13] The President of FEPAJUS mentions that community leaders are social experts teaching skills to technical actors: *"we are Avina's high professors. What Avina knows about water and sanitation, it owes it to us.*

[11] Interview with the Secretary of CLOCSAS, during the World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden, 03/09/13.

[12] Idem.

[13] Interview with the Director of the Ecuadorian Department of the Inter-American Association of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering (AIDIS), Cuenca, Ecuador, 25/07/14.

[A staff from Avina] is actually an expert because she spent time learning from us, not only from me, but from all the community managers in Paraguay with whom she works, and also from America".[14]

One consequence of this role of direct representation between local and international scales is the professionalization of CLOCSAS. By opening their headquarters in Panama and gaining legal status, it has made a first step into managing funds and projects and to offer services to community organizations (administrative and financial trainings, water quality and sanitation improvements). Some projects are progressively transferred from NGOs to CLOCSAS, leading to a redefinition of expert roles. A report presenting the results of a regional program of capacity-building led by Avina Foundation and CARE mentions *"the high value that have the knowledge and experience of community-based participants in the work of OCSAS in relation to the capacity-building process. In most of the countries, the trainer group was composed of professionals with high-level scientific knowledge and community-based experts in water management".*[15]

Moreover, CLOCSAS' leaders are building a hierarchical structure to ensure democracy and representativeness, through the adoption of the network statuses and legal form, and the election of leaders in each country. CLOCSAS' president explains that *"facing the threat to fall into particularisms, it is preferable to maintain formalisms".*[16] The centralization of authority toward the transnational network represents both a strategy of empowerment from external partners and a threat to the community-based principles of horizontality and reciprocity. The President of the National Federation of Water and Sanitation Cooperatives of Bolivia mentions the fear of CLOCSAS' professionalization: *"I would hope that CLOCSAS brings me in topics as technology and knowledge with other experiences from other countries, and this is the dream and the experience I have. But until now, it just has benefited to international bodies which are taking advantage from this organization, other financial institutions".*[17]

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[14] Interview with the Vice-President of CLOCSAS, Stockholm, Sweden, 03/09/13.

[15] Carrasco Pedro, Toledo Felipe, "Fortaleciendo Capacidades. Para un mejor acceso al agua potable y al saneamiento en zonas rurales", Fundación Avina, Quito, Ecuador, 2014, 60 p.

[16] Interview with CLOCSAS President, during the IV Latin-American Meeting of Community Water Management, Paraguay, 30/07/13.

[17] Interview with the President of the National Federation of Water and Sanitation Cooperatives of Bolivia, during the V Latin-American Meetings of Community Water Management and Sanitation, Costa Rica, 11/09/14.

In a distinctive approach, one of AMPB's major claims is to differentiate territorial authorities from traditional international experts who until recently, were speaking for them in global arenas. Indeed, "territorial authorities" are framed in opposition to "intermediaries", "paternalism" or "United Nations language". The idea is to regain control on decision-making processes regarding their own reality, "from the territories" and not "for the territories". As the President of the National Coordinating Body of Indigenous Peoples of Panama (COONAPIP) explains it, *"now we can release a much more accurate message of what the community wants, what the territories want, and not only what the 'big' experts who were talking for the indigenous peoples want"*.[18] One example of the shift from technical toward grassroots expertise are the REDD programs. In the "Mesocarbon community roadmap" elaborated by the AMPB, the expressions of "REDD experts" and "briefcase advocacy" are opposed to "local capacities" and "territorial authorities". The objective is to demonstrate with empirical evidence if REDD mechanisms can function or not.

Beyond the criticism of traditional international intermediaries, AMPB's leaders also criticize actors who represent an "indigenous international bureaucracy". The President of COONAPIP explains that *"indigenous ambassadors from some of us, who are indigenous experts who were in all international arenas, have stayed in a lot of rhetoric about rights, indigenous peoples, previous consent, but what does it mean?"*.[19] These actors are compared to the metaphor of "TACA group", in reference to the Latin-American airline, to describe a type of leadership spending most of the time in international events without a legitimate representation of community-based actors.

Based on this opposition to international technical experts, AMPB's leaders are claiming the decentralization of REDD funds and decision-making authority toward local communities, framed as the most legitimate experts to handle climate change and deforestation issues. In the academic field, many scientific studies raise the argument that greater autonomy in decision-making processes at the local scale means higher carbon storage and improved living conditions for the communities (Chhatre, Agrawal, 2009; McDermott et al., 2012). For example, some studies on

[18] Interview with the President of the National Coordinating Body of Indigenous Peoples of Panama (COONAPIP), 06/12/14, Lima, Peru.

[19] Idem.

the region show that forests located on indigenous territories, or governed by community foresters, have lower rates of deforestation (Kaimowitz, 2008).

The objective followed by the AMPB is therefore to strengthen the legal formalization of local organizations avoiding the professionalization of the transnational network. The President of AMPB's executive commission has stated that *"if the Alliance gets into a formal organization, we fall into the risk to separate from our basis"*.[20] However, the lack of professionalization questions the sustainability of AMPB and its role, beyond the promotion of territorial rights, in community forestry improvement and diffusion. The same leader also mentions that *"we are so territorials that we are not selling the regional signature"*.[21]

This comparative analysis reveals a differentiated claim of the scale at which common-pool resources should be governed. While CLOCSAS is claiming its representativeness to speak for Latin-American OCSAS, AMPB's leaders are defending the ability of indigenous peoples and forest communities to speak from the territories unlike traditional technical international actors. In both cases, CLOCSAS and AMPB try to differentiate from international dominant expert, by highlighting their complementarity or demanding their autonomy.

Toward a renewed expertise in global water and forests governance

Considering that expertise is about the construction of a shared and proper epistemology, both CLOCSAS and AMPB intend to redefine existent technical expertise languages by creating their own concepts to qualify common-pool resources. Transnational leaders from CLOCSAS and AMPB talk about the importance to "speak with passion about associativity" and "diffuse the territorial acid".

However, they adopt a different orientation in the process of expertise building. On one side, CLOCSAS claims its social expertise based on the promotion of Latin-American associativity, its contribution to the universal access to human right to water, and a co-management model with public authorities. The construction of water as a global common and the professionalization of the transnational network contribute to legitimize CLOCSAS as a new international

[20] Interview with the President of RIBCA and of the AMPB's Executive Commission, 15/07/14, Puebla, Mexico.

[21] Idem.

expert on water issues. On the other side, AMPB claims the grassroots expertise of territorial authorities, through the promotion of the diversity of local practices and the framing of indigenous and forest communities as local heroes in the conservation of forests. The construction of forests as a local common and the decentralization of international programs contribute to legitimize territorial authorities as local experts on forest issues.

Finally, the post gives insights to define what is, and how is built, transnational grassroots expertise. Framing strategies appears determinant both to challenge international technical experts and dominant paradigms, but also to convince community members of the importance to engage in transnational mobilization. The two case studies presented reveal that grassroots expertise can be strengthen through transnational action, or that transnational grassroots networks can become new international experts. The scale of expertise appears determinant for the durability of the transnational mobilization of water and forests community organizations. Indeed, while CLOCSAS may lose its connection with its community base because of a centralization process, AMPB suffers from a lack of official recognition from local and forest communities. It results fundamental to go further on the research studying the internal processes of discourses production and tensions, as the analysis presented in this post was limited to the global action of transnational community leaders.

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MARIA EUGENIA GIRAUDO*

Commodity Hubs: Production of Space and New Geographies of Capital[1]

As a result of the commodity boom that emerged in the last decade, agricultural products have experienced the longest trend in price peaks in a century. Improvement in food producing countries' terms of exchange fostered the expansion of agricultural production worldwide. In particular, flex crops – crops and commodities that have multiple uses - have emerged as one of the preferred investments in the sector (Borras et al., 2014). The two most widely produced agricultural commodities globally are sugar cane and maize; both considered archetypal flex crops (FAOSTAT). The profit extracted from this activity relies mainly on the capacity to produce and sell large volumes of a particular crop, which can then be destined for different uses: human food, edible and non-edible oil, animal feed pellets, flour, etc. The spatial expression of this trend is visible in the extensive contiguous areas dedicated to the production of two or three crops (and in some cases even just one), such as the Corn Belt in the United States.

In South America, soybean – a crop also characterised by great flexibility - has extended across the continent at a strong pace, as the planted surface increased by over 60% in Brazil and Argentina and over 90% in Paraguay, the three main producing countries. Global production of soybean is highly concentrated in the American continent, as global supply is dominated by the United States, Brazil and Argentina, with over 75% of the world's production. India, Paraguay and China follow in production volumes, resulting in a concentration of 90% of global

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production in these six countries. Countries in the Southern Cone of the American continent are particularly attractive for investment, since the area presents the possibility of further expansion of the agricultural productive surface, as well as good access to water and seaways to the international markets (FAOSTAT).

This last point is of particular importance since soybean is produced mainly for export markets, and not for domestic consumption. For example, Argentina exports 90% of the soybean it produces, the same as Paraguay (IICA). This means 55 million tons of soybean is exported in the form of grain, oil or pellets to Europe and China. As a result, the large-scale expansion of soybean production has been accompanied by the development of transport, storage and processing infrastructure necessary for the extraction of natural resources in the form of agricultural commodities.

The physical means to connect the production areas with the distribution centres towards the international markets and between different points of the production chain seem to be the most pressing issue for producers and traders alike in all countries. Governments and international organisations, such as CAF (Development Bank of Latin America) recognise the need for further improvement in this area. Moreover, infrastructure and connectivity seem to be the main obstacles to integration, and several international agencies are involved in the development of the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) – now part of the South-American Council of Infrastructure and Planning (COSIPLAN) from UNASUR (Union of South-American Nations) - such as the aforementioned CAF and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB).

In the case of the South American Soybean Complex, infrastructure is needed for two main reasons: storage of the grains or other by-products; and transportation of grains or by-products to ports from where they are shipped to their destinations. The construction of corridors for the transportation of commodities, storage locations and logistical and industrial hubs is necessary for the efficient functioning of the extractive apparatus. Infrastructure is often overlooked in research, particularly as it consists on one of the central aspects of the impact of (fixed) extractive capital. But the opening up of roads and waterways for the transportation of agricultural commodities has a profound impact on the geography of capital. This is the result of tendencies of global capitalism, particularly the contradictions inherent to the system, as Neil Smith (2010) argues. Dynamics of equalisation and

differentiation, reinforced by tendencies of centralisation and concentration of capital, reproduce patterns of uneven development that transform the geographical organisation of capital.

This article aims to analyse the emergence of logistical and processing hubs that are functional to the expansion of a commodity production chain and necessary for the extraction of natural resources. It is by creating these corridors designed to reach global markets that the soybean complex has been able to expand and increase its profitability, deepening the extractivist nature of agribusiness in the region. It focuses on the case of the complex of Gran Rosario, an agro-industrial cluster installed on the shores of the Paraná River that has become one of the largest and most efficient hubs for commodity transports in the world. This post argues that while usually natural conditions are claimed to be the reasons for its formation, it is a process of concentration of capital and production of space that gives birth to these commodity hubs. First, this post will look into the particularities of the Gran Rosario complex as a multi-functional hub, and the following section will explore the connections with the extractive imperative and the global dynamics of capital and their spatial expressions.

The Gran Rosario complex: a multi-functional commodity hub

The emergence of industrial and logistical clusters associated to commodity trade is linked to the transformation of agricultural production into a global chain. Food staples are no longer consumed locally, but instead result from an increasingly global process where every step of the chain is strategically located in order to maximise productivity and profits. The development of production chains creates linkages not only between firms, but also among national economies, or parts of them. Hence, these chains are embedded in social and institutional contexts that not only are transformed by their presence, but also have transformative effects themselves, thus creating a co-constitutive process (Henderson et al., 2002:445-446).

This embeddedness is not only institutional, but also territorial. Firms locate themselves in areas that might be strategic for the efficient functioning of the global chain for reasons of natural or institutional endowments. Consequently, they become spatially 'locked-in' and attract other firms, creating new nodes in the global production network (2002:452). This process of spatial gathering allows the formation of clusters, which can concentrate vertically (different stages of the

production chain) or horizontally (different firms located at the same step of the process). Given the nature of agricultural production for export markets, the emergence of a complex such as the one developed in Gran Rosario should be referred to as an agro-industrial cluster, both connecting farmers, suppliers and storage facilities; as well as incorporating processing plants that advance in the industrialisation of agricultural products.

The Rosario-San Lorenzo-San Martín Complex (also known as the Gran Rosario area) is a gathering of grain handling facilities and ocean vessel loading berths that extends for 80 km on the shore of the Paraná River in the Province of Santa Fe, Argentina. The complex is located at the heart of the Rio de la Plata Basin, the most extensive fluvial way in Latin America. The basin covers around 3,200,000 square kilometres, the equivalent to a third of the European continent. It is comprised of the basins of the rivers Paraná, Paraguay, Uruguay and La Plata crosses the territories of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Its geographical locality, then, gives the area of Gran Rosario a unique position for connecting at a national, regional, and global level.

The natural endowments of the Paraná basin, however important, are not the only determinant in the development and consolidation of the Gran Rosario complex as a commodity hub. A series of changes in the institutional framework implemented from the mid-1970s on were key in fostering the stark improvement in competitivity of the Argentinian agricultural sector during the 1990s. These can be summed up in the authorisation of private ports and operation and loading berths, as well as increasing the depth of the river way and providing easier access to the Atlantic Ocean (López & Questa, 2011; Boot & Zuidwijk, 2013). These localised capabilities have transformed the Paraná Upriver area into a key command and control hub for the global network of oilseed production (Sturgeon 2003). From a Global Value Chains (GVC) perspective, this portion of land has become a node of vertical and horizontal bundling, accompanied by a process of institutional and territorial embedding of firms.

The Gran Rosario area gathers a number of actors and activities forming a multi-functional cluster. In particular, there are three main activities that are developed in this complex, and their geographical concentration makes this area a key nodal structure in the global production chain. These functions are: agro-industrial cluster; logistical hub; and financial and commercial centre.

Agro-industrial cluster

The 80 kilometres that make part of the complex gather twelve crushing plants, twenty-two if we count the plants within the province of Santa Fe –the sub-national jurisdiction-. Overall, Gran Rosario holds 80% of the installed oilseed crushing capacity of the country, which is of 54 million tons a year (J.J. Hinrichsen, 2014). This is a clear evidence of the high level of concentration of investment on crushing capacity in this area, creating this space as a processing cluster destined to global markets.

Only around 38 million tons of soybeans are processed each year, which means the industry has an idle capacity of around 15 million tons (2014). Some of this was compensated with a system of 'temporary import' that allowed the entry of Paraguayan soybean on a temporary scheme in order to be processed in Gran Rosario and then exported as meal and oil. Due to suspicions that the system was being used to avoid the export tax imposed on Argentinian soybean, the scheme was suspended and plants still face an outstanding idle capacity.

Crushing industries concentrated in this area are also highly centralised. Even if there is quite a diverse set of actors involved in this process - transnational firms, domestic capitals, and cooperatives-, Gran Rosario holds the largest crushing plants in the world, by capacity of crushing volume. While in Brazil and the U.S. the average capacity of the largest plants goes up to three thousand tons per day, in Rosario they can crush ten thousand tons in average, the largest having a capacity of twenty thousand tons (J.J. Hinrichsen, 2014; Anon.TELAM, 2014). The large volumes these facilities are able to process is indicative of the extensive amounts of investment required to install such an important productive hub,[2] and hence the tendency towards increasing centralisation of capital.

Logistical hub

Throughout the extension of the Rosario – San Lorenzo – San Martin complex there are over twenty loading berths through which most of the agricultural production destined for foreign markets is dispatched. As previously mentioned, data from 2012 shows that almost 80% of Argentina's grain and by-products exports were shipped from these ports. This includes 27,428,838 tons of grains (67% share of total shipments); 23,788,526 tons of by-products (93.12%) and

[2] For the construction of the largest plant in the Gran Rosario area it was necessary an investment of 480 million US dollars (TELAM, 2014).

4,061,236 tons of oils (81.35 % share of vegetable oil deliveries from Argentine ports) (J.J. Hinrichsen, 2014). In 2010, there were around 2028 ocean vessels that entered through the River of La Plata up towards the Paraná River into the Gran Rosario complex. Of these, 27% were Handy-size boats of up to 35,000 DWT; 28% Handy-max of up to 50,000 DWT and 44% were Panamax boats with a capacity of up to 80,000 DWT (Boot and Zuidwijk 2013).[3] These figures illustrate the size and consequent impact of the logistical operations associated with grain production; and during harvest time, the daily volume of foreign currency coming from the sector has been of more than 120 thousand US dollars in the last five years (CIARA, 2014).

Financial centre

Besides its logistical and industrial capacity, the city of Rosario (at the centre of the 80km band) gathers a number of institutions that complement and assist the soybean complex. From universities with numerous degrees in agriculture and agribusiness, to lobbies and producers' unions, these actors contribute to the spatial concentration of agro-industrial activities. Besides these groups, one of the most important actors is the Rosario Board of Trade (Bolsa de Comercio de Rosario), an institution founded in 1884 to provide transparency to grain exchange in Argentina. The institution has fostered a Physical Grain Market, as well as a Futures and Securities Markets linked to agricultural production. Overall, this contributes to the vertical and horizontal bundling of the soybean and overall agricultural commodity network, making Rosario a central hub and key connector between the production of a commodity and its distribution to the global market.

Extractivism and commodity hubs

The emergence of spatial clusters belonging to a global production network coincides with the conceptualisation developed by Neil Smith of the dynamics of uneven development and its geographical expression in the capitalist system. According to the author, the "dramatic restructuring of the geographical space" that the world has been experiencing is nothing less than the spatial expression of the dynamics of capital; more specifically, of the contradictions inherent to the capitalism (Smith 2010:1). The division of labour/capital into different sectors, and

[3] DWT: deadweight tons. It is the total capacity of the boat in tons, including the load, fuel, water and other provisions.

subsequent centralisation in these spaces, creates a concentrated and highly developed built environment. The concentration of capital develops as the profit motive pushes for increasing investment in and accumulation of means of production to increase the scale of output; while centralisation occurs when individual capitals are combined, leading to the destruction of two previously existing capitals, and the creation of a new larger one (Smith 2010:161-162). The spatial correlate of this is the aggrupation of individual capitals from one sector in one particular geographical area, contributing to the emergence of production hubs and hence to the differentiation of the geographical space.

The case of the Gran Rosario complex is an example of how these dynamics play out in the current productive landscape of agriculture. Through the dual process of centralisation and concentration, global capital has produced a space specialised and identified with production and export of agricultural commodities. While the contradictions of the capitalist system have geographical expressions across different areas or sectors, the case of Gran Rosario is also inextricably linked to a mode of production – agribusiness- that involves large scale, capital and technology intensive production destined for foreign markets. In this sense, agribusiness and the associated tendency towards monoculture adopt features of an extractive activity.

Gudynas (2010) points to the removal of large volumes of natural resources that are exported with little or no added value, and the increasing use of agro-chemicals, transgenic seeds and mechanisation as elements that bring agricultural production closer to other extractive activities. The difference with other extractive activities such as mining is that instead of being limited to a certain area, agribusiness constitutes a rather diffuse enclave (2010:40). While agriculture allows the continuing expansion of this extractive mechanism, dynamics of capital require certain spatial fixity in order to further guarantee the maximisation of profits. Within the diffuse nature of agricultural production, commodity hubs such as the Gran Rosario area serve as export enclaves that facilitate the movement of resources and profits towards foreign markets. Furthermore, this agricultural hub is consequently tightly linked to the global markets. The contradiction between mobility and fixity of capital, emphasised by Smith, are expressed in what Sassen calls the “juxtaposition of the national and the global” (Sassen 2000:221) or the “endogenising of the global into the national” (Sassen 2013:27).

The production of spaces functional to the extractivist imperative is achieved through the transformation of the geography and even the natural environment. The diverse works towards increasing the depth of the Paraná River, its connections to different water channels to facilitate the movement of larger boats through the basin are one example of how there is a process of production of nature (Smith 2010) involved in the consolidation of commodity hubs. Besides its impact on nature, these built structures act as enforcers of the economic, social and environmental transformations that extractivism is imposing throughout the region. In a similar way to Svampa's conceptualisation of 'commodity-cities', commodity hubs are the result of the extractivist impulse that "creates a strong structure of inequalities, as well as the dislocation from previous economic and social weaving" (Svampa, 2014).

Conclusion

It is easy to attribute the emergence of the Rosario agro-exporting cluster to natural conditions and proximity to the most fertile area of the country. Literature on industrial and agricultural clusters points to natural endowments as key components of the emergence and expansion of these gatherings, as well as the institutional conditions of that particular area. However, it is important to point that the dynamics created by the localisation of market actors in that area can contribute as well to produce those conditions. It is the concentration of capital and its spatial 'lock-in' that have transformed nature and the particular space an area occupies within the national, regional and global economy.

The Gran Rosario complex has become the most important regional commodity hub, connecting the production of Argentina, as well as that of Paraguay, Bolivia, and – in less volume- Brazil and Uruguay. It has been consolidated as a key trading and processing node in the region, even if there is increasing competition from places like North of Brazil and Nueva Palmira in Uruguay. Moreover, it has adopted the role of door to external markets, and to the global demand for soybean and other cereals that have sustained and expanded the soybean complex in South America, thus contributing to the strengthening and expansion of agribusiness as an extractive strategy.

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SILVIA VEGA UGALDE*

Sumak Kawsay, Feminisms and Post-Growth: Linkages to Imagine New Utopias[1]

In January 2014, the FLACSO[2] journal *Revista Iconos* published a special issue on sumak kawsay, revitalizing a debate that had lost impetus in Ecuador lately[3]. I will use one of the special issue articles, written by Hidalgo and Cubillo, which offers a classification of the different existing positions on sumak kawsay, as a frame for my attempt to identify various conceptions of gender corresponding to each of those positions, either explicitly or implicitly. What I will argue in this article is that, just as sumak kawsay is a polysemous concept, so is gender. A reading that tries to find associations between both concepts within each of the perspectives contained in sumak kawsay is useful and illuminating. Likewise, I will argue that the contestation of the socio-political system in which we live – including patriarchy as a constitutive and inseparable part of that system – differs in each of the perspectives. The meaning of sumak kawsay varies in important ways from one perspective to the other, as does the understanding of gender relations. To put the

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[1] This article first appeared as part of the book *Post-Crecimiento y Buen Vivir: Propuestas globales para la construcción de sociedades equitativas y sustentables* edited by Gustavo Endara and published by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES ILDIS) Ecuador. It was translated by María Mancilla García and was published online in http://www.alternautas.net/blog/2015/7/4/sumak-kawsay-feminisms-and-post-growth-linkages-to-imagine-new-utopias on July 4th, 2015.

[2] Translator's note: Latin American Social Sciences Institute.

[3] Other publications followed that one, which I hope predict a renewed interest on the topic. For example, the book edited by Atahualpa Oviedo (2014) an anthology of the indigenist thought on sumak kawsay (2014) published by the University of Huelva and the PYDLOS programme of the University of Cuenca. It is also worth mentioning Santiago García's unpublished doctoral thesis (2014).

different perspectives on sumak kawsay and on gender into dialogue is mutually enriching; it allows us to imagine new ways of life, new utopic horizons, and to build a nexus and social alliances between actors around those proposals.

In the first part of the article I present the different conceptions of gender that would fit, broadly speaking, with various understandings of sumak kawsay. In the second part, I focus on the degrowth – or post-growth – paradigm, which resonates with the post-developmental and ecological understanding of sumak kawsay. I will reflect on the openings that these perspectives offer to question gender relations, as well as on challenges posed to the post-growth paradigm by feminist economics.

Different meanings of sumak kawsay and gender

Hidalgo and Cubillo distinguish three different perspectives on sumak kawsay: the socialist-statist, the ecological post-developmentalist, and the indigenist-pachamamista. They identify six issues with regard to which these three perspectives differ (Hidalgo y Cubillo, 2014).

Following the first understanding, sumak kawsay is an Andean version of socialism, with an emphasis on state management to achieve social equity, which is the first objective. From this perspective, sumak kawsay constitutes an alternative development paradigm. From the other two perspectives, sumak kawsay is an alternative paradigm *to* development, for its opposition to the modern vision of unlimited growth that preys on nature.

The difference that these authors find between ecological-post-developmental and indigenists-pachamamistas is that the first see sumak kawsay as a project built through the participation of groups that defend contentious positions, while the second see sumak kawsay as the heritage of indigenous people (Hidalgo and Cubillo, 2014).

It could be argued that three different conceptions of gender correspond to these three understandings of sumak kawsay, although proposing a change in gender relations is not central to any of them. A vision of gender based on the liberal notion of equality of opportunity is latent in the socialist-statist vision of sumak kawsay; a vision that defends the complementarity of men and women as a central concept resonates with the indigenist understanding and the vision of the indigenous people; and we can associate the ecological post-developmental vision of

sumak kawsay with the understanding of gender put forward by feminist economics and communitarian feminism.

The socialist/statist concept of sumak kawsay and equal-opportunity gender politics

The principle of equality of opportunity between men and women aims to obtain rights for women equal to those enjoyed by men. This perspective puts emphasis on allowing women to access the public sphere (employment, education, politics). It is concerned with discriminatory relationships between men and women, rather than conceiving these as relationships of oppression. The very idea of equal opportunity resonates with liberal feminism, i.e., the dominant perspective in women's movements and in state policies promoting gender equality.

This is the vision that we find in the Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir in Ecuador (PNBV 2009–2013 and PNBV 2013–2017), as the parity targets in elected positions of responsibility attest, together with a more traditional approach to maternity issues, supported by objectives such as: the extension of the breastfeeding period, availability of facilities for assisted birth, services for child care, reduction of maternal mortality in childbirth, reduction of teenage pregnancy and other objectives in which the central concern is protecting the well-being and health of children rather than improving women's living conditions. We also find a couple of objectives that aim to reduce violence against women and to reduce the disparity in the hours employed in housework for men and women. We can consider these two last objectives to be less linked to the traditional 'maternalist' or equality of opportunity paradigms (República del Ecuador, 2009).

In Bolivia, in 2008 a Plan for Equal Opportunities (PIO) was approved. Its first part is a diagnosis that seeks to outline the situation of women in the context of the country's political changes. It also reinterprets certain ideas related to *suma qamaña*, such as the centrality of communities or the complementary pair men-women, from the perspective of a critical conception of gender.

While this approach is more original than the Ecuadorian, it remains absent from the part of the plan that deals with strategic measures, which, yet again, relies

on the equality of opportunity discourse (Ministerio de Justicia de Bolivia y Viceministerio de Género y Asuntos Generacionales, 2008).[4]

The problem with the vision that I have associated with the equality of opportunity discourse is that by focusing on the public space, it dismisses the need for changes in private spaces. Perhaps more importantly, it uncritically sets the androcentric Western order as the universal referent of rights.

The indigenous conception of sumak kawsay and the idea of gender complementarity

In the binary vision of the indigenous peoples of the Andes, the cosmos is presented as a conjunction of the masculine and the feminine. This conception, transposed to the relationships between men and women, appears in the idea of *chacha-warmi*, which is the man-woman married couple among Aymaras, and also among Quichuas.

The man (*chacha* in Aymara) and the woman (*warmi*) become *Jaqi* (human being) only through marital union. A single man could never be *Jilaqata* ('authority', i.e. assuming a position of leadership and responsibility in the community), and neither can a single woman be *Mama t´alla* (Layme, n.d.). The couple assumes the position of 'authority' in the community in a rotatory fashion, based on gender (men assume the position of 'authority' over men and women over women). Men and women also assume different daily and ritual functions which are perceived as complementing one another (Choque, 2005).

There is a tendency to present this idea of Andean complementarity, at least in certain cases, as a feature that has survived despite colonization. Or, in other cases, it is argued that if this feature has been undermined, it has been as a result of colonial acculturation. This is especially true in the case of communitarian male leaders who affirm the existence of harmonious relationships between men and women within indigenous communities.

Nonetheless, indigenous women have started to question a notion of complementarity that, in practice, positions them as subordinates. For example, the

[4] Beyond the weaknesses in the conceptualization of gender dimensions in the discourse of sumak kawsay, this fact proves the difficulty of making operational a project that until now was formulated in the realm of ethics and political philosophy.

organization of *Mama T´allas* within CONAMAQ[5] in Bolivia is planning an alternative arrangement scheme that challenges the current way of accessing positions of responsibility since presently the authority of women follows that of their husbands. Indeed, women become *Mama T´allas* only as spouses of a *Mallku*.[6]

For Blanca Chancoso, an Ecuadorian indigenous leader, complementarity is to "interact in equal conditions, it is to clean the face with both hands, it is mutual help. It is also to break impositions, egoism and individuality. It is to add what the other is missing, not to be the other's walking stick, nor the other's ladder, and even less his labourer. It is to support each other in order to address, develop and foster shared dreams" (Chancoso, 2014: 224).

Challenges to the notion of complementarity centre on the impossibility of thinking about women's and men's personal autonomy, since it is necessary to be married to be complete, which complicates the experience of being single or the acknowledgement of sexual diversity.

However, the concept of complementarity is also seen as a mobilizing idea. In that sense, it is not seen as something that exists in current cultural practices, but rather as an ideal to be built.[7]

The ecological-post-developmental vision of sumak kawsay and the conception of gender in feminist economics and communitarian feminism

It is more difficult to find a conception of gender in the ecologist-post-developmental thinking than in the other versions of sumak kawsay, but we can identify convergences with some of the positions defended by feminist economists, on the one hand, and by the thinkers of communitarian feminism on the other. In the first case, the proposals have appeared independently of the discussions on

[5] Translator's note: National Council of *Ayllus* and *Markas* of *Qullasuyu*, a confederation of traditional governing bodies of highland indigenous communities.

[6] Arminda Velasco, leader of the *Mama T´alla*s of CONAMAQ, argues: "We have proposed that everything be *chacha-warmi*. Before it was *Tata* and his *Mama*, now we are suggesting the *Mama* and her *Tata*. We are now passing legislation proposed by the *Mamas*. Now there is a front line of *Tatas* and there are their *Mamas*, sort of in the background. There needs to be an alternation: we have said if the first head is the *Tata* and his *Mama*, the following must be a *Mama* and her *Tata*. And like this, with this kind of alternation, participation needs to be shared" (Interview to Arminda Velasco, 4 October 2013).

[7] This is what the *Plan for the Equality of Opportunities: Women Building the New Bolivia to Live Well* (Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades. Mujeres Construyendo la Nueva Bolivia para Vivir Bien) argues (Ministry of Justice of Bolivia and Vice-Ministry of Gender and Generational Matters, 2008).

sumak kawsay, while in the second, there are explicit links, since communitarian feminism aims at decolonizing feminism, appropriating and reinterpreting certain Andean paradigms in a feminist key.

The conceptual category that allows us to associate feminist economics with sumak kawsay is that of the 'reproduction of life'. We find this category in both perspectives, although understood differently. From the sumak kawsay perspective, the idea of the 'reproduction of life' deals with orienting production and consumption to satisfy human needs and not to accumulate capital. From the point of view of feminist economics, 'reproduction of life' refers to reproductive work, generally considered women's responsibility. This work serves to satisfy basic human needs, which resonates with sumak kawsay's understanding of the concept. Both concepts challenge Western 'scientific' knowledge, since it has led to an instrumentalization of nature and an invisibilization of women's economy. Both perspectives propose to transform the present organization of the economy as part of a developmental scheme into an economic scheme centred on the reproduction of life.

Some feminist economists distinguish within the discipline between positions of 'conciliation' and positions of 'rupture.' The first are interested in vindicating the conciliation of productive and reproductive work, reproducing the binary logic of the socio-economic system, where the productive pole ends up receiving priority, subordinate to the reproductive one, in such a way that the capitalist logic of production and the masculine preeminence in the public world remain untouched.

Feminist economists who advocate a rupture seek to transcend that binary logic of analysis because "production and reproduction don't have the same analytical value, and indeed, production, the markets, don't have value in themselves, only insofar as they promote or impede the maintenance of life, which is the central category of analysis" (Perez, 2005: 54).

The project of communitarian feminism proceeds from criticism of liberal feminism and seeks to decolonize feminism by rooting feminist reflection in the values and worldview of the Andes. They seek to recuperate the community, not as an existing reality – since they criticise, for example, patriarchy and other exploitative relations in some indigenous communities – but as an ideal in the making that transcends individualism, and also the state. They take up the defence of Pachamama and a harmonious relationship with nature. This current of thought has essentially been developed in Bolivia and it considers the Plurinational State as

an instrument for the transition that should lead to unity and the self-management of communities (Arroyo, 2013).

The three visions briefly presented coexist, clash with one another and at times, unite. Women's movements in countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia have sought to obtain from the Morales and Correa governments some attention to their agendas, with more or less success, depending on the kinds of proposals that have been put forward. Having said that, what has been missing is depth in the debate over long-term strategic implications for women of a constitutionalised paradigm like that of sumak kawsay/suma qamaña, focusing on the immediacy of concrete and pragmatic demands. The proposal to 'depatriarchalize' the state and society that has been put forward in Bolivia, has put the discussion back in a strategic arena and has opened a space to dispute meanings, something that hasn't happened in Ecuador.[8]

Gender transformations in the context of imagined post-growth

One of the paradigms in which the ecological post-developmental conception appears is that of post-growth. Some central ideas of this paradigm can be put into dialogue with the postulates of feminism to define common questions, although that very intention is foreign to post-growth theorists.

Based on an analysis of the environmental crisis that threatens to destroy the planet, as well as on an analysis of the levels of alienation and overwork to which human beings are submitted in the current capitalist state, authors like Latouche and Harpagés (2011), together with Paolo Cacciari (2010), propose the utopia of degrowth, which purposes to overcome the productivist vision that has oriented different societies in the past centuries, independently of their capitalist or socialist ideology.

Degrowth suggests redefining production based on the satisfaction of needs and not on the profits that the spiral of production for production entails.[9]

The main objective of degrowth is the reduction of global production to the levels of 1960–1970, to obtain an ecological footprint equal or inferior to one planet. This goal, expressed in economic terms, implies a reconceptualization of the

[8] For a detailed analysis of the debates on de-patriarchalization in Bolivia, see Vega, 2014.

[9] The synthesis presented here draws on the work of Serge Latouche and Harpagés (2011).

current way of life; it presupposes some of the central ideas that Latouche and Harpagés develop to define their proposal: firstly, the need to 'recraft space-time dimensions'; secondly, 'working less to live better'; thirdly, 'reducing distances and regain slowness'; and fourthly, 'taking back the local'. All these changes are interrelated (Latouche and Harpagés, 2010: 52–78).

Producing in order to satisfy needs means to construct smaller spaces for coexistence – as opposed to the mega cities of capitalist modernity – which, as far as possible, can be self-sustainable in the production of their energy sources and self-sufficient in food and economic conditions. This could be achieved by fostering local and seasonal agricultural production, with more contact between producers and consumers, by the reduction of transport, storing and refrigeration of products, by the use of local or regional money, and the revitalization of the social fabric. It is about leaving behind the irrationalities of transnational production such as producing in one place, sending the intermediary product to be processed thousands of kilometres away, and then having the final product return back to the consumers' homes.

A key idea associated with degrowth is the need for a considerable reduction of intermediary consumption such as transport, packaging, publicity and energy. For that purpose, relocating economic activity, restoring peasant agriculture, reducing energy waste, penalizing publicity spending, reducing the number of working hours, appear as essential measures – among others – that could be encouraged via incentives, taxes and other political decisions. Recuperating the local has economic, but also political potentialities, because it allows a relationship of higher proximity among residents, as well as participation and collective decision-making on topics of common interest; we would be looking at a re-appropriation of politics from below. The recuperation of the local wouldn't be a matter merely of place, but of identity. The creation of a space for the recognition of a collective life project together with coordinated and solidary action becomes viable. Housing would be redefined to propose grouped constructions that would optimize the use of energy and break the walls of individuality, combining adequately private and collective spaces. By reducing productivism, working time should also be reduced. In other words, the productivity that is achieved would be the product of the necessary time to produce goods and not to increase profits, which inevitably leads to producing more and more.

With extra liberated time, the flourishing of artistic activities, recreation, sports, spiritual contemplation, public participation, voluntary work and collective support would be allowed to blossom. It is a matter of quantitative reduction and qualitative transformation of work.

As can be appreciated in this narrow synthesis, degrowth advances a deep cultural revolution, a change in the current imaginaries of progress and well-being, a questioning of consumerism, and a rehabilitation of sobriety, savings, environmental conscience and the revalorisation of social fabric.

What openings do we find in degrowth proposals to question relations of gender domination? There are some elements that are particularly suitable to advance the destabilization of androcentric patterns of social interaction. The first is precisely the call for a deep cultural change entailed in the degrowth paradigm, a change that aims at transforming daily habits, from what we decide to eat to the configuration of neighbourhoods and houses. The degrowth framework, which seeks to shake up mentalities, is a suitable arena to question other common sense notions related to interpersonal and gender relation. Feminist countercultural approaches are usually resisted because patriarchal and capitalist cultural hegemony has naturalized certain habits, and their destabilization is difficult to accept.

A second aspect that favours the questioning of gender relationships is the emphasis in the degrowth paradigm on reconquering time through the reduction of distances and commuting, as well as through the reduction of working days. That would allow women, who are generally "poor in time" as a result of their double or triple working days, to advance more equal uses of working time and of free time for themselves and to put into question the distribution of time between men and women, with the aim of abolishing the sexual division of labour.

A third aspect that would favour a change in gender relations is the revalorisation of the local, since in local spaces, the visibility and the social and political prominence of women is paramount. These are areas of proximity that would boost political participation, voluntary social action, and would allow women to safely commute for paid work or recreation and leisure activities.

Correspondences and divergences with regards to the 'sustainability of life'

What, then, are the proposals of feminist economics for the organization of life and how do they fit – or not – with the degrowth paradigm? As previously highlighted, the feminist economics of rupture defends a reorganization of life, society and its behaviour around the sustainability of life, putting at the core people's care – material and affective – and the simple satisfaction of people's needs. Bosch and other authors find a convergence between the ecological perspective and the feminist one on questioning the capitalist idea of time as clock-time, homogeneous and scarce. Both schools understand time from the experience that natural – as much as human life – evolves in discontinuous and heterogeneous times. As far as the human dimension is concerned, time is lived as experience, relation, learning, companionship, and thus it is never equal to itself. Natural cycles are repetitive, but never identical (Bosch et al., 2004).

Similarly to the idea in the feminist economics of rupture of adapting productive work to the biological time of human life to guarantee first the satisfaction of care needs, the ecological perspective puts forward the same adjustment based on the cyclical time of nature (Bosch et al., 2004). On the new organization of time, Carrasco argues that:

> Schedules and working days should adapt to the necessary domestic work and not the other way around as it is presently done. Commercial arrangements should become more flexible, but in order to adapt to human needs. The result would be a growing valuation of non-commercial time, which would help the male sector of the population to diminish the number of hours devoted to the market and to assume its part of responsibility in the tasks of direct care. That way we could achieve 'equality' between women and men, because the latter would be imitating the former, participating in similar way in what are the basic activities of life. In parallel, the participation in work of men and women would progressively become homogenous (Carrasco, 2001: 24).

Echoing the idea of ecological footprint advanced by the defenders of degrowth, Bosch and other authors speak of a 'civilising footprint', an indicator that would entail a proper balance between what people receive and what they bring in terms of care time (affection and time to provide for the satisfaction of basic needs) to guarantee the continuity of life for different human generations:

The ecological footprint refers to the sustainability of human life on the planet, making visible the unequal distribution-consumption of resources; the civilising footprint would refer to the sustainability of life in conditions of humanity in the

network of relationships that make it possible, making visible the unequal input-reception of loving and caring energies between women and men (Bosch et al., 2004: 17).

It could be argued that the common concern for the sustainability of life brings together feminist economics and the post-growth school, but the emphasis in each position lies in different places. Post-growth, as formulated by authors like Latouche and Harpagés, is blind to gendered social relations, and therefore does not perceive the different workloads and responsibilities in the sustainability of life that men and women have. Feminism, by contrast, emphasizes that difference because it argues that it is on the sexual division of labour that gender domination is based. This is achieved by establishing the public world as the dominating space of men, to the detriment of the private world, the world of care, which is culturally assigned to women.

The compatibility of the two paradigms will remain only apparent if those that champion degrowth don't make a deliberate effort to include a feminist reading in their understanding of the reproduction of life, which entails dealing with the issue of who performs the work of human and natural care, under which conditions such work is done and what costs it implies for men and women. On their hand, feminists should incorporate the ecological understanding of the sustainability of life in order to frame their argument about the sexual division of labour outside of and beyond the horizon of the productivist and consumerist way of life of 'modern' societies.

Relocating the debate under utopic horizons

The proposals formulated by the schools of degrowth and feminist economics of rupture, are, today, utopic, but as Cacciari says, utopias "are like the stars for sailors in the night. Nobody thinks of reaching them, but they help to maintain one's course" (Cacciari, 2010: 16). The exercise of imagining how social relations of production and gender domination could change in other possible worlds, in other life contexts, organised around the paradigm of life sustainability, is imperative to keep alive the tension necessary for historical change, civilizational change.

The governments and societies of countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia are losing their utopic horizon and as a result are following a mistaken course, which is why political projects supposedly aiming to produce change are trapped in

pragmatism and productivist immediatism. But this problem does not only affect the governments. Latin American feminism is going through a similar journey. We have become used to fighting for sectorial demands, to being thrilled with the small concessions of patriarchal states, taking them for big victories. We speak of gender 'transversality' in public policy, following development agencies' discourses, and it has become indifferent to us whether gender is 'transversalized' in a neoliberal or in a neo-developmental state, in such a way that feminism is losing its subversive identity, its revolutionary identity, becoming yet another reformist trend, which at the end of the day doesn't really disrupt women's state of oppression, or any other of the oppressions that we suffer.

Thus, as feminists we urgently need to relocate gender discussions under the horizon of new utopias, such as sumak kawsay, degrowth, or others. This is necessary not only to restore feminism's revolutionary edge, but also to find common causes with other movements and with other social and political sectors interested in moving history forward without succumbing to ecological, capitalist and patriarchal barbarism.

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